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Secretariat memorandum

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LTW 367

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Interchange at London Bridge station

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To advise members of the background to the redevelopment of London Bridge station.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are recommended to note the report and are reminded of the previous closure hearing recommendations in the Annex.

3 Background

3.1 Volume of usage

3.1.1 London Bridge station is the fifth busiest transport interchange in central London, after Waterloo, Victoria, Kings Cross St Pancras and Liverpool Street. Usage has grown significantly in the ten years since the opening of the Jubilee Line extension, and is likely to continue to do so given the substantial development taking place around the station such as The Shard office building – which will be the tallest in Europe.

3.1.2 To place this in context, passenger numbers at the station are as follows:

- The National Rail station had 49 million passenger journeys in 2008/09 for entry and exit only.
- Interchange between National Rail services only was 4 million passengers in 2008/09.
- The London Underground station was used for 61 million journeys in 2009. This has grown from 44 million in 2005.
- The total numbers of journeys by rail modes was in the region of 110 million in 2009 (LUL and ORR periods differ so it is not possible to give an exact figure).

3.2 Links

3.2.1 Approximately one-third of London has direct frequent services to or from London Bridge. Of the remaining two-thirds, only three corridors do not have access to London Bridge by a simple one station change, but of these one has a direct bus link as a substitute. This means London Bridge is one of the best connected parts of London. London Bridge has frequent direct train services to Gatwick and Luton Airports, and access to other airports is by a simple change by rail or bus ride. These factors make London Bridge a key interchange between significant parts of London and the rest of South East England.

3.2.2 The following figures demonstrate the importance of London Bridge as a multi modal interchange:

- The National Rail station handles around 86 trains per hour at the highest peak hour.
- There are 17 daytime and four night bus routes serving the London Bridge area.
- Pedestrian flows from London Bridge station across London Bridge to the City at peak times are amongst the highest in London.
- There is also a significant amount of cycling on the principle roads around the London Bridge, plus motorised transport.

3.3 London Bridge as a destination

3.3.1 A number of significant generators of travel are located near to London Bridge, including City Hall, Southwark Council offices, HMS Belfast, Hays Galleria shopping centre, Southwark Cathedral, Guys and London Bridge Hospitals, The London Dungeon, The Globe Theatre and Museum, Tate Modern and Southwark Cathedral. This is in addition to the large number of other jobs and services located nearby.

4 The Thameslink upgrade project

4.1 Against this background of substantial activity plus new development the Thameslink upgrade project, with which members are familiar, has sought to enable a complete modernisation of existing passenger facilities in and around the station.

4.2 Members will be aware of the recommendations of the public closure hearings in 2000 held by the London Regional Passengers Committee (predecessor to London TravelWatch) into the closure of various parts of the railway at London Bridge. These are contained in Appendix 1.

4.3 Members will recall their site visit to London Bridge in December 2009, where the conditions and challenges of the redevelopment of the station were explored.

5 Equalities and inclusion implications

5.1 There are no equalities and inclusion implications arising from this report.

6 Legal powers

- 6.1 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 it 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).
- 6.2 Section 252A of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to keep under review matters affecting the interests of the public in relation to railway passenger and station services provided wholly or partly within the London railway area, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.
- 6.3 Section 252B of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to investigate any matter relating to a relevant railway matter if it appears to the committee that it is a matter that it ought to investigate and relates to the provision of railway passenger services wholly or partly within the London railway area or the provision of station services within that area.
- 6.4 The closure hearings in 2000 held by the London Regional Passengers Committee under the closure provisions of the Railways Act 1993. Those powers and duties, as amended by the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and the Railways Act 2005, are vested in the London Transport Users Committee. However, this report does not constitute a formal closure hearing. This report is constituted under sections 248, 252A and 252B of the Greater London Authority Act 1999.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report for London TravelWatch.

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Appendix 1

Extracts from the London Regional Passengers Committee report on the closure process hearings in 2000 concerning London Bridge.

This report included the following text:

Whether platforms at London Bridge needed to be retained in order to provide operational flexibility.

This clearly had potential implications for hardship. In a conventional closure proposal, the issue is essentially whether the loss of a service (whether a route or a station) would cause people hardship, and to assess the extent of that hardship. At first glance, that would appear not to be an issue here, because no station or route is proposed for closure. However, the situation is not so simple. According to objectors, people's services (and/or the adequacy of those services) would be put at risk by the loss of the platforms in question.

The Committee therefore had a difficult task: to assess whether there would indeed be this risk; how significant it was; and whether it amounted to hardship. The difficulty was compounded by the fact that a number of reasons had been advanced for why there was this risk, any or all of which might contribute to the utility of the platforms, and which may or may not collectively justify their retention.

The Committee was not considering the track layouts at London Bridge per se. It was simply considering the proposed closures of particular parts of the network (the tracks at the terminating platforms). However, the closures, and their possible effects, are so bound up with the track layouts that, in practice, the questions required examination of the layouts as a whole.

Possible design changes

The closure proposals are linked with the TWA Order application for the Thameslink 2000 project; indeed, the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority (SSRA) has said that it and Railtrack would not proceed with the closures if the TWA powers were not given.

It is possible, however, that the TWA powers will be granted subject to amendments – i.e. the scheme would go ahead but with changes to the design. This would have implications for topics where the scheme design was important in assessing whether hardship would occur.

It is impossible to tell, at this stage, whether such changes would take place, how extensive they would be, or exactly what they would be. The Sub-Committee can therefore do no more than assess the closure proposals on the basis of the scheme as presented. Any changes as a result of the TWA process might require reconsideration of the closure proposals.

