

London TravelWatch	
Proposed Closure of the Farringdon to Moorgate branch railway	
Minutes of the Sub-committee held on 3 March 2006 at Museum of London, London Wall, London, EC2Y 5HN at 10:00am	

INDEX

- 1 Chairman’s opening remarks.
- 2 Presentation from Network Rail.
 - a. Mark Papworth
 - b. Roger Cooper
 - c. Tim Ryder
 - d. Mark Papworth
- 3 Public contributions
 - a. Andrew Phipps (City of London)
 - b. Norman Wimbourne
 - c. Robert Munster
 - d. Dr Jessiman
 - e. Mr Kulkarni
- 4 Late objections.
- 5 Response by Network Rail and London Underground to points raised by the public and in discussion with members.
- 6 Sub-Committee Document B: Background to the closure, the Committee’s duties, procedure and closure notices.
- 7 Sub-Committee Document C: Issues raised by objectors and the Committee.
- 8 Sub-Committee Document D: Consideration of the 2000 report’s issues, conclusions and recommendations.
- 9 Further member discussion and Chairman’s closing remarks.

**Minutes of the Moorgate to Farringdon Branch Railway Closures Sub-committee:
Held on 3 March 2006 at Museum of London, London Wall, London, EC2Y 5HN at
10:00am**

Present

Brian Cooke	Chairman of the Sub-committee
David Leibling	Member of the Sub-committee
Andrew Theobald	Member of the Sub-committee
Rufus Barnes	London TravelWatch, Chief Executive
Vincent Stops	London TravelWatch, Streets and Surface Transport Policy Officer
Mark Papworth	Network Rail
Roger Cooper	Network Rail
Tim Ryder	Steer Davies Gleave
John Kirkup	London Underground Limited, (Morning session only)
Phil McKenna	London Underground Limited, (Arrived late morning and took part in the meeting from minute 5, iv))
Peter Nelson	Network Rail
Andrew Phipps	City of London
Robert Munster	Member of the public
Dr Jessiman	Member of the public
Norman Wimbourne	Member of the public
Sanjay Kulkarni	Member of the public

Plus others in the public gallery

1. Chairman's opening remarks

- 1.1 The Chairman opened the meeting at 10:00am by introducing the Sub-committee and Officers. He told the meeting that London TravelWatch had been asked by the Department for Transport to produce a supplementary report to update the original report it produced regarding these closure proposals in 2000. He emphasised that the hearing related to the closures and was not to be a re-run of the Transport and Works Act (TWA) process.
- 1.2 The Chairman asked that it be recorded that member, Andrew Theobald, was a councillor on the London Borough of Sutton Council.
- 1.3 The Chairman asked Network Rail to start the meeting with their presentation.

2. Presentation from Network Rail

- 2.1 Mr Papworth introduced himself as an employee of Network Rail responsible for the development and promotion of the Thameslink 2000 project. He introduced his team: Roger Cooper also from Network Rail's Thameslink 2000 team, Tim Ryder from Steer Davies Gleave and John Kirkup from London Underground.

