

Introduction by Janet Cooke, Chief Executive

Welcome to our latest interchange matters seminar

Given that such a high proportion of journeys in and around London involve two, three or more different stages, often on different modes of transport run by different service operators, the quality of the stations and stops passengers use to interchange from one leg of their journey to the next can make a significant difference to the quality of their overall journey.

In an ideal world, transport users would hardly notice the join as they (for example) leave the National Rail station, walk across the local authority street to catch a TfL bus or Tube - probably using TfL's Oyster or Contactless payment card to pay for their travel.

But to help make this transition smooth and easy to navigate, especially for people who don't regularly make that particular journey, involves a range of different organisations working together to ensure that the walking route between stages is either obvious - or clearly marked if not. And that the signage is consistent, the kerbs along the route easy to negotiate . . . etc. Which is why we're delighted to have people with us today from local authorities, train companies, Network Rail, the Department for Transport, the British Transport Police, TfL and representatives from some local transport user groups.

However, before I properly introduce this morning's event, I just wanted to flag up a major success for passengers. In our original Interchange Matters report we called for the London tube and railway connections map to identify, amongst other things, walkable interchanges - - - and we were delighted to see on the most recent publication that this has now started to happen. So it's now time to resume the conversations we had on this a few years ago to try and secure further improvements. It all helps with seamless journey planning.

Our focus this morning is on London's major railway stations.

In many ways this builds on our last seminar when we looked at surface access to London's airports as the particular stations our speakers will be considering are, or will become, direct access points for one or more airports. Both of our speakers have joined the rail industry from other sectors where a real focus on the needs of their users and customers is business critical in practice not just in rhetoric.

We have some fantastic station buildings in central London, most dating back to Victorian times, each with their own character and history, and many of which have been subject to major change in recent years. This has been accompanied by an increased emphasis on improving the facilities on offer at the station - not 'just' relating to ticket sales and journey information. We are seeing a greater number and variety of shops and restaurants and some stations (such as St Pancras) have become destinations in their own right.

All of which is great, but the danger is always there that the industry might focus too much on award-winning architecture, or tempting retail offer, and forget that the fundamental *raison d'être* for the station is somewhere for people to catch a train. In other words, stations are primarily for passengers

A real focus on the needs of passengers and seeing the station from their perspective, particularly for those who are unfamiliar with it, can make a real difference, even if the design of the station itself is not ideal. And, conversely, to carry out a major rebuilding such as at London Bridge and then not manage it with the needs of the passengers who use it always at the fore would be unforgivable. But, hopefully, that's not going to be the case . . .

Our first speaker, Darren Williams, is one of Ian Hansen's (NR's south east stations director) team. They're working to totally change the way that London Bridge, Victoria, Cannon Street and Charing Cross are managed. In doing this they're not limiting their attention to the station itself but also considering the needs of passengers as they arrive at or leave the station- making contact with and collaborating with colleagues from neighbouring organisations to do this. Something we have been calling for

Our second speaker, Paul Parsons , from MTR Crossrail, will be looking at what is being done to integrate London's newest railway into the existing major railway stations Liverpool Street and Paddington. What is being done to ensure passengers experience these as single entities rather than a collection of several different stations that happen to be co-located? We haven't specifically asked about this but a major question then arises as to how Farringdon, an interesting but small and cramped station where national rail and underground services meet, cope when London's central interchange when Thameslink and Elizabeth line services are fully operational. The station is managed by London Underground and we may hear more about this in our discussion

And in respect of Paddington I want to mention Jane Jones from GWR. Jane helped to organise the multi-operator meeting we held at Paddington station many years ago in an attempt to broker some improvements in the way that the main concourse works for passengers. We ended up with representatives from 17 different organisations in the room and quickly realised that to broker real change for passengers we needed to approach things in a different way. That meeting became the catalyst for our interchange matters research and the range of activities this has spawned.

So, over to you Darren.