

National Infrastructure Commission call for evidence, 8 January 2015

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London TravelWatch is the statutory body representing all transport users in London and rail users within the wider London Rail Area which includes London's airports

London TravelWatch welcomes the opportunity to respond to the commissions' consultation, as it touches on areas of significant concern to users of London's transport networks, and which London TravelWatch as a passenger representative body has carried out significant research in recent years.

London TravelWatch has produced a series of transport user priorities for the 2016-20 Mayoral term based on our research and our passenger contacts. This response reflects these priorities:

1. Sustained investment to meet London's ever-growing transport needs
2. A road network that makes the best use of scarce capacity
3. As many of London's rail services as possible coordinated by the Mayor
4. Reliable bus services that keep up with the pace of change
5. Simpler fares, better value for money and a fairer deal when things go wrong
6. A co-ordinated approach to transport interchanges
7. Transport networks accessible to all
8. Reliable, accessible and timely information
9. Everyone able to travel without fear of crime or anti-social behaviour
10. Disruption effectively managed

Consultation questions

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

Transport is a derived demand. It therefore follows that it needs to respond to the economic and social challenges of population growth, job creation and distribution, the supply of housing, the affordability of fares and regional connectivity. Provision of transport can open up opportunities for education, employment, and the provision of services that would otherwise be difficult to access; it can allow development of housing that is both desirable and affordable: and develop regional economies through the benefits of aggregation, knowledge sharing and sociability. Equally, congestion, crowding, a poor living environment and the lack of effective and reliable transport services can hold back the development of new housing, the creation of new jobs and educational opportunities. The challenge is to improve accessibility in a way that is affordable to both the fare payer and taxpayer, and which meets the aspirations for service standards for both.

The capacity constraints that create congestion and crowding issues are in our view the most important issues that the infrastructure commission should focus on, and where investment is most needed. Creating additional capacity can be done in a

number of ways, and will range from large projects such as Crossrail 2 to modest small scale investments e.g. improving walking routes within interchanges or additional entrances to existing stations. These smaller schemes can add considerable value compared to their modest costs in creating new capacity, relieving crowding and congestion that exists already, improve connectivity and reduce journey times.

The need for this continued and enhanced investment in capacity is reflected in the views of passengers. During focus groups for our recent affordability research¹, it was apparent that even amongst low earners, there was a clear desire for investment aimed at reducing journey times, crowding and congestion, even if this meant more expensive ticket prices, although there was an overall resignation to the high cost of travel. Behind this was a recognition that better transport connectivity gives better access to a wider range of job and educational opportunities, allowing for career progression and increasing income, and housing that would better suit their circumstances and aspirations.

In a complex city such as London, where the most journeys are made using a variety of modes this suggests that improving the number and quality of public transport interchanges² is the most cost effective way of delivering additional capacity on the transport network, delivering economic growth and sustaining population growth. London TravelWatch argues that the investment in London's transport in recent years has been the catalyst that has allowed London's economy and population to grow.

This growth has in part been sustained by the continuous income stream that fares on the public transport network and the Congestion Charge on roads, and it would be important that this is protected to allow investment to continue, and in the case of roads there is an argument that pricing should play a greater role. Nevertheless passengers tell us through our research³ that their primary concerns are the affordability of the transport network, its' reliability and the travelling environment that they experience.

Affordability

London TravelWatch with its partners Trust for London and London Councils recently conducted research on transport affordability in London⁴. This found that:-

¹ http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4100&age=&field=file Living on the edge: the impact of travel costs on low paid workers in Outer London.

² http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4040&field=file Interchange Matters: Passenger priorities for improvement

³ http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3780&field=file The London Travelling environment : what consumers think

⁴ http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4100&age=&field=file Living on the edge: the impact of travel costs on low paid workers in Outer London.

- Most people living in London are resigned to the high cost of travel; they need to get to work and have no choice but to put up with the costs involved because they lack viable alternatives.
- 64% of all Londoners who commute to zone 1, which equates to around 1 million people tend to choose the quickest or best journey available to them to get to work, including many people on a lower income. 36%, or a projected 500,000 commuters, are not using the quickest or best journey option available to them.
- However, travel cost is one of the main factors in the route chosen by one in four, or a projected 180,000 people, commuting to Zone 1 from outer London and the equivalent of around 145,000 workers living in outer London choose the cheapest route to work rather than the shortest or most convenient.
- 9%, or a projected 70,000, outer London residents who commute to zone 1 could get to work faster if they spent more.
- Over one in five, or a projected 156,000, commuters who commute from outer London⁵ to zone 1 have to cut other spending to pay for travel to work.
- London residents earning more than £600 per month have to work approximately 20 minutes every day they work to pay for that day's commuting costs. This increases sharply to 54 minutes for those earning £200 to £599 and 1 hour 56 minutes for those earning less than £200.
- Travel to work accounts for almost one tenth of a manual worker's average earnings.
- Lower earners are more likely to use the bus and some choose this method to reduce their travel expenditure.
- Everyone is concerned about rising travel costs but people on low incomes are worried that further increases could affect their ability to earn a higher salary by working in Zone 1.

