

London TravelWatch response to the consultation on the combined Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise

August 2012

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Southern and Great Northern franchise



London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Liaise with the transport industry, regulators and funders on matters affecting users and respond to their consultations;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and the surrounding area.

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Glossary

Term	Definition
DfT	Department for Transport
DLR	Docklands Light Railway
FCC	First Capital Connect
NPS	National Passenger Survey
ORR	Office of Rail Regulation
PPM	Public Performance Measure
SQUIRE	Service Quality Incentive Regime
TfL	Transport for London
TOC	Train Operating Company
TSGN	Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern

Executive summary

London TravelWatch welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Transport's (DfT) consultation on the combined Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern (TSGN) franchise. The franchise is due to commence in September 2013 and will benefit from the investment in the Thameslink programme.

We support

London TravelWatch supports the DfT proposals to expand the Thameslink network utilising the new infrastructure and rolling stock to provide more services and serve a wider range of destinations.

We welcome

London TravelWatch welcomes the investment in the rolling stock and infrastructure on the route, along with the resultant increase in passenger carrying capacity.

We recommend

London TravelWatch's priorities for the franchise are:

- Increased capacity to address overcrowding on the route. For those areas which do not conform to London TravelWatch's aspirations for levels of train service, an increase in frequency to a minimum of four trains per hour;
- 'Right-time-railway' – London TravelWatch supports the concept that the performance of these routes can be improved by focussing on right-time arrivals. This means that arrival and departure times at all points along the route should be exactly on-time, rather than the current standard that on-time is considered to be when the service is within 5 minutes of the advertised arrival time at the final destination only;
- Stations – Minimum station standards from the independent 'Better Rail Stations Report' (<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf>) to be adopted as part of the franchise, with further standards required beyond the minimum for stations that have greater passenger numbers than the Network Rail ranking of station classification suggests. Details of how these standards will be met and the correct application of the standards according to a reasonable classification should be part of the franchise obligations. A de-cluttering of signage at stations to make passenger information clearer and more consistent at the start of the franchise in combination with station deep cleans. The standard of Southern stations to be retained, with the same standards brought to all TSGN stations;

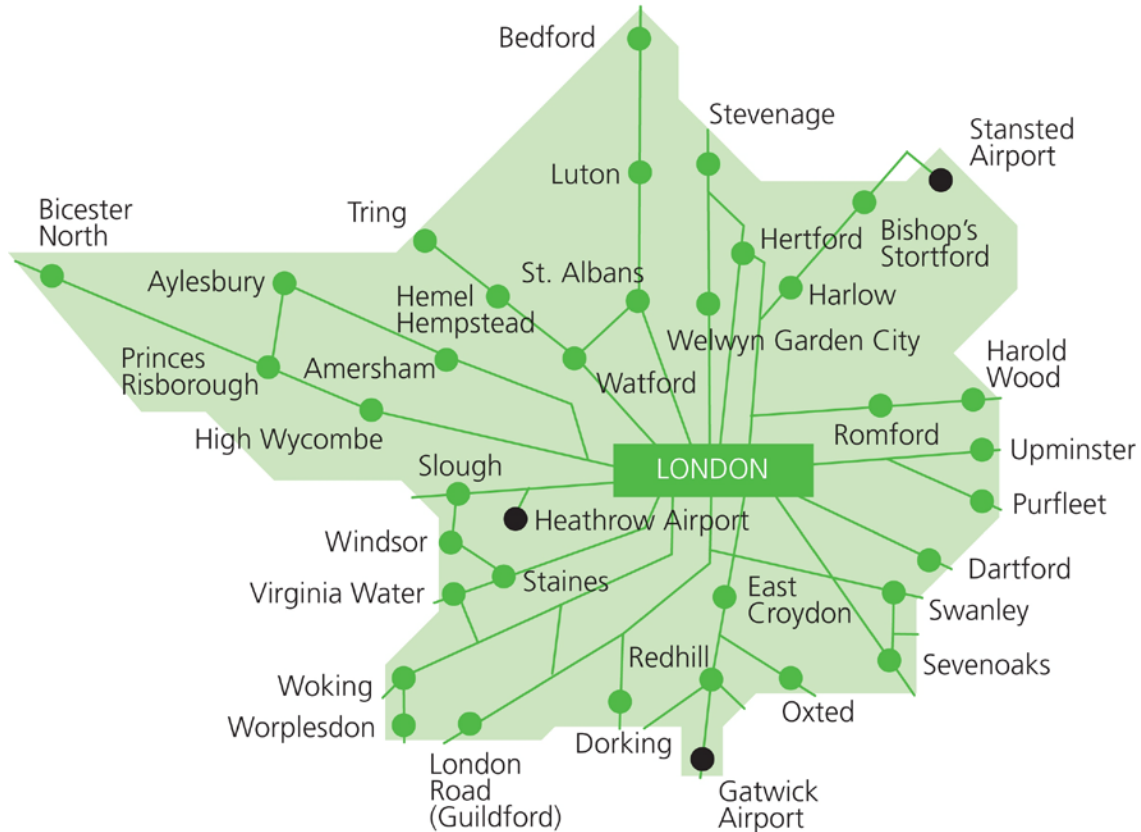
- Minimisation of bus replacement services – The impact of planned disruption on passengers needs to be reduced in future franchises. Operators must be strongly incentivised to run trains where possible, rather than replacement buses. Where buses are necessary, a minimum standard of service needs to be provided in terms of information and bus quality;
- Investigation of closer working between the new operator and Network Rail. This would be an opportunity to provide better information about the service to passengers, especially at times of service disruption;
- Smartcard technology across the whole network, as it would benefit from integrated smartcard ticketing;
- Customer complaints – Train operators to monitor the demographics of their complainants and to advertise their procedures for all passengers to follow helpful complaint procedures, but particularly for those underrepresented in complainant statistics;
- Retaining all the current services through the Thameslink core, including running at least some Wimbledon loop services through Blackfriars;
- Keep all Great Northern line services within this franchise so as to retain and enhance management focus on these services; and
- Close working between the DfT, and the potential franchisees, with London TravelWatch in both this and other franchise consultations. London TravelWatch represents the clear majority of passengers on the Thameslink network, and has produced many reports that have key implications for the franchise, such as “Fare Deals for London” about zonal fares and many others. As the statutory body for most of the passengers affected by the franchise, we would like to see a greater role in assisting the Department and any bidders for the franchise for the benefit of passengers.

London specific issues are discussed from page 11 onwards, as well as the responses to the Department’s individual questions from page 17.

Introduction

London TravelWatch's response has been informed by our casework appeals, as well as our current and past research. The area that London TravelWatch is responsible for is shown below:

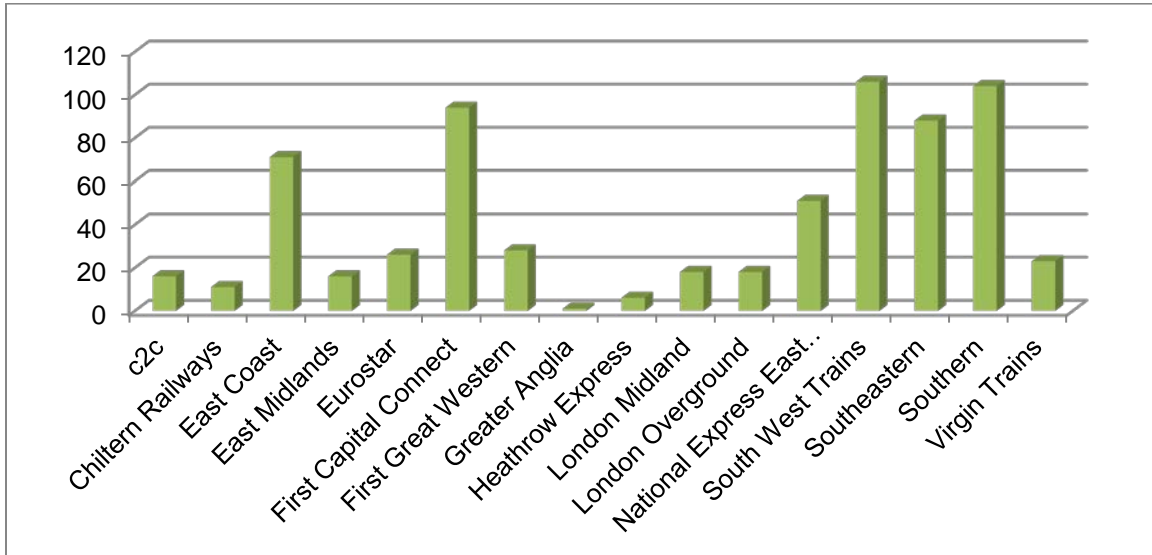
Figure 1 - London TravelWatch Remit Area



London TravelWatch Casework

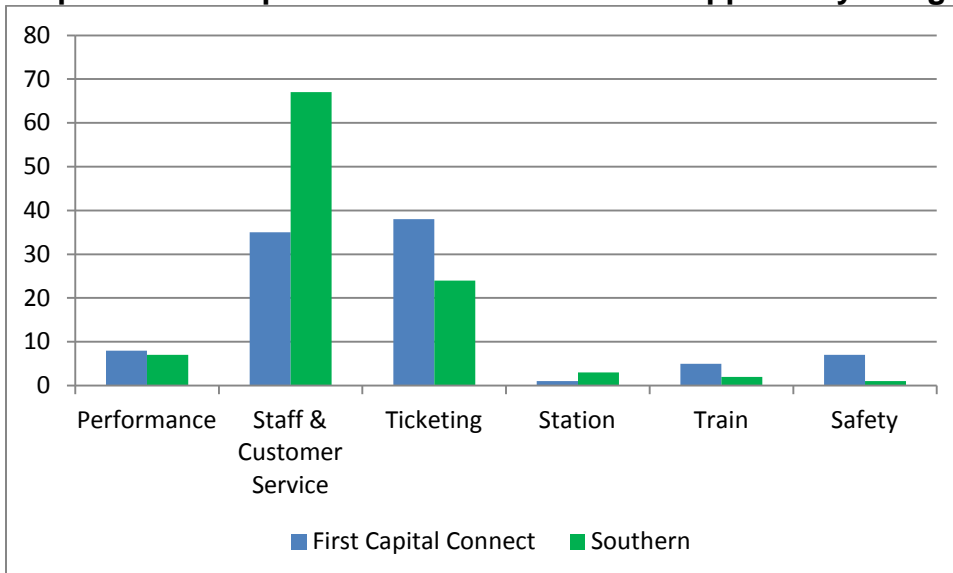
London TravelWatch is the body to which transport users appeal if they are not satisfied by the response of the transport operator's complaints process. Across all train operators, London TravelWatch received 677 appeals against National Rail operators in 2011/12, of which appeals regarding fares and ticketing were the majority.