- 2.2 Mr Cooper addressed the Sub-committee. Bringing members up to date on the procedural and other developments since the Committee had last considered this issue in 2000.
- 2.3 He outlined the support that the project had received from the TWA Inspector and from the Secretary of State, but also the three 'deficiencies' referred to in the Inspector's report.
- 2.4 He described the project and its objectives, which remained broadly the same as they were in 2000.
- 2.5 To address the three 'deficiencies' identified by the Inspector the 'London Bridge Masterplan' has been adopted by the project and new planning applications had been applied for at Borough Market and Blackfriars.
- 2.6 These had all been considered at the recently closed TWA inquiry.
- 2.7 To address concerns of the Committee and others regarding capacity and interchange at Farringdon a new footbridge design, replacing the existing one had been proposed with greater capacity.
- 2.8 Mr Cooper went on to assure members that although it was for Government to decide how Thameslink 2000 would be financed Network Rail is able to fund it themselves through borrowings.
- 2.9 The Chief Executive and members asked questions during the presentation:
- i) Network Rail were asked for clarification regarding the connection of the East Coast Mainline to King's Cross as part of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL). He was told that CTRL had constructed the tunnels, but that Network Rail would fit them out as part of Thameslink 2000;
 - ii) Network Rail were asked about the closure of Cowcross Street, alternative traffic routes and the provision made for Crossrail. Members were told that Cowcross street, outside of Farringdon station, would be closed and alternative routes described as part of the transport assessments for the project. The Thameslink 2000 team have been working closely with the Crossrail team on their plans for Farringdon station. There would be passive provision made for Crossrail. The main Crossrail entrance is now proposed to be on the site of Cardinal Tower so enabling it to be built independently of Thameslink 2000.
- 2.10 Mr Ryder next outlined the transportation case:
- In his view the case for the project is now stronger than when the Committee had previously considered it following a more robust analysis and the change in the Government's appraisal methodology.
 - The project is now more closely aligned with the present planning frameworks.
 - Costs had risen in part due to the inclusion of new works brought into the project, for example 'London Bridge Masterplan', a re-signalling project etc.

- The demand model had been updated. The forecast usage of Thameslink 2000 in central London has risen from 75,000 to 80,000 in the morning peak.
- The forecast usage for Farringdon station is similar to an independent forecast undertaken by London Underground Limited.
- The passenger disbenefits to Moorgate passengers is forecast to be 420 hours for a morning peak, which can be contrasted to the overall passenger benefits of 22,000 hours.

2.11 Mr Papworth summed up, but firstly assured members that Network Rail and London Underground Limited have been working collaboratively on the project – it is an important scheme to London Underground Limited as well as Network Rail as it delivers benefits to both organisations.

2.12 Mr Papworth felt the three important issues that had been raised during the closure process were:

- i) the capacity of Underground services between Farringdon station and Moorgate station;
- ii) the ability of the Farringdon station design to cope with the expected levels of interchanging passengers;
- iii) the additional fares passengers may have to pay to get to their destination.

2.13 Network Rail were content that points i) and ii) had been addressed satisfactorily, but that the fares issue was not something that Network Rail could address.

2.14 The Chief Executive asked for further clarification regarding the location of the proposed main Crossrail station entrance. This was described to him.

3 Public contributions

3.1 Members of the public were invited to speak. The Sub-committee heard first from Andrew Phipps of the City of London Corporation.

3.2 Mr Phipps told the Sub-committee of the City of London's views:

- i) on balance the City of London supported Thameslink 2000 provided that the scheme was fully implemented;
- ii) they have concerns about fare increases due to the necessity to change to Underground services in the future;
- iii) they believed the potential future use of the track bed should be considered;
- iv) they were concerned regarding the operation of Farringdon station.

3.3 Mr Phipps answered the Sub-committee's questions.

3.4 Mr Wimborne made several points:

- i) that the track bed should be retained as there are possibly other railway developments that could utilise it in the future;
- ii) he did not accept that the branch needed severing in order to operate 12 car trains;

- iii) there were alternative railway schemes than the one being proposed by Network Rail.

3.5 Mr Munster made several points that he believed were new points for the Sub-committee:

- i) the introduction of defensive driving techniques and its impact on the ability to operate 24 trains per hour;
- ii) the introduction of the 'Train Protection Warning System' and its impact on the ability to operate 24 trains per hour;
- iii) Transport for London's policy support for four trains per hour metro services would influence the service patterns suggested by the Thameslink 2000 project;
- iv) Later in the meeting he questioned the assessment by London Underground Limited of spare capacity on Underground train services travelling from Farringdon station towards Moorgate station.

3.6 He also asked:

- i) why it was necessary to close the Moorgate branch to run the frequency of service suggested?
- ii) why the platforms at Farringdon station could not be extended to the north?

3.7 Dr Jessiman's concerns were that:

- i) he did not believe it would be possible to operate 24 trains per hour;
- ii) there should be escalators provided at Farringdon station for the less mobile;
- iii) the Farringdon station design should be improved;

3.8 Mr Kulkarni then indicated that he wished to speak to the Sub-committee. He asked whether Farringdon station could be moved to the south or the Farringdon station platforms extended to the north thus retaining the Moorgate branch.

