

# Transport Services committee

## 12.03.13

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### **Secretariat memorandum**

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Agenda item: 8

TRS043

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### **Rail in London report**

#### **1 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To note London TravelWatch's response to the London Assembly Transport Committee's discussion of Crossrail and the future of rail in London.
- 1.2 This report is for information only.

#### **2 Information**

- 2.1 Attached below is the Director, Policy and Investigation's letter to the Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee in relation to their review of Crossrail and the future of rail in London, along with the detailed response.

#### **3 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 3.1 In accordance with London TravelWatch's duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and other legislation, account is taken when responding to consultations on proposals from external bodies of their particular impact (if any) on the needs of people whose access to transport may be restricted by reason of disability or social exclusion.

#### **4 Legal powers**

- 4.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight). Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon the Committee to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.

#### **5 Financial implications**

- 5.1 No specific financial implications for London TravelWatch arise from this report.

Caroline Pidgeon AM  
Chair of the Transport Committee  
London Assembly  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
LONDON  
SE1 2AA

**Our Ref:**  
**Your Ref:**

21<sup>st</sup> February 2013

Dear Caroline,

### **Transport Committee discussion of Crossrail and the future of rail in London**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide evidence to your meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

Rail has and will play a significant role in the way in which London will develop in the next 30 years. Indeed without the contribution of rail schemes to the connectivity and competitiveness of London, London would be put at a significant disadvantage in its ability to attract inward investment in jobs, housing and services.

There are a number of 'grand projects' that will have a major impact on passengers both during and after construction, and will bring significant benefits. However, it can be easy to be distracted by such activity, and forget that some smaller projects, attention to detail in customer service and policies relating to fares and personal security will and can have a greater effect and benefit to passengers than investment in infrastructure alone.

We therefore believe that the passenger needs to be at the heart of decision making on issues such as franchises and infrastructure projects, but also in terms of customer service and local accountability for the quality of individual stations and train services.

I have prepared the note appended to this letter for the committee, which explores these wider issues.

If you have any queries on this submission please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely

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## **Note to the London Assembly Transport Committee scrutiny of rail issues 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013**

London TravelWatch has published a number of reports in the past two years which would be of use to the committee's investigation as follows:--

### **Brown review of rail franchising**

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2013/01/newly\\_appointed\\_london\\_travelwatch\\_board\\_wants\\_the\\_government\\_to](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2013/01/newly_appointed_london_travelwatch_board_wants_the_government_to)

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2013/01/passenger\\_watchdog\\_welcomes\\_many\\_of\\_the\\_findings\\_of\\_richard\\_brown\\_s\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_government\\_s\\_rail](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2013/01/passenger_watchdog_welcomes_many_of_the_findings_of_richard_brown_s_report_on_the_government_s_rail)

### **Devolution of responsibility for rail services to the Mayor**

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/11/latest\\_london\\_overground\\_landmark\\_shows\\_the\\_benefit\\_of\\_rail\\_devolution\\_says\\_passenger\\_watchdog](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/11/latest_london_overground_landmark_shows_the_benefit_of_rail_devolution_says_passenger_watchdog)

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/06/london\\_travelwatch\\_supports\\_decentralisation\\_of\\_rail\\_services\\_in\\_its\\_response\\_to\\_the\\_government\\_s\\_co](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/06/london_travelwatch_supports_decentralisation_of_rail_services_in_its_response_to_the_government_s_co)

### **Railway closures processes**

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/11/passenger\\_watchdog\\_welcomes\\_dft\\_decision\\_to\\_review\\_the\\_railway\\_closures\\_process\\_but\\_ealing\\_broadway](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/11/passenger_watchdog_welcomes_dft_decision_to_review_the_railway_closures_process_but_ealing_broadway)

### **The legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games**

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/09/passenger\\_watchdog\\_looks\\_at\\_the\\_olympic\\_and\\_paralympic\\_transport\\_legacy](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/09/passenger_watchdog_looks_at_the_olympic_and_paralympic_transport_legacy)