Graph 1: Appeals received by London TravelWatch from April 2011 to March 2012

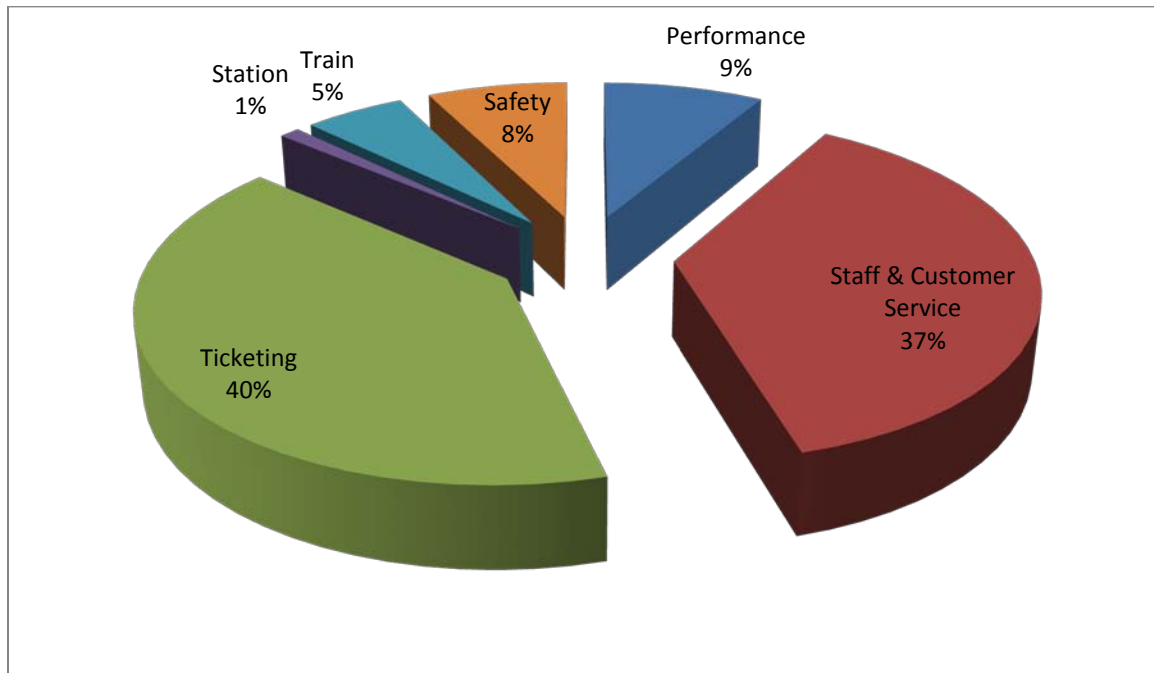


Of all these appeals, 198 were regarding either First Capital Connect (FCC) or Southern services, with 94 for First Capital Connect and 104 regarding Southern.

Graph 2: First Capital Connect and Southern appeals by category

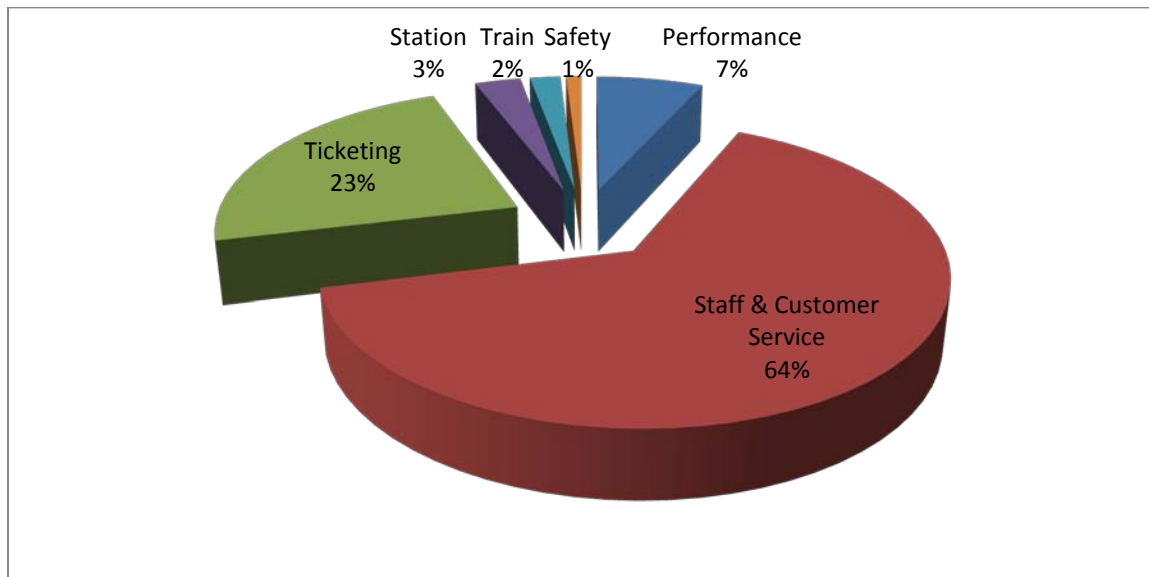


Graph 3: Appeals received by London TravelWatch regarding First Capital Connect services from April 2011 to March 2012



The graph above shows that ticketing issues made up the majority of FCC appeals with a total of 38, followed by staff and customer service appeals with 35. No other category received more than 8 appeals.

Graph 4: Appeals received by London TravelWatch regarding Southern services from April 2011 to March 2012



For Southern operated services, 67 appeals were received by London TravelWatch regarding staff and customer service complaints, with 24 ticketing appeals. As with FCC, no other category received more than 7 appeals.

It has not been possible to extract complaints data for the minority of stations and services that are currently operated by Southeastern or as part of the joint service with First Capital Connect. However, we believe that it is likely that any appeals as such would reflect similar concerns to those expressed for both First Capital Connect and Southern.

In responding to this consultation, London TravelWatch has collaborated with Passenger Focus and we have shared our research with each other to expand our evidence bases. We have analysed casework studies as well as liaising with user groups and local authorities in areas affected by the franchise within London TravelWatch's remit. We have utilised our experience and previous research which is related to the TSGN area, as well as holding regular discussions with the current operators and Network Rail. We have also held a 'transport user surgery' in the area at Tooting and conducted research and monitoring, all of which has informed our response.

Issues for London passengers relating to this franchise

The importance to London passengers of this franchise

While the exact details of which routes will be included in this franchise are not yet known, it is clear that this franchise will be the largest franchise ever operated in Great Britain, and that the vast majority of the route in terms of passenger numbers and passenger mileage will be in the London area. The Southern network alone is one of the more complex and heavily used suburban networks in the country, in addition to the Great Northern and Thameslink routes, all of which carry nearly all their passengers either to, from or wholly within the London area.

It is crucial that London TravelWatch is given a significantly larger role in working with the DfT in developing the specification for franchises that predominantly impact on passengers within the London area, with much of our research being relevant and targeted to franchises such as this one. We are best placed to offer guidance in assisting with bidders and with drafting the consultation documents for London-based franchises and can offer an unrivalled insight into issues that affect a clear majority of passengers across the proposed franchise. Some of this London-focused research is covered below.

Given the scale of the franchise, it is important that there is a clearly defined management structure for each route. Given the experience of other sizable franchises which operate a mix of different routes, those which have a suitable management focus at a local level offer a far better service than those which try to manage as a “one-size fits all” style. This has been clearly seen with the current Great Western franchise, which after a very poor start to the franchise has improved dramatically after devolving management responsibilities back to a more local level. This will be especially important given the level of change that this franchise will be subjected to, with the operational requirements from the Thameslink Programme engineering works as well as the introduction of new rolling stock and routes. The change management process will inevitably be more successful and responsive to the needs of passengers if there is a strong management awareness of local issues.

Incomplete journeys incurred on Oyster cards

In 2011, London TravelWatch conducted a major piece of research on the impact on passengers of incomplete journeys, where the passenger has for whatever reason failed to ‘touch in or touch out’ using their Oyster card on their journey. Overall, around £60 million is collected each year by Transport for London (TfL) and train operators in excess maximum fares.

For stations operated as part of the TSGN franchise, the total amount of excess revenue collected in 2010 was £6.8 million. A detailed breakdown of where these charges were incurred is shown in Annex 1.

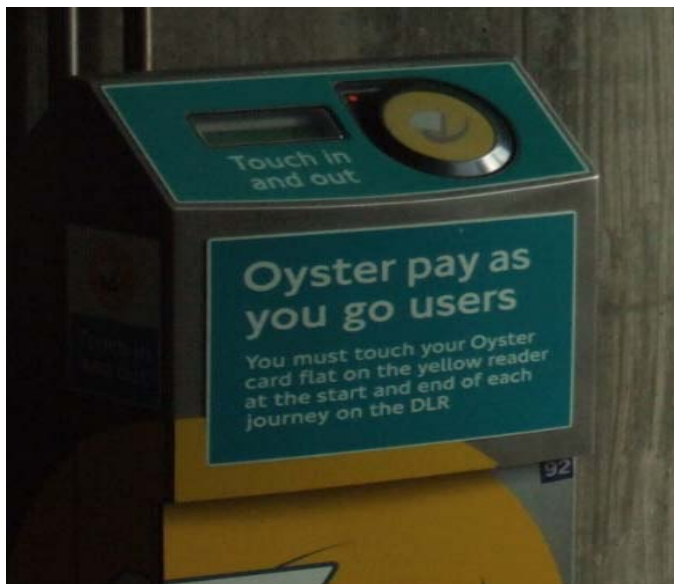
This is a significant amount of revenue, although TfL believes that around 60 to 80% of the maximum fares charged would have been raised from customers had their Oyster card been correctly validated. Despite work on “auto-fill”, the problem remains and more needs to be done, especially as less frequent users are more likely to be affected. Research has clearly shown that the continuation of such high levels of maximum fares being levied is undermining confidence in Oyster and also making passengers feel that Oyster is not delivering the expected value for money fares, with the cumulative effect hindering travel for infrequent users.