Any consent to either closure proposal should be conditional on the TWA powers being granted, and on no changes to the proposal being required that were material to the possible effects of the closures.

Costs of extra platforms

A number of objectors, having suggested that hardship would be caused, felt that additional terminating capacity would mitigate that hardship.

A) Assuming that the 24tph service is achievable

At London Bridge, there would be fewer terminating platforms, but also fewer terminating trains, as some would have been diverted to the through platforms. Railtrack believes that the remaining terminating platforms would be able to handle these. Moreover, there would be no reduction in the total number of platforms at London Bridge, but the balance would shift in favour of through platforms on the high level, thus in some ways increasing the versatility of the station. **The Committee concluded that the terminating capacity would be adequate, and thus no hardship would arise from this issue.**

Ability of the remaining terminating platforms to cope with disruption.

However, the railway will inevitably not always run smoothly, and the Committee examined at length the issue of whether the platforms to be closed would have been useful in mitigating the effects of disruption. According to Railtrack, there would be a number of places for failed trains to be removed out of the way, or for trains to be turned round in order to restore the service. Part of the solution involved proper contingency planning, just as it currently does. Railtrack also said that Thameslink 2000 trains would have their own infrastructure on the approach to London Bridge, thus not impeding Charing Cross or Cannon Street trains, unlike the current situation.

The Committee concluded that there were bound to be situations when the presence of one or more of the platforms to be closed would have been useful in mitigating the effects of disruption and in restoring the service to normal. However, given the wide range of possible circumstances, and the alternative places available for trains to go, the absence of that utility would not amount to hardship. That said, in reaching that conclusion the Committee had no realistic alternative to relying on Railtrack's (untested) evidence described in the paragraph above.

Potential extra train services into London Bridge from the south. There is also the possibility of operators wanting to run additional train services in to London Bridge from the south, terminating in the low-level station. Some objectors had suggested that the ability to accommodate these would be limited. The SSRA's view was that the remaining platforms would have some capacity for future growth. Railtrack had provided more details: apparently, Connex's intention is to run the existing level of off-peak service during the peaks, but with longer trains. (At present, the peak service is constrained by line capacity, and is less than the off-peak service; there would be additional peak capacity as a result of the works.) There would also be spare capacity at Charing Cross, according to the SSRA, although the City Corporation remained to be convinced of this. **The Committee concluded that there would be no hardship arising from this issue.**

B) Assuming that the 24tph service is not achievable

The Corporation of London, which had undertaken detailed analysis of the Thameslink 2000 proposals, believed that 18tph was likely to be achievable. The Committee therefore took this as the 'worst case scenario'.

Ability of the remaining terminating platforms to cope with the proposed timetable.

As with the 24tph situation, the most obvious potential reason for hardship was if the remaining terminating capacity was not sufficient. In this case, the question revolved around what terminating capacity was available to any trains that had been intended to become Thameslink 2000 trains but (due to the shortfall in throughput) could not do so. (These are referred to in this report as 'displaced' trains.) The SSRA had done little detailed analysis of what would happen if 24tph was not achieved. But there had been a sensitivity test, which looked at a 20tph scenario.

In the absence of agreement between the City Corporation and SSRA on the subject, and in the absence of sufficient evidence for the Committee to decide for itself, the Committee believes that the Regulator needs to ensure that sufficient capacity is maintained.

Under the fewer than 24 trains per hour scenario, any consent to either closure proposal should be made conditional on the Regulator being satisfied that there would be adequate London terminal capacity to accommodate the displaced trains.

Ability of the remaining terminating platforms to cope with disruption

The issue here is the same as with the 24 trains per hour scenario, but with an added twist. If it turned out that any of the proposed terminal capacity at London Bridge would be in use to accommodate displaced trains, then the ability to cope with disruption would be reduced accordingly. However, the Committee concluded that such a reduction in the ability to cope with disruption did not substantially affect the situation (compared to the 24 trains per hour scenario), and so there would not be hardship.

Potential extra train services into London Bridge.

This issue would be the same as under the 24 trains per hour scenario, unless displaced trains had been accommodated in London Bridge low level, which would reduce the scope for extra trains. Again, the Committee regarded this as speculative, and reached the same conclusions as under the 24 trains per hour scenario.

C) Implications of arriving at different platforms at London Bridge.

There was one further issue regarding London Bridge. Some passengers for whom that station was the origin or destination would enter or leave their trains on through platforms, rather than terminating ones. This would affect the relative ease (or otherwise) of interchange between those trains and others, or between those trains and other modes. Some people would gain, and others would lose, but all the effects would be small. The new platforms would be fully accessible.

The dominant rail-rail interchange was by people who arrived in the terminating platforms and wanted to reach Charing Cross or Cannon Street. If their train was diverted to the through platforms, this interchange would become easier.

The Committee accordingly felt that there would be no hardship arising from the effects of the platform closures there on interchange movements.

D) Disruption during works

A number of objectors suggested that the works at both locations would be disruptive to services or to passengers' walking routes. There would be a period when the platforms in

question had been closed but the works would still be taking place and the Thameslink 2000 service would not be in place; thus, it was suggested, hardship would be caused.

The Committee was informed of the proposals for managing train services during the works. **At London Bridge, Railtrack says that there would be rescheduling and train path alterations, but these would be insignificant due to the level of platform capacity.**

The works would inevitably cause disruption, which should be mitigated as far as reasonably possible. The Committee felt that it was important for the passenger-handling arrangements to be properly planned and implemented – not just in terms of where trains go, but also in terms of how passengers are told about the changes, and how the affected passengers are treated.