This concern with cost is a challenge, as there will need to be a balance between securing funds for investment and the need to restrain cost increases for transport users.

London's passengers, through the fares they pay, cover a significantly greater proportion of operating costs of their transport system than other areas of the UK and comparable cities in Europe. This has the benefit in that this allows a much greater certainty of investment return and long term sustainability of the system.

⁵ For this report, outer London is the 14 boroughs situated around the edge of the Greater London Authority area plus the boroughs of Brent, Ealing, Haringey, Barking & Dagenham and Merton.

However, rail passengers tell us that their number one priority for improvement is better value for money for the price they pay for their tickets⁶.

Reliability

Bus passengers in London (who account for over half of all public transport users in London and over half of all bus users in Great Britain) tell us that they want their services to be more reliable, and have consistent journey times. This is especially true of younger people in education or entering the employment market, who are unable to afford faster modes of public transport or more expensive private transport.

Rail passengers also want their trains to operate more reliably, consistently and have sufficient capacity for them to travel in comfort. This will require upgrades to capacity of the network in terms of train frequency and length. The National Rail network in London needs to be provided with services that are of a 'turn up and go' nature i.e. at least every 15 minutes throughout the operational day.

Travelling environment

When we asked passengers about their travelling environment they told us of many concerns. Most importantly is their concern for their personal security, not just being a victim of crime, but just as importantly having to deal with anti-social behaviour.

Passengers also regard overcrowding, particularly at peak travelling times, as an important issue for them which exacerbates other discomforts such as noise. Finally, though not at the top of passengers concerns they do want stations, trains and buses to be clean and clear of litter and graffiti which they associate with anti-social behaviour

2. What are the strategic options for future investment in large – scale transport infrastructure improvements – 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, reliability, journey times and connectivity to jobs?
- What might their potential impact be on employment, productivity and housing supply in London and the South East?

As noted above the priorities for improvement in the transport network need to be focused on improving affordability (including passenger value for money and the

⁶ Transport Focus research <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research/publications/rail-passengers-priorities-for-improvements-october-2014> , London TravelWatch research . http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3734&field=file and http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3896&field=file

ability to access a wide range of jobs and services), reliability, capacity (including reducing crowding and congestion), connectivity (including reducing journey times) and improving the overall travelling environment.

Therefore any transport schemes that are brought forward need to meet a number of tests that cover these elements :-

- Does it increase the accessibility of jobs and services?
- Does it improve the reliability of the existing network?
- Does it provide sufficient additional capacity where it is most needed?
- Does it reduce the incidence of crowding and congestion?
- Does it improve the overall connectivity of the London and South East region?
- Does it reduce overall journey times?
- Does it improve the overall travelling environment?

London TravelWatch has previously recommended⁷ a number of infrastructure projects that would meet these tests, address the issues that have been identified above and increase the opportunities for employment growth and housing provision. These include:-

Rail

- Developing the Chiltern rail route within Greater London, with improved frequencies and a diversion of longer distance services to serve Old Oak Common (for the development corporation area and interchange with Crossrail and other rail routes).
- A bigger interchange at West Hampstead with platforms on the Chiltern and Metropolitan lines, reducing journey times and increasing accessibility of jobs and services
- Resignalling London's national rail routes to enable higher frequency services to be run
- Linking the Great Northern City branch (Finsbury Park to Moorgate) to rail routes in South London e.g. the London Bridge – Tulse Hill corridor, relieving congestion in the City, but enabling development of areas such as that around South Bermondsey station for new housing
- Improving rail access to Heathrow Airport with western and southern rail routes, including the opportunity to develop housing and improve access to job opportunities.
- An electrified Reading – Gatwick Airport rail route – outside of London but of strategic importance to it, because of its ability to give an alternative to travel via London or by car via the M25.

⁷ http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3916&field=file Potential future transport projects for London – June 2014

- A reinstated and electrified Southall – Brentford rail link and an electrified West Ealing – Greenford rail route to improve access to jobs and open up new opportunities for housing, and to remove the need for non-standard diesel operation.
- New capacity at central London rail and underground stations through new entrances and link tunnels e.g. Covent Garden to Temple, new entrance to Waterloo East, City Thameslink to St. Pauls. Camden Town to Camden Road, Regents Park to Great Portland Street and linking the two Edgware Road stations.
- A new station at Maiden Lane serving the Kings Cross developments, but from the catchment area of the North London Line, improving access to employment and new areas of housing.
- Improving connectivity in South London by building a bigger interchange at Brixton with platforms on the London Overground and Victoria – Dartford routes, and an interchange at Brockley with platforms on the Victoria – Dartford route. These would open up access to employment and housing across a very wide area.
- Extending the Bakerloo line to Lewisham, Bromley North, Hayes and West Croydon, with significant opportunities to improve access to employment and encourage housing development.
- An 'outer circle' rail route linking London's outer boroughs, to improve access to housing and employment.
- Upgrading the Felixstowe – Ely – Nuneaton rail freight route to allow diversion of freight services away from the Great Eastern, North London and West Coast Main Line routes to free up capacity for passenger services.