The London TravelWatch research can be found at: -
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13964>

The principal recommendations relating to the TSGN franchise are:

- To provide clear information as to where Oyster balance information can be obtained;
- Enable all National Rail stations with booking offices within the Oyster area to resolve Oyster related problems; and
- Ticket vending machines need to be replaced to include the ability to view balances, top up and add Oyster products.

To fulfil these recommendations, all standalone card readers should be given vinyls of a similar sort to that employed on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) as shown in the picture below:



In addition, we consider that it would be worthwhile installing ticket vending machines at any station where currently no such machines are available (Crews Hill, Bayford, Eynsford, Shoreham and Bat & Ball). These would enable passengers to buy Oyster products at Crews Hill, but also assist with reducing the amount of ticketless travel.

Ticket machines that do not accept cash

Of great concern to us, has been the decision by First Great Western and London Midland to disable the ability to accept cash at most of their ticket vending machines. This has major implications for those passengers who do not have access to credit or debit cards, such as those under 16 or who are vulnerable adults by virtue of disability or who wish to buy a low value fare for which they do not necessarily want to use such a card. In particular such users may expose themselves to the risk of a Penalty Fare. We would like to see mandated that no station on the TSGN network is left without any ticket machines that accept cash.

Gating of stations

There are a number of stations on the TSGN network that we consider should have ticket gates installed given the volumes of passengers using them, and the need to reduce ticketless travel and associated crime and disorder. These stations are listed in Annex 2.

Providing sufficient capacity

Passengers on the TSGN currently experience high levels of crowding particularly in the peak hours, so we would expect to see measures to help alleviate this situation. Measures to encourage more flexible journey times must be made, but by incentivising off-peak and shoulder-peak travel rather than pricing passengers without alternatives off the peak services.

The new rolling stock for the franchise should also be procured in a way that means that capacity is provided for both the leisure and commuter markets. Ordering rolling stock that is capable of splitting and joining will be essential given the capacity constraints on the route, so fixed formation trains of twelve or eight carriage length is not appropriate. Fixed formation stock provides poor utilisation, as it both carries significant empty space through much of the off-peak, but also as any fault on a single carriage causes an entire twelve-car train to be taken out of service as it is not possible to detach a smaller portion to allow the remaining eight cars to run. It would be extremely short sighted and inflexible to order a sub-standard fleet that will operate for 30 or more years without the possibility of adopting a number of standard railway operating practices, and extremely optimistic to pre-judge what will be required over 30 years in this manner.

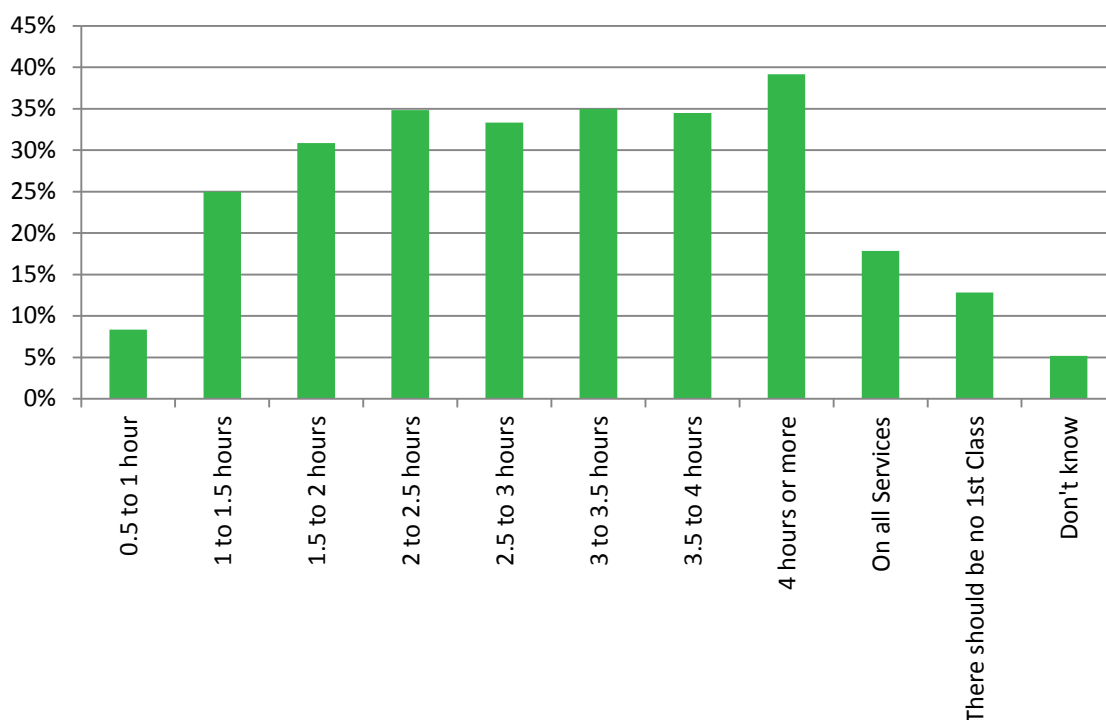
The rolling stock should also be designed so that it can provide maximum capacity during peak times, but not such that it is uncomfortable for passengers making longer leisure journeys. Wide spaces around the doors are critical both for standing capacity during peak hours, and luggage capacity for airport services. Services should be designed such that the overall journey time to or from London is short enough that performance is reliable, and that First Class provision is unnecessary. The services should be designed with passenger demand as the primary driver, rather than railway traditions or operating practices. A thorough review of what is and is not possible to be provided in the timetable should be undertaken with passenger representatives to determine which services and destinations should be served by the Thameslink franchise, and until this is done we make no comment on which destinations should ultimately be served throughout this document.

We recommend changes to the way in which First Class is provided and marketed based on our research conducted in 2010 into passenger attitudes to First Class, which can be found at:

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4222>.

As a result of our findings we recommend that for passenger journeys of less than one hour's duration that consideration is made of declassifying first class accommodation either permanently or on a train by train basis. For passenger journeys of over one hour, we believe that there is a considerable scope to persuade passengers to upgrade to first class provided that their expectations are met for this and that they are informed of the benefits and advantages of such an upgrade. Where these recommendations have been implemented by other operators such as East Coast, Virgin Trains and Greater Anglia there has been increased take up of first class on long distance services, and for London based operators such as Southern and First Capital Connect, declassification either selectively or permanently has resulted in more capacity being made available to standard class ticket holders. Given the vast majority of passengers on the TSGN network have a journey time of either under or around 1 hour, we feel that it would be sensible to provide rolling stock with either no first class facilities or declassified first class facilities that customers are confident they can use with any ticket.

Graph 4 - Graph of Responses to the Question, 'on which, if any, of the following lengths of journey do you believe first class rail services should be available?'



Providing train services in the evenings and weekends / improving ticket facilities at smaller stations

We would advise that the National Passenger Survey (NPS) has a number of gaps in coverage within the London area, and there is a considerable under reporting of passenger usage in the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) station usage statistics. This is due to insufficient account being taken of the use of Travelcards, Freedom Passes and Oyster Pay As You Go trips. As a result, the NPS has not surveyed 44 of the stations served by this franchise in the past six years. This may be relevant if the NPS is used to determine financial incentives, as it is important that the franchise does not solely concentrate on stations likely to be surveyed at the expense of smaller stations. These stations are shown in Annex 4. In addition, coverage at some other stations is fairly limited. We would suggest that the franchise commits to funding surveys at all stations, so as to get a more complete and accurate opinion of all passengers.

Passengers see late evening and Sunday services as important, and these should be of the same level as currently provided at other off peak times. In addition, we also believe that passengers wish to see improved ticketing

facilities, particularly where no Oyster top up facilities and no means of purchasing a ticket from a vending machine exist.

Providing train services in the evenings and weekends and improving ticket facilities at smaller stations are extremely important growth areas for the franchise to deliver, and the rolling stock is already available. Providing sufficient capacity for the growing off-peak and weekend market is important for the new franchise, and evidence from other areas shows a significant demand for improved services outside the peak times.

In this franchise, our research shows that there is a case for improvements to be made to the following services:

Great Northern routes

On Great Northern routes, benefits for passengers would be obtained by operating all late evening, early morning, Saturday, Sunday and public holiday inner suburban services to Moorgate instead of Kings Cross. This would enable connections with the North London Line and East London Line at Highbury & Islington, giving access to the Westfield Shopping Centre at Stratford, and to the significant night time and weekend economies that have grown since this franchise was last specified. These are primarily situated around Hoxton, Haggerston, Shoreditch High Street and Old Street. In addition, the Old Street area is home to a significant number of new companies specialising in worldwide telecommunications and IT that require access to the rail network at all times. Moorgate is also a significant interchange with the London Underground, and a shopping area in its own right, which will become even more pronounced with the introduction of Crossrail services part way through this franchise.

Thameslink routes

The opening of City Thameslink station in the late evenings, early mornings and all day on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays would serve the tourist attractions around St. Paul's Cathedral and the new Cheapside (One New Change). The tourist and shopping areas mean that demand at these times has significantly increased since the franchise was last specified.

In both of the above cases the service has not adapted to take advantage of developments and therefore the rail network as a whole has not attracted some of the demand it could have done.

