Board 30.6.09

LondonTravelWatch

Secretariat memorandum
Author : Vincent Stops

Response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy, Statement of Intent

1   Purpose of report

1.1   To suggest a response to the Mayor's transport Strategy, Statement of Intent.

2   Background

2.1   The Mayor of London is required by the GLA Act 1999 to have a Transport strategy. In November 2008 the Mayor wrote a very personal view of travel and transport in London entitled *Way to go!* as a precursor to the statutory process.

2.2   The Statement of Intent is a more formal document and is designed for consultation with the GLA family – The London Assembly, the London Development Agency, the Metropolitan Police, The London Fire Brigade. However, the Mayor has invited everyone to contribute.

2.3   The Statement asks for responses to six questions.

2.4   The document may be found at :
        http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/publications/2009/docs/transport-strategy.pdf

2.5   The closing date for comment is 13 July 2009. It is expected that this will lead to the publication of the new Mayor's Transport Strategy in early 2010.

3   Responses to questions

Question 1
Referring to chapters one and two, are there any other transport challenges facing London that the MTS should address?

3.1.1   Chapters one and two cover many of the transport challenges faced by London and Londoners as outlined in our transport manifesto:

* A Transport network accessible to all
* A fair deal for travellers on fares
* Health services that everyone can reach
* Room to breathe (reducing overcrowding on public transport)
* Priority for buses (on the road network)

- Transport systems that respect the environment
- Travelling with confidence (reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour)
- Walking with pleasure
- A road network that is fit for purpose

3.1.2 However in responding to the transport challenges London and Londoners face there are choices to be made and conflicting demands to be resolved. The Mayor's Transport needs to recognise this and indicate how this may be done.

3.1.3 It is clear that that the transport networks in London are mature. There will be some, additional rail capacity: Crossrail, the Thameslink programme, the North London Line upgrades and the new East London Line, but little new road capacity. The Mayor's Transport Strategy needs to acknowledge this and indicate how best use is to be made of the existing rail and road networks.

3.1.4 There have been improvements to interchange over the last few years, however, there are many interchanges that could and should be improved, such as improved street level interchange between rail services at West Hampstead, for example or improved signing schemes at complex interchanges such as Stratford.

3.1.5 On the rail network this may mean some additional infrastructure. We are pleased to see the innovative ideas in paragraph 186 describing how outer London towns may be better connected by rail (chordal and orbital links). We would welcome further discussions on this with your officers on some of the schemes we have proposed previously – see paragraph 3.4.2.

3.1.6 Almost all of London's National Rail system is electrified giving benefits of extra capacity, reduced local pollution, more reliable running and a better passenger environment. London TravelWatch would wish to see all of London's National Rail Network electrified, and the routes outside London that are used by services that run to and from London.

3.1.7 On the road network, though there may be some scope for additional capacity to relieve local congestion, this will be very much on the margin. The main challenge is how to reallocate the existing road space to the more sustainable modes – tram, bus, cycle walk and to manage demand for road space by pricing. Your guiding principle, respecting choice, is admirable, but on a road network with finite capacity it may be necessary to do more than encourage and persuade. We know from the review of the DfT's sustainable travel demonstration towns that behaviour can be changed by 'soft' measures, but also it is necessary to lock-in the benefits because released road capacity will simply fill up again by others choosing to travel on any less congested roads.

3.1.8 Implementing bus priority it is vital. To this end TfL and the London boroughs must work together to implement whole route bus priority schemes such as the 3G bus priority programme that TfL has developed. It is of concern that the role of bus priority is not more clearly articulated in statement of intent as this is an important challenge for all of London's highway authorities. This needs to be clearly stated in the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

3.1.9 Congestion charging in central London has been a big success. It has reduced congestion in the central area leading to improved bus performance and more cycling. Central London is now a more pleasant environment in which to walk. Congestion charging has meant improved journey times for essential private vehicles. It has delivered funds to improve bus services into the central area. A key challenge for the Mayor's Transport Strategy should be to advocate for the extension of road pricing in London. Not simply extensions of the existing scheme, but a second generation, smarter, pricing scheme that can be more flexible than the existing central London scheme.