### **Franchise responses**

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/09/london\\_travelwatch\\_response\\_to\\_south\\_eastern\\_franchise\\_consultation\\_seeks\\_a\\_wide\\_range\\_of\\_improvement](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/09/london_travelwatch_response_to_south_eastern_franchise_consultation_seeks_a_wide_range_of_improvement)

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/08/london\\_travelwatch\\_response\\_to\\_combined\\_thameslink\\_southern\\_and\\_great\\_northern\\_franchise\\_seeks\\_a\\_wi](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/08/london_travelwatch_response_to_combined_thameslink_southern_and_great_northern_franchise_seeks_a_wi)

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/05/london\\_travelwatch\\_s\\_response\\_to\\_essex\\_thameside\\_rail\\_franchise\\_seeks\\_an\\_extension\\_of\\_oyster\\_and\\_a\\_r](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/05/london_travelwatch_s_response_to_essex_thameside_rail_franchise_seeks_an_extension_of_oyster_and_a_r)

### **Fares and ticketing policy**

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/08/london\\_travelwatch\\_expresses\\_regret\\_at\\_proposed\\_above\\_inflation\\_fare\\_rises\\_and\\_calls\\_for\\_the\\_mayor\\_o](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/08/london_travelwatch_expresses_regret_at_proposed_above_inflation_fare_rises_and_calls_for_the_mayor_o)

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/07/london\\_travelwatch\\_recommends\\_radical\\_changes\\_to\\_fares\\_and\\_ticketing\\_structure](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/2012/07/london_travelwatch_recommends_radical_changes_to_fares_and_ticketing_structure)

Transport and regeneration

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14052/get>

Walking and interchange in London

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

The Mayor's role is significant in that he directly controls already part of the network, and is likely to gain more influence: but also indirectly on the culture of the passenger proposition in terms of customer service, transparency of fares and the ease of interchange with other modes – most of which he has direct control over.

London TravelWatch has set out what it believes to be the priorities for transport users during this current Mayoral term in its document 10 policies to keep Londoners moving : Transport users priorities for the 2012-16 Mayoral term

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

Taking the themes relating to rail in this document we would comment as follows:-

#### Frequent and comprehensive public transport

Rail has the advantage of being able to provide fast, frequent and capacious services to the major nodes of employment and retailing without the need to provide vast areas of car parking at these locations. Even so capacity is at a premium on the network at peak times. Often there is a tension between the needs of local and long distance passengers where there is insufficient capacity to accommodate both and the prioritisation of commercial objectives, leading in some cases to local journeys within London taking a lower priority over longer distance services . Examples of this include the Chiltern Line into Marylebone, and Southeastern services into Victoria.

Making the best use of capacity also requires the network to run reliably and that punctuality is maintained and improved. The severest overcrowding and dissatisfaction amongst passengers occurs when services are disrupted, and capacity is not used effectively.

London TravelWatch supports the major projects of Thameslink and Crossrail currently underway that will provide significant extra capacity, and also the proposals for Crossrail 2 and an extension of the Bakerloo line into South East London. However, we believe that there are also a number of other smaller but no less impactful projects and improvements that would also achieve significant benefits both to passengers and the local economy.

These include :-

Increasing the frequency of local trains on those London area lines that currently do not enjoy a frequent turn up and go service: Catford and Wimbledon Loop line services are half hourly at best, as are the Chessington South and Greenford branches, and local services on the Great Northern route north of Alexandra Palace and the Dagenham Dock route on Essex Thameside: Chiltern line Greater London stations have minimal frequencies: The Epsom Downs branch south of Sutton only has an hourly service: Replacing the Beckenham Junction – Crystal Palace half hourly service with an extended and expanded Tramlink route would also mean that frequencies between Crystal Palace and Norwood Junction could be doubled.

Improving late evening and Sunday service levels to those provided at other off-peak time.