Southeastern routes

The operation of the Sevenoaks line services at evenings and weekends to serve Elephant & Castle and Blackfriars is welcome. However, user groups tell us that these services would have much more utility if they were to run through the

Thameslink core to serve the night time and weekend economies around Farringdon and St. Pancras International stations.

Southern routes

The enhancement of 'Metro' services in 2009 in the late evenings and at weekends was a very welcome development and passenger numbers and satisfaction levels responded accordingly. However, we believe that given the increase in Sunday travel in London in recent years, it would be appropriate to consider a further enhancement of 'Metro' services such that they are comparable with off-peak Monday to Friday and Saturday services.

An example would be a Sunday London Bridge – Crystal Palace – London Victoria service to match the other days of the week.

Annex 3 shows the growth in usage on Saturday and Sunday for London Underground stations near the TSGN area. Growth on Saturday is around 45% and closer to 50% for Sunday. It is also noteworthy that local bus services in the area have also experienced a similar growth in their usage. This growth in parallel modes shows the latent demand that there is for improved services on Sundays, where National Rail is currently lagging behind other modes in providing service levels based on outdated patterns of travel that do not apply any longer.

Improving the take up of use of rail by minority and underrepresented groups

This combined franchise serves many areas with significant minority group populations. London TravelWatch believes that in some cases usage is significantly less than for the majority population, and that where rail is used the take up and access to the complaints process is limited. London TravelWatch recommends that the new franchisee should be required to monitor the ethnic / social background of complainants to ensure that minority groups are not underrepresented. In addition, we recommend the example of the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) community ambassador scheme, which uses members of local communities to outreach to minority groups to encourage them to use the DLR but also acts as a conduit for comments and complaints where conventional channels are either not available or inappropriate.

Improving the passenger experience of stations

In 2011, we undertook a research project to identify best practice at interchanges in the London area. This can be found at:

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14197>

We found that there were serious shortcomings in wayfinding, signage and information provision, including imperfect information showing access to bus and London Underground interchanges. There are lessons that should be applied from the report, which when introduced will lead to a considerable improvement in onward travel from the Thameslink core stations for many passengers.

In London there is a widely adopted “Continuing your journey” mapping system based on TfL mapping and Legible London signage. This system has been designed around the needs of pedestrians rather than motorists. It appears in all London Underground stations, bus stations and stops and has been adopted by some Train Operating Companies.

We would expect franchisees to work with TfL to introduce TfL style “Continuing your journey” and Legible London mapping in and around their London stations. Outside London, we wish to see bespoke pedestrian mapping systems introduced, that have been designed specifically for onward pedestrian journeys, including journeys to interchange points such as bus stations.

Responses to the individual consultation questions put by the Department

Question 1

What improvements do stakeholders believe could be made on the combined franchise through partnership working between Network Rail and the new operator?

London TravelWatch is watching the development of the “Deep Alliance” between Network Rail and South West Trains with interest. If a similar scheme were to be introduced in the TSGN area, we would support it if the alliance benefits passengers, through improved information provision, recovery from poor operational performance and improved communications. If alliancing develops into a primarily financial arrangement then we would not have any comments regarding alliancing in franchises and would look for other partnership working opportunities to improve the journey experience for the travelling public.

We are also aware that the implementation of different alliances around London could potentially lead to a situation where each alliance focuses on a narrow area of responsibility and London-wide co-ordination is missed. This seems particularly relevant for the Thameslink network, which crosses a number of Network Rail routes and is therefore not a candidate for alliancing, but could lead to a situation where other Network Rail/Train Operating Company (TOC) alliances prioritise Thameslink services lower than the other TOC services.

Closer working on issues such as the management of core stations, the united implementation of litter and graffiti clearance and information to passengers at times of disruption are all important, regardless of whether there is an official alliance or not.

Question 2

Do consultees have any other specific aspirations for the new franchise they wish to bring to the Department’s attention?

In addition to the other station proposals referenced in the franchise consultation documents, we would like to emphasise the importance of including in the base specification improved and enhanced evening and weekend services within the London ‘Metro’ area. This is covered more fully in our response to Question 5.

Question 3

Are consultees aware of any other rail or non-rail development schemes that might affect the new franchise?

There are some significant developments away from the rail network that will affect this franchise.

Reorganisation of health care facilities in South West London

A major reorganisation of health care in South West London is about to be consulted upon. The broad thrust of the scheme will be to centralise planned and acute care at a number of specialist hospital units. However, while this is projected to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities, it will require some patients and visitors to travel further to different facilities. One option would centralise planned care for South West London at St.Helier Hospital, with acute and specialist care at other hospitals such as St. George's Tooting and Croydon University Hospital. The effect of these changes is likely to increase demand at stations close to these establishments. Of particular concern is the remoteness of St.Helier Hospital from stations with step free access. We would therefore recommend the inclusion of St.Helier, Sutton Common and Carshalton stations in programmes to add step free access. Similarly Tooting and Haydons Road stations are well placed to serve St. George's Hospital if step free access could be provided. In all of these cases, to be an effective means of travel to and from these hospitals (and especially Sutton and Wimbledon as interchange stations) an off peak service of at least four trains per hour would be desirable.

Belmont station is very close to the Sutton and Royal Marsden Hospitals and has step free access, but rail travel is not promoted due to the current low frequency of trains.

This reorganisation would also increase the numbers of trips to hospitals outside of the South West London area, in particular to the specialist and acute care centre at Kings College Hospital, between Denmark Hill and Loughborough Junction stations. Denmark Hill station is currently being made step free. However, as the Hospital is developed, more activity is taking place closer to Loughborough Junction station. Travel to this station from the Wimbledon Loop has increased in recent years, especially as the Hospital has implemented a travel plan, and a further reorganisation of health care and increased patient choice is likely to continue this trend. Therefore, London TravelWatch recommends that consideration should be given to providing step free access at this station, and also providing more direct walking and step free routes from the station into the hospital site.

Crystal Palace Park regeneration

Bromley Council and the Greater London Authority are currently developing plans to regenerate Crystal Palace Park. These plans will significantly enhance the amount of inbound travel at off-peak times and at weekends to stations serving the park in the period from 2014 onwards.

These plans will support the case for improved 'Metro' services in the area particularly on Sundays.

However, we note that Penge West station, which is a 'gateway' station to the park, only has step free access to the northbound platform. Bromley Council has developed a scheme which would provide ramped step free access to the southbound platform as well as improve the accessibility of the station to Penge town centre. It is recommended that this scheme (which is of relatively modest cost) should be pursued jointly with TfL/London Overground.

Alexandra Palace regeneration

Alexandra Palace is an important venue for cultural events in north London. It is a fully accessible venue for wheelchair and other disabled users. However, the station at Alexandra Palace does not have step free access. London TravelWatch is currently in dialogue with Network Rail and the DfT as the new platforms at this station do not allow step free access. We consider that it should be a priority that this station should have step free access provided.

Question 4

What increments or decrements to the specification would stakeholders wish to see and how would these be funded?

London TravelWatch wishes to see the current standard of station staffing on the Southern network included in the new franchise, and expanded to include the entire TSGN network so as not to create a two-tier network.

Please also see our response to Question 5.

Question 5

Which aspects of the specification, other than for those services operating through the Thameslink core route, would stakeholders wish to see mandated and which aspects of the specification could be left to the discretion of the operator?

London TravelWatch is increasingly concerned with the decline in service when operators are allowed to operate without mandated service requirements. An example of this is the current Chiltern December 2012 timetable proposals which see a reduction in service to a minimum at nearly all of their London area stations as these stations provide a lower “yield per passenger” than the more lucrative long distance services. Due to the inherent nature of private operators to regard profit as more important than providing services for social reasons, we feel that a strongly mandated service specification is the only way to ensure that passengers can have confidence that their service levels will be reasonable. We would wish to see all of the aspects that build up the specification be mandated as the only way to maintain service levels for passengers, such as first and last trains, peak and off-peak frequencies and destinations.

London TravelWatch research concludes that passengers primarily want services that are frequent and reliable, with good interchange and affordable fares. However, the current TSGN timetable, especially covering Sundays, does not fully reflect the needs of passengers particularly in Greater London. The specification for this franchise therefore needs to reflect current passenger needs rather than current service patterns.

London TravelWatch would like to see improvements to the late evening and Sunday services so that they operate at the same frequency and stopping pattern as the off-peak Monday to Saturday timetable. Research shows that passengers who travel at off-peak times place greater value on regular interval services with consistent stopping patterns and journey times. In the London area over the past 10-15 years, late evenings and Sundays have seen large increases in activity so these times are often as busy if not busier than Monday to Saturday daytimes. London Underground traffic volumes and bus usage at these times have also increased dramatically, showing the demand within London for this service level.

We wish to see the Sunday timetable for the route enhanced to the level operating off-peak on Saturdays, and believe that the weekday evening service between 2100 and 2400 should be enhanced to the same pattern as that operating between 1900 and 2100, with four trains per hour on all routes as the minimum, in line with the changes above.

London TravelWatch would also like mandated in all franchises that public holidays, including Boxing Day, operate an understandable service pattern,

rather than the current situation where one operator has a Monday-Friday service without peak trains, one a Saturday service and yet another a Sunday service. There should be more combined working between operators to ensure that a single timetable is operated that passengers can instinctively understand, and that connections between operators work as they are using the same timetable.

Similarly, for the period between Christmas and New Year when reduced services for commuters might operate, we would like more co-operation on adjacent routes, and also for operators to cease using the 'railway slang' of describing to the passenger services as 'Saturday' services: this creates a significant expectation amongst passengers that ticket restrictions, prices and cycle policies should also conform to 'Saturday' practice. Each year London TravelWatch receives a regular series of complaints from passengers on this subject – and in most cases not resolved, as the passenger does not understand this piece of railway shorthand.

We would like all aspects of the train service to be enhanced in the short term in accordance with the London TravelWatch paper 'Requirements for Trains Services' (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/772/get>).