4 Late objections

4.1 The Secretariat then informed the Sub-committee of the late objections that had been received.

4.2 Before inviting the Network Rail team to respond to the issues raised at the meeting the Chairman asked that his disappointment at the lateness of the London Underground Limited submission, be minuted.

5 Response by Network Rail and London Underground to points raised by the public and in discussion with members.

- i) Network Rail stated their intention to fully implement the scheme.

The Chief Executive suggested members may want to request a condition to this effect.

- ii) Network Rail stated that fares arrangements were not in their control.

- iii) Network Rail stated they did not control the track bed. London Underground Limited had no plans for the track bed, but that it may have a role as part of the Crossrail construction plans.

The Chairman indicated that members could retain the condition with respect to retention of the track bed. The Chief Executive suggested the Crossrail issue be highlighted.

- iv) London Underground limited stated that they had been working on the project with Network Rail for over ten years and that they “believe the [Farringdon] station will be able to operate OK”. They said It had passed a quite severe modelling test.
- v) Network Rail stated that they had done the best they could with respect to developing an accessible station at Farringdon. It had not been practicable to incorporate escalators into the Farringdon station design due to the size constraints of the Farringdon station platforms. But the station does have step free access. Network Rail agreed they would write to the Committee telling them the capacity of the lifts and a better plan of their location and what had been the constraints on the size of lifts.
- vi) Network Rail restated the Inspector’s statement regarding the operation of 24 trains per hour and that they had had the issue independently assessed. They would provide the Sub-committee with details of this assessment.
- vii) Network Rail told the Sub-committee that the designs for Farringdon station are fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. Following discussion Network Rail said that they would provide the Sub-committee with a statement regarding compliance of the Farringdon station design with the latest disability discrimination legislation.
- viii) Network Rail stated that they would be doing works at both Moorgate and Barbican stations to make them safe subsequent to closure.
- ix) Network Rail stated that it would be for the Department for Transport and Transport for London to specify the details of the train services to operate on as Thameslink 2000.
- x) Network Rail described the increase in capacity for Midland Mainline services as more than 30 percent.
- xi) London Underground Limited addressed the issue of capacity of their services between Farringdon and Moorgate stations. They believed this section was not particularly crowded and that the Metropolitan, Hammersmith and City, and Circle lines would, in future, have their capacity increased. London Underground Limited stated: “..we’re quite happy that there is sufficient capacity to take the displaced passengers between Farringdon and Moorgate”.
- xii) London Underground Limited described to members the graphs in their ‘Moorgate Branch Line Closure, Impact Study (September 2005)’.

During the discussion on this the Chairman suggested that members may wish to note in their report the issue of clutter, for example vending machines, on very busy central area stations.

- xiii) London Underground Limited had concluded in their report that Farringdon station could be managed in terms of passenger capacity and flows. They accepted that they were now happier with the proposals than they had been at the previous hearing in 2000.
 - xiv) London Underground Limited pointed out that there would be a 25% increase in the capacity of the Underground train service.
 - xv) Network Rail described how they intended to limit the loss of operational flexibility that closure of the Moorgate branch provides presently. For example, in the case of a train failure the train may presently be moved into Moorgate station so that north to south Thameslink trains are not impeded. In the future the design changes for Thameslink 2000 would allow a similarly failed train (often caused by failure to change over the power supply from overhead lines to the third rail supply) to be removed from the network. This would be achieved by the extension of the overhead power supply south of City Thameslink so that a failed train, from the north, could be turned around there.
- 5.1 Members were particularly keen to make a recommendation asking that there would be no fare increases for passengers as a result of passengers having to use the Underground to finish their journey in the future.
- 6 Sub-Committee Document B: Background to the closure, the Committee's duties, procedure and closure notices.**
- 6.1 The Secretariat took members through Document B which described the background to the closure, the Committee's duties, procedure and closure notices.
- 7 Sub-Committee Document C: Issues raised by objectors and the Committee.**
- 7.1 The Secretariat took members through Document C. This summarised the issues raised by objectors and the Committee and reported Network Rail's responses to the summary which the Secretariat had produced.
- 7.2 The Chairman agreed with the Chief Executive that the issues of capacity at stations in the outer area was outside the scope of the closure hearing.
- 7.3 Members again heard about the improved interchange bridge at Farringdon station that had been proposed since the Committee's previous consideration. London Underground Limited reiterated that they were "...now comfortable that Farringdon station will work".
- 7.4 Network Rail added that design work was ongoing and they would continue to address issues that London Underground Limited raised with them.
- 7.5 Network Rail said that the station design would cater for service perturbations of two to three minutes, but that longer perturbations of, say 10 to 15 minutes would cause management issues at Farringdon station as they would to the operation at other busy stations.
- 7.6 Members noted that the Department for Transport, as one of the promoters, had not responded to the Committee's letter asking for their view of the cumulative impact of