Light Rail

It is of concern that the role that light rail in London could play is being overlooked. Passenger loadings along some existing corridors and potential growth corridors will be such that light rail would be the appropriate mode. We have previously supported the proposed extensions to Croydon Tramlink, West London Tram and the Cross River Tram proposals. Like these latter two, there are many other corridors where high levels of bus passenger numbers would imply that light rail may be an appropriate mode. The potential of further light rail schemes in London should be investigated.

Roads

Unlike passenger transport schemes where the demand can, to some extent, be managed by price, additional road capacity in an urban transport environment will be self-defeating because of the latent demand for road travel. Similarly measures to encourage modal shift will have the effect of releasing latent demand.

London TravelWatch supports a wider, more sophisticated system of roads pricing in order that demand can be managed properly on London's road network and the need for additional road infrastructure can be assessed. This would enable more reliable essential motor vehicle journeys and have the additional benefit of releasing funds for investment in transportation schemes.

That said London TravelWatch has supported the mayor's east London river crossings subject to various caveat regarding tolls, the provision of public transport and assurances that the wider road network does not become more congested.

One of the key infrastructure investments in London is the continued programme of bus priority. London TravelWatch believes that buses should have priority on all bus routes and that there is much to do to achieve this.

Cycling and walking

London TravelWatch supports continued investment in safer cycling and walking to allow and encourage increased use of these modes of travel, especially for shorter journeys, thereby freeing up additional capacity on the public transport and road networks thereby improving journey time reliability, crowding and congestion.

In particular, reusing redundant railway infrastructure for cycling and walking schemes e.g. Finsbury Park to East Finchley and Alexandra Palace, to reduce traffic congestion on major arterial roads by offering alternative routes and modes of transport, and on improving the public realm generally. Other potential ideas could include a pedestrian and cycle link between Canada Water and Canary Wharf.

Interchange

Londoners, make more multi-modal journeys than elsewhere, typically using two or three different modes to get around. This means that interchanges play a significant role in the experience of London's travellers. Research by London TravelWatch shows what passengers think good interchange looks like⁸.

Good interchange is often overlooked, but is as important as the services from the interchange. Increasing the usefulness of existing routes and interchanges; adding new ones to existing networks where this would steer growth towards the areas and routes that have the capacity to absorb this, and to relieve existing congestion and crowding. Examples of this would be the extension of the Bakerloo line into South East London⁹ and developing a Chiltern Metro, including additional platforms at West Hampstead.

⁸ http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4040&field=file Interchange matters: passenger priorities for improvement.

⁹ http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3940&age=&field=file Bakerloo line extension consultation response.

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

Co-ordination of HS2 at Euston with a future Network Rail scheme at their station. We have received assurances that any Crossrail 2 scheme would be built having regard to a future Network Rail scheme it would seem poor value for money if the Crossrail 2 proposals were developed in isolation. We strongly recommend that Euston is developed as a single scheme.

Interchange is really important to passengers who regard interchange as necessary, but not desirable. Crossrail would be an opportunity to develop first class interchanges at the stations served. We would expect Crossrail 2 to do as Crossrail 1 has and develop proposals for not only the stations, but also the public realm around them and the routes to nearby transport objectives such as the local town centre. Unlike Crossrail 1 any additional public realm works should be funded.

The stations served by Crossrail 2 should act as catalyst for promoting development and regeneration at, above or nearby.

Consideration should be given to the extension of Chessington branch of Crossrail 2 beyond the London boundary to Leatherhead to form a through line, and open up area around Malden Rushett for housing development.

4. What are the options for the funding, financing and delivery of large-scale transport infrastructure improvement in London, including Crossrail 2?

- What is an appropriate local and regional contribution – given the potential distribution of benefits to business, residents and transport users and the wider economy – and how could this be achieved?
- What innovative funding mechanisms could be considered to support delivery of key schemes?

As stated above the affordability of the public transportation system is very important both in terms of the proportion of an individual's income, but also as a tool of transport policy. The latter is often forgotten, but if the cost of public transport is too high we know it will be used less. Some of the demand will translate into private motor vehicle use which will exacerbate London's problems of congestion.

In order to secure the maximum social, economic and environmental benefits that a good public transportation system can contribute to then public investment is required. In addition to passenger fares, a mixture of funding from general taxation, roads pricing and land / property value uplift should be used. Additionally it is vital that all passengers pay their way and that this is assured through high levels of enforcement.

5. How have major metropolitan areas in other countries responded to similar challenges and priorities? Are there any lessons to be learned and applied to London?

London TravelWatch's limited resources do not allow us to give direct comparisons with other areas, however, we note that in dense urban areas such as Hong Kong, development has been successfully tied to the implementation of transport schemes. This approach has been done in London in the past e.g. the Metropolitan Railway constructed Chiltern Court above a reconstructed Baker Street station: In the 1980's British Rail redeveloped the former Holborn Viaduct station to include the low level City Thameslink station and office development above. This could be repeated in the future, but with careful consideration of the needs of existing passengers and users during and after the construction period.