London TravelWatch wishes to see specific improvements for the following routes:

- An increase in off-peak frequency of train services to four trains per hour, including Saturday and Sunday on all routes where this is not the case, such as the service to Sevenoaks. The majority of stations on this route are within the London Travelcard boundary or have a significant population within their catchment yet only currently receive two trains per hour; and
- Later train services to stations, to be in line with the last journey times of the London Underground of around 00:30, including at weekends as these services are frequently very full.

London TravelWatch wishes the improved off-peak and weekend services to be mandated within the new franchise.

London TravelWatch suggests that consideration is given to the performance regime to provide more positive impacts for passengers. For example, financial penalties for delays could be used specifically for railway network investment. On this basis both Network Rail and train operators would be regulated by the Office of Rail Regulation to invest any proceeds from delay minutes in schemes to the benefit of the network.

While London TravelWatch supports the National Passenger Survey, a minimum standards regime must be in place to back up the passenger perception based

targets. This ensures that an absolute level of service and facilities are achieved. The independent auditing for such a scheme also needs to be external to the train operator to ensure that it is impartially enforced. London TravelWatch suggests that a Service Quality Incentive Regime (SQUIRE) is applied to this contract. SQUIRE monitors and measures the quality of customer services provided by the franchise operator. To do this, independent inspectors regularly check the service quality of the franchise's train and station facilities.

SQUIRE inspectors audit the majority of stations and many trains every four weeks. Service areas inspected range from graffiti, toilets and timetables to train cleanliness, staff service and the public address system. There are 36 service quality areas inspected under this regime.

SQUIRE performance results should be published at least quarterly and shown by station, train or line of route.

The franchise should be financially incentivised to better the targets set and receive financial penalties for areas which fail to reach these targets.

Question 6

Are there other approaches to train service specification which you would prefer?

London TravelWatch's research, with feedback from passengers, has clearly demonstrated that passengers want reliable, frequent and affordable train services. It is clear that private operators, whenever left with commercial freedom, will seek to concentrate wholly on "higher yield" services, and cutting services or station staff and facilities to raise profits. We do not agree that giving more commercial freedom is a sensible policy to pursue when providing a public service that provides a huge economic benefit to society as a whole.

The devolution of decision making to a more local level is one that may provide benefits, as seen by London Overground, and the improvements to the Southern network funded by Transport for London. We would wish to see a greater level of involvement from Transport for London in the service specification of the TSGN network.

Question 7

What changes to services would stakeholders propose, what is the rationale for them and would these proposals provide economic benefit?

Please see our response to Question 5 for details of off peak and weekend services we wish to see in the new franchise.

Additionally, we wish to see through services from the Wimbledon loop beyond Blackfriars retained, as has been enjoyed by users of this route for nearly two decades. While we acknowledge the infrastructure constraints that restrain the amount of services that can run through the core from this route, we do not feel that it is reasonable for a key commuter route to summarily lose a service that has been operating for so long, and would call on the franchise to commit to running some of the services on this route through the core, assuming this can be done without reducing overall capacity or severely affecting performance on other routes.

Question 8

How might better use be made of the capacity currently available?

Currently, there are very small pockets of diesel operated services on the Hurst Green - Uckfield and Ashford - Ore lines contained within this franchise. The new franchise will need to retain a small diesel train fleet for use on these lines, which will add additional costs to the franchise at a far higher unit cost than would be the case if electrified. London TravelWatch considers that without electrification of these branches, the cost of residual operations is likely to disproportionately fall on these lines. We therefore consider that there is likely to be a case for electrification of these routes.

In addition, the lack of such electrification constrains the ability to optimise train paths in the peak over the most heavily crowded sections of line in the London area between South Croydon and London Bridge. The requirement to have a separate diesel fleet then means that operators are faced with inefficiencies from not being able to fully integrate these services with their otherwise electric fleet.

The construction of the timetable is also disproportionately constrained by the small diesel fleet, as this fleet is locked in to serving just one line. In the peak hours, services arriving at London Bridge must wait there until a path is available to return to Uckfield. If all the rolling stock were electrically operated then a service from Uckfield could depart from London Bridge to any destination and vice versa, significantly improving platform utilisation at London Bridge, which will be so heavily constrained during and after the Thameslink Programme works.

Please also see our response to Question 5, which would allow far greater utilisation of the rolling stock to provide additional services outside of peak hours, rather than sitting redundant for the majority of the week.

Please also see our response to Question 9, which outlines our research into first class travel and our views on demand management.

We also note the views of MPs and others from the Hastings area that an electrified Ashford – Ore line would allow direct Hastings to London services via HS1, with considerable potential reductions in journey time over existing services. This could have a number of advantages for the London area – particularly by freeing up capacity on faster Southeastern services from Sevenoaks and Orpington into central London.

Question 9

What steps might bidders be expected to take to meet passenger demand and what might be the most appropriate mechanism for managing demand?

Passengers on the TSGN currently experience high levels of crowding particularly in the peak hours, so we would expect to see measures to help alleviate this situation. Measures to encourage more flexible journey times must be made, but by incentivising off-peak and shoulder-peak travel rather than pricing passengers without alternatives off the peak services.

In particular we recommend changes to the way in which First Class is provided and marketed.

We conducted research in 2010 into passenger attitudes to First Class. This can be found at: <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4222>.

As a result of our findings we recommend that for passenger journeys of less than one hour's duration that consideration is made of declassifying first class accommodation either permanently or on a train by train. For passenger journeys of over one hour, we believe that there is a considerable scope to persuade passengers to upgrade to first class provided that their expectations are met for this and that they are informed of the benefits and advantages of such an upgrade. Where these recommendations have been implemented by other operators such as East Coast, Virgin Trains and Greater Anglia, there has been increased take up of first class on long distance services, and for London based operators such as Southern and First Capital Connect, declassification either selectively or permanently has resulted in more capacity being made available to standard class ticket holders. Given that the vast majority of passengers on the TSGN network have a journey time of either under or around one hour, we feel that it would be sensible to provide rolling stock with either no first class facilities

or declassified first class facilities that customers are confident they can use with any ticket.

Question 10

What destinations on the current Southeastern network do respondents think should be served by the combined franchise's services and what is the rationale for such proposals?

London TravelWatch would prefer to see the current Southeastern Metro network (plus the proposed Victoria – Bromley South via Catford loop service which is essential to replace the links between Victoria and Wandsworth Road/Clapham High Street) being operated as a London Overground concession. This would provide a much higher level of service, focused on the needs of the majority of passengers, and more local accountability. Retaining the Sevenoaks service through the Thameslink core, as per the original Thameslink pattern is also essential, but with London Overground levels of quality for stations and staffing.

It may be appropriate for longer distances services, such as those from Maidstone/Ashford to run through the Thameslink core, but only in addition to their established services to their current London Terminals.

The current service levels from Kent to London Bridge (and Charing Cross/Cannon Street) should be the minimum that run to these destinations. Any services from Kent that run via the Elephant & Castle route should therefore be in addition to the current services, and in no case as a substitute for the established and well used routes into the current London Terminals.

Question 11

How might better use be made of the capacity available on the Brighton Main Line?

The increased co-ordination between the current FCC and Southern operations with the introduction of one combined service should result in a better service for passengers. We acknowledge the difficulty there will be in running services during the reconstruction of London Bridge and would urge the franchisee to involve London TravelWatch at an early stage in timetable planning to discuss which services are most valuable for passengers.

London TravelWatch would also like to comment that the use of “skip-stopping” or other equivalent service patterns should only be used if this results in a consistent and memorable timetable for passengers. On other routes where skip-stopping is used, there is a clear difference in best practice and worst practice, where passengers are put off travelling by the confusion in the time of services and in the difference in calling patterns depending on the time of day.

The practice of splitting and joining trains to provide better utilisation of each path into London will be critical on the Brighton Main Line, with (as suggested) the fast services to Brighton splitting at Gatwick Airport to provide a replacement for Gatwick Express, as well as splitting at Haywards Heath for the East and West Coastway and potentially other points along the line.

Question 12

What steps should bidders be expected to take to improve performance on the route?

Performance on the route has been generally improving, and this is welcome. The improved performance should continue with the new rolling stock and infrastructure, and with thorough planning of engineering works associated with the Thameslink Programme, performance should not suffer. The service pattern should be designed to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to prevent performance from dropping markedly, and only routes that can be accommodated without risking the performance of the core section being implemented.

During times of poor performance, the important thing for passengers is the information that is provided to them about their delay. The new franchisee must embrace both 'old and new' media to communicate with the range of passengers that use the franchise. We also suggest that the good practice from London Overground of showing alternative routes/means of travelling from each station to other stations should be adopted.

Lessons must be learned from the recent incident at Kentish Town, and the associated Rail Accident Investigation Board report. Significant shortcomings regarding the information provided to passengers as well as management decision making and on-train equipment must all be resolved and should be a requirement of the franchise.

London TravelWatch wants to see far greater industry emphasis on reducing the impact of planned disruption on rail passengers. Over the past 10 years, considerable effort has been put into addressing unplanned disruption and while there is still further work to go, passengers have seen the benefits. The next hurdle is therefore planned disruption with the industry needing to be able to find a way of keeping the railway 'open-for-business' throughout the week. This means that the wholesale replacement of services at the weekends by buses is not acceptable.

Network Rail and the franchisee must share information with other transport providers such as London Underground and the Tramlink network, where

applicable, with regard to the alternative options available to passengers at times of disruption.

There is a hierarchy of decision making, which is required when mitigating the impact of engineering work on the passenger. There are two stages, which must be considered before a full bus substitution is considered:

- Diversion of trains or a reduced service making use of single line working; and
- Partial bus replacement to intermediate locations, for example, to different main line routes or Underground lines so that the majority of the journey is undertaken by rail with only the first or last leg by bus.