both Thameslink 2000 and Crossrail on crowding, capacity and interchange at Farringdon station should both projects proceed.

7.7 London Underground Limited told members that Crossrail had analysed this issue and found that Farringdon station would cope. Briefly the Committee were told that crowding pressure would be removed from the northern end of Farringdon station and effectively transferred to the southern end where there would be more platform capacity. Crossrail would also reduce the overall passenger numbers at Farringdon station.

7.8 Network Rail were asked about their construction plans. This was described by Network Rail during which members asked questions.

8 Sub-Committee Document D: Consideration of the 2000 report's issues, conclusions and recommendations.

8.1 Members considered each of the issues, conclusions and recommendations made in the 2000 report and decided whether to vary, delete or retain them. Please note: The numbers in the text in square [] brackets refer to the headings and paragraphs in the original 2000 report that were discussed by members. Paragraphs and headings taken from the 2000 report are inset.

8.2 The achievability of 24 trains per hour. [Chapter 5]

The Sub-committee accepted the TWA Inspector's conclusions that operating 24 trains per hour through the central core would be possible.

8.3 Possible design changes. [6.3]

The Sub-committee accepted that now the TWA Inspector had effectively reported and his report had been largely accepted by Government there would be no substantial design changes. Members agreed this recommendation [6.6] could be deleted.

8.4 Ability to get a seat on Thameslink trains in the evening peak. [8.7]

Members agreed to modify the wording of recommendation [8.13] slightly to reflect a lesser concern than previously.

8.5 Use of LUL trains between Farringdon and Barbican or Moorgate [8.15]

Members agreed to retain recommendations [8.20 and 8.23] but noted that they had been told that there would be an increase in Underground train service capacity.

8.6 Interchanging with LUL or with the street at Farringdon

The fact of interchange [8.26]

Members discussed recommendations [8.34, 8.44, 8.52, 8.57 and 8.59] and agreed that from what they had heard they were content that the issues at Farringdon station that had so concerned the Committee previously were of less concern and that the final report should reflect this and delete all these recommendations.

Members were particularly pleased to have acknowledged that the provision of a much higher capacity over bridge was, in part, a response to the concerns of the earlier Sub-committee report in 2000.

8.7 Other factors affecting the station [8.60]

In the 2000 report members were concerned that it was intended to remove seating in order to leave more room for waiting and interchanging passenger movements.

The 2000 report recommended:

Hardship would be caused, particularly to passengers with low-frequency services and to passengers with limited mobility, by the absence of seating at Farringdon station. [8.62]

Whilst members now recognised that the station would operate acceptably they nevertheless recognised that the station would be very busy and that everything possible should be done to reduce the amount of unnecessary clutter, for example vending machines, on the stations. Members felt that such items should certainly be removed in preference to the removal of seating. Members wished to see recommendation [8.62] retained and strengthened to address clutter on station platforms.

8.8 Ways of coping with the demand [8.64]

Members were content to take out recommendation [8.69] in line with assurances from Network Rail and particularly London Underground Limited, the station operator, that the design of Farringdon station would cope with demand.

