
Confidential briefing note

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Agenda item : 12

Drafted : 23.9.09

London Bridge station

Members will be aware that London TravelWatch and its predecessor body considered at great length and depth proposals by Railtrack and subsequently Network Rail to rebuild London Bridge station. These included public closure hearings as part of the Thameslink programme in 2000 and again in 2006, and input to the various applications as part of a master planning exercise during the same period, including for the major office development known as 'The Shard'. Final planning approval was given in October 2006 and funding agreed in July 2007.

The Board at the time agreed to the proposals on the basis that although there was some hardship to existing passengers, this was more than outweighed by the additional passenger benefits that the Thameslink upgrade and the rebuilding of London Bridge station.

Work has commenced at London Bridge on preparations for the construction of 'The Shard' office development. However, work on the main Thameslink works at the station and surrounding areas is not due to commence until after 2011.

However, the impact of the recession and constraints on public finances mean that the Thameslink scheme and in particular the works at London Bridge will be subject to further scrutiny and refinement because of the substantial costs involved. The works at London Bridge form a significant proportion of the total £5.5bn cost of the Thameslink upgrade. The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) has asked Network Rail to produce a revised plan for the works at London Bridge.

If a reduction in the scope and cost of works at London Bridge is identified as necessary, London TravelWatch will need to be satisfied that a) the passenger benefits envisaged in the original scheme are preserved or enhanced – better facilities at the station, longer trains, more frequent services (such as on the main Thameslink core route between London Bridge and St.Pancras International), b) that where there were disadvantages to passengers in the original scheme (such as the reduction in terminating platforms on the lines from Peckham Rye and Forest Hill) that any redesign might be able to accommodate measures to mitigate or reduce the impact of these.