If bus replacement is necessary then the full bus replacement must be of a quality that is sufficiently high. London TravelWatch has historically received a number of appeals about the quality of bus replacement services, particularly focusing on the lack of information available to passengers. Where bus substitution is required due to engineering work, London TravelWatch would like bidders to follow a code of practice:

- Adequate and prominent publicity to be disseminated at least 10 days in advance and on the day, both on the route and on lines connecting with it (even if the latter are run by a different operator e.g. other train companies, London Underground or Tramlink);
- A weekly network-wide map of engineering disruption;
- The equivalent London Underground or Tramlink notice should be displayed at 'network' stations and the 'network' map at Underground and Tramlink stations;
- Low-floor fully accessible buses to be used (except for long journeys where coaches are required, in which case special arrangements should be made to assist disabled and luggage-laden passengers);
- Adequate facilities for luggage, buggies and cycles to be provided;
- Temporarily closed stations to be clearly identified as such, with the replacement bus timetable clearly displayed with clear directions to the bus stops;
- Bus stopping points to be clearly marked by temporary bus stop signs, so that passengers and drivers alike know where these are and to prevent disputes;

- Buses to display destinations and intermediate calling points clearly on the front of the vehicle;
- Adequate numbers of well informed staff to be provided at all affected stations to direct passengers to buses and trains and answer ticketing questions;
- Where interchange between buses and trains takes place at stations with automatic ticket gates, the gates should be configured to ensure that all tickets are returned to the passengers when the gates are not in use. Adequate staff must be provided at the gateline to direct and assist passengers with luggage etc. to use the manual gate; and
- Only reputable bus companies to be used, with drivers who have the necessary local knowledge and ability to follow the route.

London TravelWatch's report, "When is a train not a train? - A study of rail replacement bus services" (2004) should be used as guidance when planning rail replacement bus services.

Question 13

What destinations on the Great Northern route do respondents consider would be appropriate to become destinations for trains which serve the core Thameslink route?

There is a balance to be struck between creating more direct journey opportunities and creating services that are unreliable and have poor rolling stock utilisation. The design of the new rolling stock needs to be suitable for the high loadings that will be carried through the core of the route, and the high density rolling stock would not be suitable for journeys of many hours end-to-end. As with our research into first class accommodation covered in Question 9, there is a tipping point where first class accommodation becomes expected, and ideally the TSGN network should operate without journeys long enough to require first class conveyance for capacity reasons.

It is important that the minimum of the current service level is provided at stations such as Hornsey and Harringay and the service pattern for Thameslink is designed to take into account which rolling stock should be provided for which route so as to not rely on Selective Door Opening close to London to provide longer trains. If new platforms are required at these stations in order to retain their current level of service, these must be delivered by the franchise to ensure that there is no decline in service.

The transfer of some of the Welwyn Garden City service to the Thameslink route should be used to free up capacity at Moorgate for increased frequencies on the

Hertford North route. This should be a franchise objective, and any required infrastructure, such as a turnback facility or new platforms at intermediate stations should be delivered as part of the franchise.

Question 14

Do respondents believe Great Northern trains which do not serve the Thameslink core route should remain as part of this franchise or be transferred to the new Inter City East Coast franchise?

All of the current Great Northern franchise should remain in the TSGN franchise. It would not be appropriate for an Intercity operator to run a suburban service such as Moorgate to Finsbury Park, and our experience with other operators would suggest that the suburban service would be neglected or reduced at the expense of the longer distance, higher yielding, Intercity services.

The experience of integration of such different types of service on Great Western, was in our view was disastrous for passengers, using both local, regional and inter city services. This was because management attention was severely distracted and over stretched by the different demands of each market. Similar but less marked experiences have occurred in the (National Express) Greater Anglia, East Midland and Chiltern franchises, with users of smaller stations suffering the most. Great Western has since improved by effectively splitting management back into the relevant market sectors.

Question 15

What improvements would respondents like to see made to Great Northern services as part of the combined franchise and what is the rationale for this?

Please see our response to Question 5. We would like to see a service level of four trains per hour at all stations as a minimum within the London area, along with an improved service around the time of the first and last trains, and at weekends.

This is particularly relevant as both Welwyn Garden City and Hertford North services currently drop to three trains per hour between the peak periods. We understand that these services could be increased to four trains per hour with either a financially neutral or positive financial benefit.

In addition to the services, the condition and quality of the station environment on the Northern City Line from Moorgate is extremely poor. This is especially noticeable as the parallel London Underground infrastructure has recently been

cleaned and improved, leaving a marked contrast with the Great Northern stations which appear as though they have been untouched since the 1970s.

Question 16

What services would be appropriate to serve the Airport market?

London TravelWatch agrees with the objective to support good connectivity with major airports with any possible service improvements being considered.

It is important that the railway is able to deliver maximum capacity through this challenging period, and dedicated airport services are not likely to provide enough capacity to allow this. During the peak hours in particular, it is not appropriate to have capacity sitting idle at airports when it could be used to transport thousands of passengers to their destination.

Appropriate rolling stock should be provided which can allow airport passengers to convey their luggage without blocking aisles or doorways. Significantly widened doorways can double up as either space for luggage or a large standing area for rush hour trains.

The former services that used to serve Gatwick Airport (Southern to Watford Junction and Cross Country to the West Coast Main Line) provided very useful links for passengers with heavy luggage, affording them an opportunity to avoid hauling their luggage across central London. A service from Gatwick Airport that utilises the West London Line would be valuable for these passengers, especially those with mobility constraints, in avoiding central London and would provide more incentive for airport passengers to travel by rail rather than road to the airport.

Airport services should operate such that plenty of time is allowed for passengers to catch the earliest flights from the airports, and to catch trains after the last flights. Trains should either run considerably past the times of these flights, or be excluded from the performance regime to allow them to wait for passengers on delayed flights. At Gatwick Airport, trains should run throughout the night, but for the other international gateway stations, including Southampton Airport Parkway and St Pancras International, trains should always be available to get passengers to or from the earliest and latest connections.

We feel that the current service level to Luton Airport Parkway is appropriate, but would request that through ticketing including the shuttle bus from the station to the airport is sold as part of all tickets to Luton Airport Parkway.

Question 17

What improvements could be made without adversely affecting the service provision on the remainder of the franchise?

Improvements can be made by running trains frequently to the airport whenever capacity allows, such as at weekends and throughout the night when flights are operating. Rolling stock is available at all times except the peak, and should be utilised to ensure that airport services run at the maximum length that can be achieved to assist with luggage taking up room. During the peak, services should of course serve the airports, but without dedicated airport services eating into vital capacity.

Question 18

What services that run via Elephant & Castle do respondents think should run via the Thameslink core route

To fully realise the benefits the Thameslink Programme creates, sensible planning of which services should use the Thameslink core is essential. It is important that the majority of peak services using the core are of maximum length and those destinations to the North and South of the core are appropriate and matched so that maximum capacity is delivered. This should be done such that routes which allow 12-car operation from the North are paired with routes from the South which also allow 12-car operation, and that routes are short enough in end-to-end length as to use appropriate rolling stock to cater for peak demand, without the need for First Class, and allowing large areas for standing or luggage, especially by the doors.

London TravelWatch acknowledges the operational reasoning behind Network Rail's conclusions, as well as the guidance from operators, but we believe that a minimum of two trains per hour should run through the core from the Wimbledon loop, at least as far as Kentish Town. The return of the original service pattern with Sevenoaks services running through the core and services from the Streatham line terminating at Blackfriars, which has not operated since 1995, will inconvenience many passengers who have made employment or housing decisions based on the service pattern in operation for the last 17 years. We feel that a split where two trains per hour run through the core from each side of the Wimbledon Loop, even with the forecast large reduction in overall performance and capacity, is still a price worth paying for the Wimbledon Loop passengers. If there is any time when the Wimbledon Loop is unable to use the Thameslink core, there should be mitigation provided of an increase in service frequency and a reliable interchange.

In both the peak and off-peak, it is appropriate for the Sevenoaks services to run through the core, as they have done historically and today. Any associated trains

from the Southeastern route that run through the core today should also be retained. However, services that do not currently run through the core should have the lowest priority to do so in the new specification, and of the entirely new Thameslink services, it can be left to the operators' commercial judgement which routes should run through the core, after the mandated current routes.

We believe through services from all routes are feasible during the off peak and should be retained, including from the Wimbledon Loop.

Question 19

Recognising that not all of these services can run via the Thameslink core route, what would be the most satisfactory way of managing the interchange at Blackfriars?

Wherever possible, the interchange at Blackfriars should be arranged so that cross-platform interchange is possible onto a through service. Clear signage should be provided and an easily navigable route onto the connecting service should be provided at all times. With northbound connections it should be possible to provide a cross-platform interchange the majority of the time, but with southbound interchange this will not be possible. For all interchanges that are not cross-platform, clear signage, wayfinding and the ability to interchange without having to pass through ticket barriers are all essential.

In 2011, we undertook a research project to identify best practice at interchanges in the London area. This can be found at:

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14197>

We found that there were serious shortcomings in wayfinding, signage and information provision. There are lessons that should be applied from the report, which when introduced will lead to a considerable improvement in interchange at Blackfriars station.

Question 20

What improvements would respondents like to see made to Coastway East and West services, the rationale for such proposals and the economic benefit expected to be delivered from these changes?

This question largely relates to an area outside London TravelWatch's remit, but we would support the retention of the practice which sees the splitting and joining of Coastway services to allow greater capacity towards the London end of the Brighton Main Line.

Question 21

What improvements would respondents like to see made to other Southern services as part of the combined franchise from 2015, what is the rationale for such proposals and the economic benefit expected to be delivered from these changes?

Please see our response to Question 5. We would like to see a service level of four trains per hour at all stations as a minimum within the London area, along with an improved service around the time of the first and last trains, and at weekends.

It may well be necessary to extend train and platform lengths beyond the current commitments during the life of this franchise, for example, the current modelling of demand on the Sydenham corridor suggests that 10-car services will not be enough to meet peak demand during this franchise, and further extension to 12-car services should be considered. This should include appropriate platform extensions at stations that currently have shorter platforms. In the case of Penge West this could be combined with the Bromley Council scheme to provide step free access. At Forest Hill it should be noted that a 12-car length platform would also enable ramped step free access to be provided to and from the station car park (owned by Lewisham Council).

