

8 January 2016

Title of consultation

National Infrastructure Commission – call for evidence

Organisation

National Infrastructure Commission

Introduction

The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) runs the London Fire Brigade (LFB). The 17 members of the Fire Authority are appointed by the Mayor of London. Eight are nominated from the London Assembly, seven are nominated from the London boroughs and two are Mayoral appointees. LFB is the busiest fire and rescue service in the country and one of the largest firefighting and rescue organisations in the world. We are here to make London a safer city and our vision is to be a world class fire and rescue service for London, Londoners and visitors. We will always respond to fires and other emergencies, but our work has changed over the years with a much stronger emphasis now on fire prevention and community safety.

Response

3. London's transport infrastructure

3.1) In line with the published terms of reference, the Commission is reviewing the evidence base and the strategic options for future investment in large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London. The questions that the Commission is particularly keen to focus on in this initial phase of work are:

1. What are the major economic and social challenges facing London and its commuter hinterland over the next two to three decades?

The changes that increasing population pressures will bring to housing, businesses and services may present challenges to the London Fire Brigade in protecting London and Londoners. This has already been demonstrated in the increased use of 'Sheds for Beds'. The increased use of non-standard or non fire compliant accommodation or business premises may bring social challenges including the increased risk of fire and the associated economic and social costs.

In addition, the challenging and ageing population demographic may create additional social and economic challenges in London. This includes a shift in the care landscape to an increase in vulnerable persons living independently in housing not designed to support their care needs.

The promise of 'night tube' and the changes that this may bring to the night time economy in London are broadly welcome. We anticipate that night tubes will evolve to include the DLR, Crossrail, and Crossrail 2 networks. The London Fire Brigade anticipate that this will significantly change the night time economy of London and our citizen's behaviour. This in turn may change the profile of risks that Londoners face and type and number of emergencies. This may impact across the spectrum of the services we provide with a potential mobilisation increase to London Underground premises due to the night use. Office hours will change too as improved transportation in and around London may enable 24/7 working practices.

2. What are the strategic options for future investment in large-scale transport infrastructure improvements in London - on road, rail and underground - including, but not limited to Crossrail 2?

- How should they be prioritised, taking account of their response to London's strategic transport challenges, including their impact on capacity, reliability, journey times and connectivity to jobs?

The London Fire Brigade has played a full part in the design of major transport infrastructure projects in London including Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Woolwich Arsenal Extension, DLR car expansion, Crossrail and Crossrail 2 and Silvertown Road tunnel. Our work on reducing the impact of operational incidents on these networks and the London Underground system has produced positive results across the planning, construction, testing and commissioning phases. The engagement of the Fire and Rescue Service and adoption of lessons learnt from our experience should be considered a priority to reduce unnecessary costs arising from over-engineering the infrastructure. There have been instances where the lessons have not been learnt, particularly during the construction phase, which have impacted on time, cost and the capability of the emergency services to respond to incidents during the construction phase.

- What might their potential impact be on employment, productivity and housing supply in London and the southeast?

Supporting the delivery of a safe, resilient and secure mass transit system, on time and on budget will support the general social and economic vitality of London and the southeast.

With current and future demographic projections, there is a need to find at least 450,000 jobs for Londoners in the next ten years with another 400,000 homes too.

Large areas of London including the Upper Lea Valley and Battersea Nine Elms area have been earmarked as having the potential for both transport and residential redevelopment. This could help create communities, thousands of jobs and the improved transportation would give an added boost to already existing local businesses.

3. What opportunities are there to increase the benefits and reduce the costs of the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme?

We have been engaged with planning for Crossrail since the early 2000s. Unfortunately some of the benefits from lessons learnt were not recorded and agreed. Various changes to the project's management resulted in the learning being lost. To remedy the omission has resulted in increased cost and risk to the project. Methods of learning from previous projects could be improved. The introduction of a dedicated LFB seconded Officer to the project at an early stage could greatly benefit the project and reduce risks and therefore costs to both the scheme and emergency services.

Part of Crossrail 2 project's 'over site development' at stations and shafts could be used to provide GLA facilities (fire stations) and also further alleviate the housing issues faced by London by incorporating social housing within the footprint. This could allow older stations, with larger footprints, to be developed to partially fund the joint development. This would further assist change in the LFB, provide us direct access greater numbers of public for community safety matters.

- 5.3)** We may publish any submissions made; if you believe there is a reason why your submission or any part of your submission should be considered confidential please provide details.

The detail of the relationship between the LFB and Crossrail, and the detail relating to lessons learnt is commercially sensitive.

The Commission is subject to legal duties which may require the release of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or any other applicable legislation or codes of practice governing access to information.