8.9 Alleviation of hardship [8.71]

Members were content to take out recommendation [8.75] in line with assurances from Network Rail and particularly London Underground Limited, the station operator, that the design of Farringdon station would cope with demand. They did however seek reassurance from Network Rail that latest disability discrimination legislation had been considered and complied with.

8.10 Use of the LUL route to Moorgate: time penalty [8.77]

Members were content to take out recommendations [8.88 and 8.89] in line with assurances from Network Rail and particularly London Underground Limited, the station operator, that the design of Farringdon station would cope with demand.

8.11 Fares [8.90]

Members wished to see recommendations [8.93 and 8.94] retained and strengthened to take out any time limitation on fares rises that would follow closure and the implementation of the Thameslink 2000 project.

8.12 Accessibility [8.95]

Members accept that the station will be able to cope with demand at Farringdon station. However they remained concerned that any lifts may be too few and of too small capacity and so wanted to reserve their decision on this issue until they had received further comment on the number and capacity of lifts to be provided.

8.13 Conclusion on the closure proposal as a whole [8.98]

Members were content to take out recommendation [8.102] in line with assurances from Network Rail and particularly London Underground Limited, the station operator, that the design of Farringdon station would cope with demand.

8.14 Safeguarding the corridor [8.103]

Members decided to retain recommendation [8.105].

Please note: later in the meeting members decided to amend recommendation [8.105] to take account of the London Underground Limited objection regarding securing access to the track bed after Thameslink services ceased.

8.15 Conclusions and recommendations: assuming that the 24 trains per hour service is not achievable [Chapter 9]

The Sub-committee accepted the TWA Inspector's conclusions that operating 24 trains per hour through the central core would be possible. Recommendation [9.9] would be deleted.

8.16 Conclusions and recommendations: disruption during works [Chapter 10]

Members believed recommendations [10.8, 10.9,10.10, 10.11, 10.12] were still relevant, but that the last recommendation [10.12] would better summarise the position and that only this recommendation should be retained, but reworded to take account of name and responsibility changes and the fact that the St Pancras Midland Road station blockade had now happened.

8.17 Conclusions and recommendations: possible economic hardship [Chapter 11]

Members decided not to change the text on this issue.

8.18 Advertising of the closure proposals [Chapter 12]

Members expressed disappointment in the quality of the notices, particularly as a previous Department for Transport Minister had responded to concerns of the Committee following his receipt of the Committee's report on the closure of the Sheepcote Lane Curve. The Sub-Committee heard from the Chief Executive that the Minister had proposed that the Committee work with the Strategic Rail Authority to make improvements to the language and content of closure notices.

The Secretariat described the process whereby very late changes to the agreed notices had been made following the intervention of the Department for Transport press office.

Members agreed to again express their concern about the closure notices.

9 Further member discussion and Chairman's closing remarks

- 9.1 The Chairman then asked that the points made by the City of London be agreed as part of the Committee's recommendations, particularly point one, that closure of the branch should be conditional on the full scheme going ahead, both infrastructure and the level of service and capacity as currently proposed in the central area. In saying this members recognised that the precise detail of the service pattern itself may change. They defined the central area as from St Pancras station to London Bridge / Elephant and Castle stations.
- 9.2 Members agreed to support the City of London's other recommendations described in the conclusion to its objection letter.
- 9.3 Members then considered the late objection from London Underground Limited regarding securing access to the track bed after Thameslink services ceased.
- 9.4 Members asked that recommendation [8.105] be reworded to additionally reflect members concerns regarding safeguarding and protecting the corridor from possible trespass, intentional or unintentional.
- 9.5 Network Rail undertook to do works to ensure that what was left behind, after Thameslink services ceased between Farringdon and Moorgate stations, was in a safe condition and that barriers would be installed if necessary to stop unauthorised access to the railway.
- 9.6 Members asked that these works be to the satisfaction of London Underground as they felt it important that the station should be finished to a satisfactory quality.
- 9.7 Members finally agreed to ask the Secretariat to produce a report and minutes which members would hopefully agree by correspondence, though a further meeting, may be necessary.