We would like to see the improvements to the West London Line services continued, and where possible extended with greater service frequency and length. We also wish to see an interchange station provided at Old Oak Common to allow greater interchange onto the Crossrail route, relieving the pressure in Central London.

Question 22

What are respondents' views on the practice of splitting trains at stations such as Haywards Heath?

We would support the practice of splitting trains as it allows a much greater range of through journeys to be offered to passengers without the need to interchange. This is particularly important for people with luggage or who have reduced mobility.

In addition it allows much better use of rolling stock (and therefore reduced industry cost) and provides greater capacity at the London end of the Brighton Main Line between Gatwick Airport, East Croydon and London where crowding even in the off-peak is common.

Question 23

Do respondents feel that the Newhaven Marine branch line and station should be kept open and maintained or should the rail industry deploy the relevant funding elsewhere on the rail network?

This question relates to an area outside London TravelWatch's remit.

Question 24

How would you like to see performance information published?

London TravelWatch would like to see the information published electronically, in graph and table formats. This format is easier to understand, easier to calculate and to reproduce information to suit our stakeholders.

We would like to see both the current PPM information as well as "right-time" data published, and we would like to see innovative ways to encourage passengers to use alternative services, such as a colour coded element of timetables printed at stations showing which peak services are most heavily loaded.

Possession disruption index for passengers – the disruption to passengers by possessions can be very significant, particularly at the weekends. Publication by route would allow passengers to see the availability of the network at a level which is meaningful to their usage of the railways. London TravelWatch wishes to see publication of the statistics for bus replacements as a percentage of scheduled services for each route broken down by weekday, Saturdays and Sundays.

Question 25

How frequent should its publication be?

London TravelWatch would like to see performance data published quarterly, in addition to the usual industry four week periods and Moving Annual Average statistics. With this period of publication, it is easier to analyse performance as it better shows trends.

Question 26

What level of disaggregation of performance do you believe is reasonable?

London TravelWatch thinks the level of disaggregation should be on a route-by-route basis due to the size of the franchise. Data should be available on demand for a variety of disaggregation, including line-by-line and train-by-train, but it is not required to publish this every period.

Question 27

What are the priorities that respondents consider should be taken into account to improve the passenger experience of using these services?

London TravelWatch published “10 policies to keep Londoners moving: Transport users’ priorities for the 2012-16 Mayoral term” in advance of the Mayoral elections earlier this year, available at:

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14109>

Of particular relevance to this franchise are the following priorities:

- Frequent and comprehensive public transport;
- A fair deal for passengers;
- Easy interchange;
- Reliable and timely information;
- Travelling with confidence;
- A transport network open to all; and
- Enforcing the rules.

While London TravelWatch supports the National Passenger Survey, a minimum standards regime must be in place to back up the passenger perception based targets. This ensures that an absolute level of service and facilities are achieved. The independent auditing for such a scheme also needs to be external to the train operator to ensure that it is impartially enforced. London TravelWatch suggests that a Service Quality Incentive Regime (SQUIRE) is applied to this contract. SQUIRE monitors and measures the quality of customer services provided by the franchise operator. To do this, independent inspectors regularly check the service quality of the franchise’s train and station facilities.

SQUIRE inspectors audit the majority of stations and many trains every four weeks. Service areas inspected range from graffiti, toilets and timetables to train cleanliness, staff service and the public address system. There are 36 service quality areas inspected under this regime.

SQUIRE performance results should be published at least quarterly and shown by station, train or line of route and the franchise should be financially

incentivised to better the targets set and receive financial penalties for areas which fail to reach these targets.

In the National Passenger Survey, each of these routes receives low Value for Money ratings, and considerably lower ratings than other modes such as Tramlink and the Docklands Light Railway. Measures to improve the Value for Money scores should be prioritised highly for the franchise.

Question 28

What do stakeholders see as the most important factors in improving security (actual or perceived) and addressing any gap between the two?

We would urge that priority should be given by the new franchisee and by Network Rail to tackling the significant amounts of trackside graffiti and rubbish that occur particularly in the London area. This not only creates the impression of an uncared for and unattended railway, but also disruption when trespass is reported or trains ingest rubbish/litter/overgrown vegetation in their mechanical and electrical parts. Measures to monitor this, along with incentives to comply should be introduced, and an independent body should be able to provide some degree of enforcement power if the situation worsens.

The current staffing level on the Southern metro network should be retained and rolled out across the TSGN network. Staffing from first to last train significantly increases passengers' feelings of security as well as reducing anti-social behaviour and crime levels.

London TravelWatch believes that the same levels of staffing that are achieved in the current Southern franchise should be replicated in the parts of this franchise currently operated by First Capital Connect and Southeastern within the Greater London area.

The gating of all stations will see a drop in ticketless travel as well as crime and anti-social behaviour and should be implemented wherever reasonable.

In addition to the levels of staff available at stations, we would like to see more a visible staff presence on-board trains.

Question 29

What is important to stakeholders in the future use and improvements in stations?

London TravelWatch has published its own research and requirements for stations in the London area at:-

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839>

Attention is drawn to our 2006 report 'Getting to the station', which explores standards for improving cycle and pedestrian access to stations as well as car parking and public transport access.

The adoption of travel plans for individual stations is also a good way to ensure that the use of car parking spaces is optimised and reduce the impact of the railway on surrounding streets. The franchise operator should also have its own company travel plan.

In London there is a widely adopted "Continuing your journey" mapping system based on TfL mapping and Legible London signage. This system has been designed around the needs of pedestrians rather than motorists. It appears in all London Underground stations, bus stations and stops and has been adopted by some Train Operating Companies.

We would expect franchisees to work with TfL to introduce TfL style "Continuing your journey" and Legible London mapping in and around their London stations. Outside London we wish to see bespoke pedestrian mapping systems introduced, that have been designed specifically for onward pedestrian journeys, including journeys to interchange points such as bus stations.

Question 30

What priorities would respondents give to car parking and cycling facilities at locations where these are fully used?

This franchise should specify the adoption of secure car and cycle parking standards at stations.

Improved car parking should be supported at stations where this can reduce overall car trip length. In particular, smaller stations outside of Greater London have the potential for additional car and cycle parking to be installed.

Secure cycle storage could also be improved at stations particularly in the inner London area and at larger towns outside London.

Charging periods for car parks should also be consistent with the train service operational day and validity of train tickets.

Question 31

What sort of ticketing products and services would you expect to see delivered through 'smart' technology on this franchise?

There are a number of improvements that would make the fares and ticketing system easier to understand for passengers, as follows:

- Harmonisation of TfL's Conditions of Carriage with those of the National Rail network. At the moment the usage of Oyster Pay As You Go on the National Rail network falls between both TfL and National Rail Conditions of Carriage. This situation is not just confusing for passengers, but can also lead to financial detriment;
- Extension of a multimodal zonal fares structure for wider areas than the current London Travelcard boundary. The simplification is particularly important in connection with ticket vending machines where confusion of ticket type can lead to passengers not getting the best value for money;
- We would like to see all stations on the TSGN network allowing Smartcard technology to provide seamless ticketing throughout the network, including beyond the current Oyster boundary. At minimum, an extension of the boundary where the terminating point is only a short distance beyond Zone 6, as has happened at Dartford, is urgent, and Sevenoaks would be a good example where this should also apply. Where required this can be provided along with gating, but where gates are not suitable, it should still be possible to use smartcard technology through standalone smartcard validators; and
- Correctly selling and clarifying the use of "London Terminals" tickets. We wish to see a single, unified London Terminals ticket applicable to all London stations on the Thameslink core route from either direction on the combined franchise or Southeastern from St Pancras International to Blackfriars inclusive. This should be priced at the lowest comparable existing fare. Given that the current online ticket booking system, and many ticket clerks, incorrectly sell "London Terminals" tickets to passengers who correctly specify Farringdon or City Thameslink as their destination, it is extremely important that passengers have these tickets honoured and not find themselves either penalty fared or obliged to purchase additional tickets, when they have done everything correctly in attempting to buy the right ticket.

Measures to tackle peak overcrowding by incentivising shoulder or off-peak travel, not by increasing fares during the peak, should be made more deliverable with smart technology, as should options such as season tickets for one or two days per week for those who do not travel regularly.

Question 32

What local accessibility and mobility issues do stakeholders see and how they might be addressed?

All bidders should be required to adopt, as a minimum, the standards proposed in the 'Better Rail Stations' report. London TravelWatch believes that it is essential that minimum standards and not solely a passenger perception approach are used to monitor station quality. This is because perceptions can vary substantially over time and by area for reasons that are unconnected with the standard of service. There are also absolute requirements in terms of facilities, which are not easily reflected in peoples' perception. London TravelWatch therefore strongly favours the approach taken by TfL in the London Rail Concession such as on the London Overground network, which has very explicit minimum standards to adhere to.

TfL has identified a number of stations for which step free access would be deliverable, and provide the most benefits. We support their opinion that Alexandra Palace, Battersea Park, East Dulwich, Enfield Chase, Hackbridge, New Barnet, Palmers Green, St Helier and Tooting should be the minimum requirements for step free access delivered during the franchise. As noted elsewhere London TravelWatch would add Loughborough Junction, Sutton Common, Carshalton and Penge West to this list to accommodate off-rail developments. (See also note above regarding Forest Hill).

We would wish to see a pragmatic approach taken to accessibility, with step free access being provided at stations which could be improved by means of simple and easy to maintain ramps at a small cost. This should be funded by an alteration to funding streams to allow 'easy to do' and 'small cost' schemes to be brought forward, even if current passenger numbers make the case for improvement marginal. This is especially relevant with the under-reporting of passenger numbers making business cases harder to achieve. Example stations in this franchise would include Penge West and Bellingham.

We would like consideration of the use of "Harrington Humps" which allow level access onto trains from the platforms and would provide a cost-effective method to improve accessibility which have been shown to be effective on the London Underground network.