3.1.10 Value for money is important, particularly given the need for i) additional transport capacity across London; ii) the likely additional costs of the Underground improvements; iii) the cost of reverting to double-deck buses from articulated buses and iv) the 'new London bus' proposals iv) the present financial constraints that will continue for some years. We believe that some of the costs in the bus services budget could be reduced by the implementation of bus priority - there is much to be saved by reducing the time spent by buses idling on London's congested streets.

3.1.11 Finally, London's health services are undergoing some fundamental changes. It is proposed that some services are devolved to a more local setting (polyclinics) and some services to specialist centres (Trauma and Stroke review). This will mean significant changes to journeys to health services. Both the health services and transport services should engage with each other in this period of change in order that these facilities are both located in more accessible locations and are served better by transport services. It is said that trips to health services generate 5% of journeys in London. We therefore believe the transport issues associated with the restructuring of the health service should be identified in the Mayor's Transport Strategy as a major challenge.

Question 2
Referring to chapter three, the MTS Statement of Intent proposes adopting a spatial approach similar to that set out by the DfT's Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (see Figure 1 [describes a hierarchy of transport networks]). Does anything need to be added or improved to ensure this approach fully complements the national strategy while meeting London's needs?

3.2.1 We have contributed to the Outer London Commissions' Initial questions consultation. Our concern is that outer London's town centres are presently congested. As described above there is little scope for additional road capacity, indeed additional capacity may have the unintended consequence of deterring the slow modes, cycling and walking.

Therefore, if a revised London Plan sought to direct housing and employment growth to outer London town centres we would want to be assured that there is sufficient capacity planned on the public transport networks to support that growth and that public transport operates reliably. We know that fixed public transport links (train, underground, tram) are viewed more favourably by stakeholders, but that the quantum of new development required to justify them is less welcome. Our view is that appropriate modes should be selected on the basis of projected passenger loading.

Question 3
Referring to chapter three, the MTS will be implemented in partnership with boroughs and other stakeholders through London Regional Transport Plans and LIPs. With this in mind, how should the MTS ensure consistent outcomes and progress across London?

3.3.1 Transport users do not recognise governmental or any other boundaries. They want a consistent level of service across London. It is important that the Mayor's Transport Strategy sets out clear and consistent policies that will improve transport in London and both advocates for these policies and sets priorities. It is important that the borough LIPs are consistent with the Mayor's Transport Strategy and funding supports the transport strategy priorities. This is particularly important in promoting bus priority where there is most benefit from whole route priority across the different borough / highway authority borders and where there are many local political difficulties in reallocating road space from its present use. It is vital that TfL, as the strategic transport authority, takes a pro-active role in promoting a strategic approach from the London Boroughs.

Question 4
Referring to chapter four, what is the right balance between the three broad policy approaches: changing land use assumptions, managing demand and providing further transport capacity?

What role can new technologies play in tackling London's transport challenges?

a. For land use assumptions, your views would be welcomed on the following:
• What transport interventions are required to support economic development focused on 'strategic Outer London development centres'?
• What transport interventions are required to support more growth in Outer London generally?
• If there were to be a greater focus on economic development in Outer London, what additional transport interventions would still be required to maintain central London's economic vitality?

b. For managing demand, your views would be welcomed on the following:
• What is the role of pricing (eg targeted local road pricing or London-wide road pricing) to help manage demand?
• Would your view of pricing change if there was more economic development in Outer London where car usage is higher and public transport less pervasive?

c. For providing further transport capacity and connectivity your views would be welcomed on the following:
• Where is additional transport capacity and connectivity most needed, in the context of proposals to alter land user assumptions and manage demand?

d. For using new technologies your views would be welcomed on the following:
• What role can be played by new technologies, for example electric vehicles, in tackling challenges such as climate change, air quality and noise?
• What steps should be taken to support their development and use?

3.4.1   In those part of London that are congested there will need to be a mix of the three policies proposed - land use change, managing demand and additional capacity. However changes to land use is clearly a very long term intervention and so whilst we welcome this it will have limited impact for many years.

3.4.2   Providing additional capacity on the rail network is welcomed. London TravelWatch has long made the case for smaller scale infrastructure improvements[1] such as the East London Line extension, the Croxley Link, new platforms at Brockley, Brixton and Willesden Junction, new stations at Tufnell Park on the Barking to Gospel Oak Line, Lea Bridge and Ruckolt Road on the Stratford to Tottenham Hale line.