Making service patterns similar between weekdays and weekends e.g. the Moorgate – Finsbury Park line has no services on Saturdays and Sundays despite a huge rise in the local residential population around the stations it serves and a vibrant leisure economy around areas such as Old Street and Highbury & Islington stations.

Supporting improvement schemes within London that would release additional capacity by better use of resources e.g. electrification of the Barking – Gospel Oak line.

Supporting improvement schemes outside of London where this would enable diversion of freight and passenger flows away from London where these do not need to enter the London area e.g. electrification and capacity building of the route between Felixstowe and the West Midlands via Ely, thus adding capacity to the Great Eastern Main Line, North London Line and West Coast Main Line routes through London: electrification of the North Downs route between Reading and Gatwick Airport and releasing rolling stock for use on Great Western Thames Valley services: Electrification of the Uckfield branch so as to give greater operational flexibility at London Bridge and Victoria, and additional capacity between East Croydon and central London.

In all of the above, the Mayor can either exercise direct control of the outcome or influence matters through the franchising process. The further devolution of rail powers strengthens the Mayors responsibilities and gives a greater chance that improvements can be made to stations within the London area.

#### A fair deal for travellers.

The level of fares charged and passengers perceptions of value for money for the price paid for their ticket have a major influence over passengers decisions to use rail as opposed to other modes of transport or to travel at all.

The Mayor has significant influence over the level of fares charged either through the fares that TfL sets directly or through the Travelcard agreement. How fares are calculated must be transparent and consulted upon when change is proposed.

Our work on Oyster Incomplete Journeys highlighted the fact that many people were unaware that they were incurring maximum journey charges, and also ignorance of the availability of discounted fares.

The coming of Crossrail and the enhancement of services provided by the Thameslink project means that more people will be travelling directly to central London without the need to purchase onward travel on other modes. The current National Rail definition of a 'London Terminals' ticket is therefore going to become more confusing to passengers and progressively more obsolescent. We therefore think that an integrated fare and ticketing structure for London is an essential prerequisite to the development of the rail network in London.

Value for money satisfaction amongst National Rail passengers is poor compared to other service industries and against TfL modes. The best performing London and South East train operator is London Overground with a 54% satisfaction rate in the National Passenger Survey. Other operators receive scores in the high 30's and low 40's. We are currently commissioning research to understand what companies would need to do to improve this.

However, recent research by Passenger Focus into the National Stations Improvement Programme of work at small and medium sized stations shows that significant improvements in satisfaction came with improvements in toilet facilities, provision of small cafes, improved

accessibility and cycle storage. The particular stations studied in the London area had the benefit of input from London TravelWatch's local knowledge in developing the schemes.

This plus other evidence suggests that passengers place significant emphasis on the travelling environment when assessing value for money.

It should be noted that improving and maintaining toilet facilities at stations and on trains can have a significant impact on passenger satisfaction, and the usability of the network for older people and those with children.

### Easy interchange

All stations can be regarded as interchanges in some form with buses, taxis and private hire vehicles, cars, cycling and pedestrian access. In London the majority of journeys involve multiple stages involving a number of modes. The Mayor has significant influence over this aspect travel either directly through London Overground or indirectly through the local implementation plans of the London boroughs. It is to be welcomed that Crossrail will include significant public realm and interchange works at stations it will take responsibility for outside of the central London area.

Improving interchange possibilities can significantly add value to transport investments and services by allowing passengers to make better use of existing capacity. This has been demonstrated by the success of the expansion of orbital services operated by London Overground. The Hackney Central – Hackney Downs interchange project will bring significant regional connectivity benefits to North East London between the West Anglia route and the North London Line. London TravelWatch has long argued that further projects such as installation of platforms on the Chiltern line at West Hampstead, a new station at Brixton on the South London Line, new platforms at Brockley on the Lewisham – Peckham Rye route, and a new station at Maiden Lane on the North London Line north of Kings Cross St.Pancras would deliver passenger benefits far wider than the local area to these schemes.

