

London TravelWatch's Bank Transport and Works Act order submission

London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Liaise with the transport industry, regulators and funders on matters affecting users and respond to their consultations;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and the surrounding area.

We represent passengers on the entire London Underground network, including those lines and stations that are outside the Greater London boundary.

London TravelWatch fully supports the Bank station capacity upgrade, which is vitally needed, and we welcome the opportunity to make our representation. We would like to thank Transport for London for the level of engagement they have provided the public with, including the public exhibitions, consultations at each stage of the proposal and bespoke meetings. We would like to ensure that this positive working relationship continues throughout the development of the scheme, as this will make sure that the needs of passengers are fully considered along with engineering criteria at a stage which will allow mutually beneficial changes to be incorporated before the plans are too far developed.

London TravelWatch would like to place on record that we fully support the aims of the Bank station capacity upgrade, which we consider a scheme to have such benefits to passengers that it can be considered a scheme of regional, if not national, importance. We are satisfied that Transport for London, through positive engagement with stakeholders and the developers, has designed the best outcome for the Bank station capacity upgrade, which will deliver huge benefits and avoid the need for frequent closures of the station due to overcrowding, with associated societal and economic impacts. We would note that there are a few elements of the scheme that we would have wished to have seen provide a different outcome, but understand the reasons why they are not being taken forward. These include an entrance on King William Street in addition to Cannon Street to create a dual facing new entrance. We understand that this will not be in the plan due to both the very narrow footway on King William Street, as well as the proximity to existing entrances. We accept this, along with the provision only of passive provision for a second Docklands Light Railway tunnel, in case of future extension. We also called for a possible subterranean link with the Cannon Street National Rail station, but accept the alternative to improve the public realm and street level links between the National Rail station and the new London Underground entrance on Cannon Street. We would also like to see work continue to reduce the impact of the construction period on the City Branch of the Northern Line, with closures kept to a minimum, being considered as the scheme progresses.

Despite our overwhelming support for the scheme as a whole, and our assessment of the proposals as generally excellent, we would like to place on record one official objection to the scheme. Namely, we would like to object that it is not proposed to provide step free access to the Central Line of the rebuilt Bank station. Not only is step free access essential for passengers of reduced mobility, but it is considered a key factor in the journey of many passengers, including those with children, luggage or temporary injury. Passengers who consider themselves to be fully mobile still value accessibility highly, with our recent research "Value for money on London's transport services: what consumers think" showing that the provision of step free access is the number one variable that gives a positive feeling of value for money on the transport network. We would like to ensure that the benefits of the

scheme are provided universally and that a large and growing percentage of the travelling public are not excluded from using the new Bank station due to a lack of step free access.

We are happy to speak at any enquiry, both to demonstrate our strong support for the scheme as a whole, or to expand on our specific objection to the lack of accessibility to the Central Line after the scheme completion.

Many Thanks,

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