3.4.3   However, increasing capacity on the road network is more problematical due to the phenomena of induced traffic, which may also, as an unintended consequence deter use of the sustainable modes, bus, cycle and walk. Therefore it will be necessary to plan for greater use of road pricing either London wide, as additional discreet zones to the central area zone or as zones around London's congested town centres.

3.4.4   We welcome new technology, particularly improvements to the provision of information so that journeys can be planned more easily and passengers alerted to disruption. Oyster has proved a great success and we particularly look forward to its use across the rail network in London. Perhaps the greatest opportunity for new technology is in creating a more sophisticated road pricing regime. The crude system used in central London is effective, but is rightly criticised as being a blunt instrument. New technology could be used to price road use by price of day and location.

3.4.5   Although tangential to our remit we are keen to see improvements to London's air quality as this will in turn improve the pedestrian environment. New technology, electric, hybrid and hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles have a role in this by reducing the volume of local emissions.

Question 5
In chapter four, two broad land use transport options are identified:

• Option 1 prioritises focused economic development in central London, with more emphasis on radial transport capacity and connectivity improvements into central London and transport improvements within central London itself;

• Option 2 prioritises a more dispersed growth scenario, with more radial transport capacity and connectivity improvements into potential 'strategic Outer London development centres' and other metropolitan town centres;

Any final decision about which option is taken forward will be strongly influenced by economic viability. With this proviso, what are your views on the two broad options given the transport and economic challenges London faces?

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[1] Small is Beautiful – medium term rail improvements for the London area

A consultation paper by the London Transport Users Committee, March 2004

3.5.1 London TravelWatch has no view on which spatial planning model is taken forward. There may well be benefits to a polycentric model. Our main concern is that sufficient public transport capacity is available so that passengers may have a reasonable travelling experience which accord with our transport manifesto principles highlighted in 3.1.1.

Question 6
Referring to chapter four:

a) To support economic development and population growth a number of broad policies have been outlined to improve London's national and international links, capacity and efficiency London-wide, radial links into central London and 'strategic Outer London development centres' and orbital connectivity. What are the policy priorities?

Are there any other policies that should be included in the MTS under the economy theme?

b) To enhance quality of life a number of broad policies have been outlined to improve journey experience, the built and natural environment, air quality, reduce noise impacts and improve health. What are the policy priorities? Are there any other policies that should be
included in the MTS under the quality of life theme?

c) To improve safety and security a number of broad policies have been outlined to reduce crime, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour, and to improve road safety and public transport safety. What are the policy priorities? Are there any other policies that should be included in the MTS under the safety and security theme?

d) To improve transport opportunities for all a number of broad policies have been outlined to increase accessibility, support regeneration and enhance access to opportunities and services. What are the policy priorities? Are there any other policies that should be included in the MTS under the transport opportunities for all theme?

e) To tackle climate change a number of broad policies have been outlined. What are the policy priorities? Are there any other policies that should be included in the MTS under the climate change theme?

3.6.1 a) We have been generally supportive of additional high speed services connecting London to the north, but we have to be convinced that any new services would not impact adversely on existing local services, nor push out investment on higher priority proposals.

3.6.2 b) Many of the policy priorities are set out in the statement, however we do think that the vital role of the bus and implementing bus priority should be articulated more clearly and given more emphasis.

3.6.3 c) We have nothing to add.

3.6.4 d) London is now well placed in terms of accessible buses. London has a great network of bus services and every bus in London is low floored and has a space for wheelchairs. This is an important achievement as buses will continue, for

many years, to be the only form of public transport in London that can be accessible to almost all – the Underground and National Rail will take much longer, some stations may never be accessible.

3.6.5   We would like to see more emphasis on the role of the bus as the only universally accessible transport available for all and particularly the need to ensure that bus stops are also made accessible in a short time scale.

3.6.5   e) See 3.4.5

4   Equalities and inclusion implications

4.1   The Mayor Transport Strategy must comply with all relevant equalities legislations. London TravelWatch has a particular remit to consider the needs of disabled users.

5   Legal powers

5.1   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).

6   Financial implications

6.1   This report poses no financial consequences for London TravelWatch.

7   Recommendations

7.1   That members debate the report and agree a response to the Mayor.