Improving cycle storage and bus stops at stations and where feasible car parking can make a significant contribution to making stations more sustainable and attractive interchanges. (See walking with pleasure below regarding pedestrian access).

### Reliable and timely information

This is a basic requirement for passengers to have confidence in the transport network. Information on where crowding is likely to occur has been shown during the Olympic and Paralympic Games to have had a significant benefit in redirecting passengers away from lines and stations where crowding can be expected and enable them to use the available capacity more effectively. This is especially important during times of disruption. We are pleased that TfL has initiated a travel demand management project and that we have been able to contribute to it. The use of such travel demand management techniques could be complimentary to or more effective than the use of fares systems to manage demand.

### Travelling with confidence

Passengers expect to be able to use transport in safely and for it to provide them with personal security whilst travelling. The environment in which passengers travel is therefore a key determinant in passenger satisfaction. Clean, well lit and staffed stations and trains attract passengers, retain existing custom and deter crime and anti-social behaviour.

### A transport network open to all

Making the rail network fully accessible will increase capacity and improve everyone's mobility. This will help those who find the system hard to use because they have a disability, or are travelling with children, shopping or luggage. Making stations step free can be costly, but the Mayor and operators could achieve this in a more cost effective way by integrating such work within general station upgrades. There are still numbers of stations such as Sudbury Hill Harrow, Penge West, Bellingham, Ravensbourne, Maze Hill and others where step free access could be easily achieved by installation of ramps rather than lifts. We were disappointed recently when major works at Alexandra Palace failed to include step free access, even though the works included the provision of new facilities. Operators and transport authorities must make the most of opportunities as they present themselves to make stations more accessible.

### Enforcing the rules

A significant feature of the introduction of the London Overground concession was the focus on reducing the significant amount of fare evasion that was present on the rail network that was inherited from the Silverlink franchise. In some cases up to 20% of users were not paying the correct or any fare. Effectively these people were travelling at the expense of other travellers and the rail network was not receiving the revenue that supported the case for further investment. London TravelWatch believes that it is only fair that everyone travels with the appropriate ticket and has paid the fare that is due.

This improvement was achieved by the installation of automatic ticket gates at many stations (with associated staffing improvements) and ticket vending machines at stations at which there were previously none. The result of this has been a significant reduction in ticketless travel to below 2-3% of passengers. This in turn has reduced instances of crime and anti-social behaviour on the network.

London TravelWatch recommends that operators and authorities should install ticket gates at all stations with an annual footfall of over one million entries and exits per year (e.g. Herne Hill, Elephant & Castle (National Rail) and Beckenham Junction) or where the stations is partly gated already e.g. Abbey Wood, West Ruislip (Chiltern platforms), Finsbury Park and Finchley Central (London Underground).

To ensure that every passenger has the opportunity to purchase the correct ticket or to add products to an Oystercard before travelling London TravelWatch recommends that operators and authorities install ticket vending machines at those stations that currently lack these e.g. Sudbury Hill Harrow, Sudbury & Harrow Road, Brixton (National Rail), Crews Hill, Emerson Park, Drayton Green, Castle Bar Park, South Greenford and Angel Road.

### Walking with pleasure

A significant proportion of London's rail users walk to and from the stations that they use. Providing a pleasant and safe environment, with adequate signage to places where people need to get to, and to stations themselves is crucial to encouraging people to continue to walk and to use the rail network.

There are many pedestrian interchange opportunities between closely located stations which should be improved and promoted so passengers are encouraged to walk between them rather than making unnecessarily circuitous journeys. e.g Euston to St.Pancras International; Kent House to Clock House: Kenton to Northwick Park. These walking routes are within the gift of the Mayor and local councils to improve and maintain, but it should be noted that the

benefits often accrue to travellers from outside of the immediate vicinity of the walking route, and it often takes input from bodies such as London TravelWatch to achieve acknowledgement of the priority for such routes.

Tim Bellenger

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013