Question 33

What environmental targets would stakeholders like to see within the franchise specification?

Also outlined in question 28, we believe that there should be a concerted effort by the new franchisee and Network Rail to reduce the amount of trackside graffiti, litter and rubbish. Targets should be set for the removal of this, and the total volumes left uncleared.

Attention should also be paid to vegetation management, especially relevant as the recent incident of a failed train at Kentish Town was caused originally by foliage becoming entangled in the pantograph of the train.

Recommendations

London TravelWatch has reviewed the proposals for the combined Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise in the light of passenger expectations and appeals received. Our key priorities for the new franchise are as follows:

- The new franchisee must work with passenger needs as the focus to develop the new timetable to deliver maximum benefits rather than the easiest operational solution;
- The retention of services from the Wimbledon Loop in addition to the Sevenoaks services through the Thameslink core where this will not overly affect capacity or performance;
- Improvements to service frequency so that all London area stations receive a four trains per hour service level in each direction at all times;
- The improvement to station facilities and customer service standards that have been completed on the Southern network to be retained and rolled out across the TSGN network;
- Oyster acceptance across the metro network rather than ending arbitrarily at the Travelcard boundary and extension of smartcard ticketing throughout the TSGN network;
- The retention of all Great Northern services in the TSGN franchise;
- Excellent information provision throughout the infrastructure development programme, including regular liaison with London TravelWatch; and
- Delivery of a reliable, adequate new fleet of rolling stock, capable of splitting and joining and learning from best practice on other new fleet builds.

References

London TravelWatch

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- 10 policies to keep Londoners moving: Transport users’ priorities for the 2012-16 Mayoral term (2012)
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Independent

- Better Rail Stations Report 2006:
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf>

Annex 1 Incomplete journey excess charges at TSGN served stations in 2010.

Station	£,000
Alexandra Palace	26
Balham	318
Banstead	2
Battersea Park	49
Beckenham Hill	6
Beckenham Junction	10
Bellingham	10
Belmont	2
Bickley	10
Birkbeck	2
Blackfriars	22.5
Bowes Park	9
Brockley	25
Bromley South	132
Carshalton	12
Carshalton Beeches	10
Caterham	8
Catford	16
Cheam	12
Chipstead	2
City Thameslink	56.5
Clapham High Street	12
Clapham Junction	180
Coulsdon South	8
Coulsdon Town	2
Crews Hill	2
Cricklewood	29
Crofton Park	16
Crystal Palace	22
Denmark Hill	31
Drayton Park	9
East Croydon	220.5
East Dulwich	39
Elephant & Castle	161.5
Elstree & Borehamwood	105
Enfield Chase	27
Epsom Downs	1
Essex Road	11
Ewell East	5

Farringdon	153
Finsbury Park	124
Forest Hill	33.5
Gipsy Hill	35
Gordon Hill	21
Grange Park	7
Hackbridge	5
Hadley Wood	5
Harringay	19
Harrow & Wealdstone	88.5
Haydons Road	7
Hendon	20
Herne Hill	25
Highbury	90.3
Honor Oak Park	19
Hornsey	22
Imperial Wharf	28
Kenley	4
Kensington Olympia	21
Kent House	11
Kentish Town	77.5
Kings Cross	358
Kingswood	4
London Bridge	766
Loughborough Junction	7.5
Mill Hill Broadway	41
Mitcham Eastfields	8
Mitcham Junction	4
Moorgate	178.5
Morden South	1
New Barnet	24
New Cross Gate	40.5
New Southgate	16
Norbury	60
North Dulwich	17
Norwood Junction	27.5
Nunhead	18
Oakleigh Park	22
Old Street	200
Orpington	48
Palmers Green	34
Peckham Rye	61.5
Penge East	21

Penge West	3
Petts Wood	20
Purley	39
Purley Oaks	6
Queens Road Peckham	24
Ravensbourne	3
Reedham	2
Riddlesdown	2
Sanderstead	7
Selhurst	21
Shepherd's Bush	116.5
Shortlands	17
South Bermondsey	15
South Croydon	14
South Merton	1.5
St. Helier	2
St. Mary Cray	12
St. Pancras International	265
Streatham	33.5
Streatham Common	78
Streatham Hill	62
Sutton Common	3
Sutton	66
Sydenham Hill	9
Sydenham	24.5
Tadworth	3
Tattenham Corner	3
Thornton Heath	62
Tooting	10
Tulse Hill	34.5
Upper Warlingham	5
Victoria	781
Waddon	6
Wallington	26
Wandsworth Common	32
Wandsworth Road	8
Watford Junction	157
West Croydon	53.5
West Dulwich	18
West Hampstead Thameslink	61
West Norwood	55
West Sutton	2.5
Whyteleafe	3

Whyteleafe South	2
Wimbledon	206.25
Wimbledon Chase	2.5
Winchmore Hill	25
Woodmansterne	2
TOTAL	6798.55

Annex 2 - stations served by services from the TSGN network that should have ticket gates installed due to the volume of usage, and the need to reduce ticketless travel and associated crime and disorder.

First Capital Connect

Alexandra Palace, Berkhamsted, Cricklewood, Enfield Chase, Finsbury Park, Flitwick, Gordon Hill, Haringay, Hendon, Hornsey, Loughborough Junction, Mill Hill Broadway, New Barnet, Palmers Green, Radlett, Tooting and Winchmore Hill all have volumes of over 1 million passengers per year.

Southern

Caterham, Cheam, East Dulwich, Sanderstead and Wandsworth Common all have volumes of over 1 million passengers per year.

Southeastern

Beckenham Junction, Denmark Hill, Elephant & Castle, Herne Hill, Nunhead, Penge East, Petts Wood, Shortlands, St. Mary Cray and Swanley all have volumes of over 1 million passengers per year.

Additionally, Drayton Park, Essex Road, Queens Road Peckham and Waddon have smaller volumes, but their lack of gates creates a 'hole' in an otherwise locally gated network meaning that they can attract ticketless travel and anti-social behaviour.

Annex 3 - growth in Saturday and Sunday usage for London Underground stations.

YEAR	2003	2010	2003-2010	2003	2010	2003-2010
STATION	Sat	Sat	Sat % Increase	Sun	Sun	Sun % Increase
BLACKFRIARS	13,569	0	N/A	11,467	0	N/A
TEMPLE	7,157	9,097	27.11	0	5,449	N/A
SOUTHWARK	8,059	12,150	50.76	5,357	8,309	55.11
ELEPHANT & CASTLE	24,315	37,587	54.58	16,558	25,903	56.44
BOROUGH	4,718	10,855	130.08	3,043	7,087	132.90
MANSION HOUSE	4,114	8,063	95.99	2,881	5,803	101.42
FARRINGDON	10,934	12,444	13.81	4,399	6,044	37.39
BARBICAN	7,705	10,148	31.71	5,017	6,414	27.85
CHANCERY LANE	8,708	12,104	39.00	0	6,378	N/A
ST PAUL'S	16,070	26,317	63.76	12,754	19,135	50.03
CANNON STREET	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
LONDON BRIDGE	82,738	134,240	62.25	49,342	81,505	65.18
BANK & MONUMENT	19,720	32,520	64.91	10,849	19,700	81.58
MOORGATE	8,426	11,464	36.06	4,580	7,243	58.14
ANGEL	35,900	44,820	24.85	20,515	26,768	30.48
FINSBURY PARK	57,694	62,122	7.67	30,445	38,393	26.11
HIGHBURY & ISLINGTON	22,932	36,046	57.19	12,478	18,830	50.91
OLD STREET	21,374	38,462	79.95	12,073	22,577	87.00
LIVERPOOL STREET	70,936	107,327	51.30	53,933	78,959	46.40
ALDGATE	2,858	5,917	107.03	2,130	4,932	131.55
TOWER HILL	54,211	52,804	-2.60	39,298	40,337	2.64
BERMONDSEY	8,656	12,205	41.00	6,073	8,613	41.82
CANADA WATER	17,386	21,580	24.12	12,700	15,545	22.40
ALDGATE EAST	8,642	17,266	99.79	7,788	13,981	79.52
BETHNAL GREEN	19,153	36,637	91.29	13,293	26,467	99.10
WHITECHAPEL	14,838	21,309	43.61	11,325	15,377	35.78
STRATFORD	38,128	71,787	88.28	26,369	45,685	73.25
MILE END	17,208	28,528	65.78	12,089	20,243	67.45
STEPNEY GREEN	6,701	7,317	9.19	5,319	5,347	0.53
BOW ROAD	7,044	10,755	52.68	5,101	7,490	46.83
BROMLEY-BY-BOW	4,161	4,861	16.82	2,765	3,427	23.94
WEST HAM	5,066	7,682	51.64	3,413	5,340	56.46
CANARY WHARF	33,106	45,931	38.74	23,575	31,120	32.00
NORTH GREENWICH	15,552	35,212	126.41	11,306	24,667	118.18
CANNING TOWN	12,173	18,298	50.32	8,512	14,671	72.36
TOTAL	689,952	1,003,855	45.50	446,747	667,739	49.47

Annex 4 - stations not included in the National Passenger Survey in the period 2005 to 2012 in the London TravelWatch area

First Capital Connect

Bayford, Brookmans Park, Crews Hill, Drayton Park, Grange Park, Hadley Wood, Morden South, St.Helier, Watton-at-Stone, Welham Green and Wimbledon Chase.

Southern

Banstead, Belmont, Birkbeck, Box Hill & Westhumble, Carshalton Beeches, Cheam, Chipstead, Clandon, Clapham High Street, Coulsdon Town, Epsom Downs, Ewell East, Horsley, Kingswood, London Road Guildford, North Dulwich, Queens Road Peckham, Riddlesdown, Sanderstead, Tadworth, Tattenham Corner, Waddon, Whyteleafe South, Woldingham and Woodmansterne.

Southeastern

Bat & Ball, Beckenham Hill, Crofton Park, Eynsford, Kent House, Otford, Ravensbourne and Shoreham (Kent).