
Secretariat memorandum

Author : Tim Bellenger

Agenda item: 8
LTW494
Drafted 02.03.15

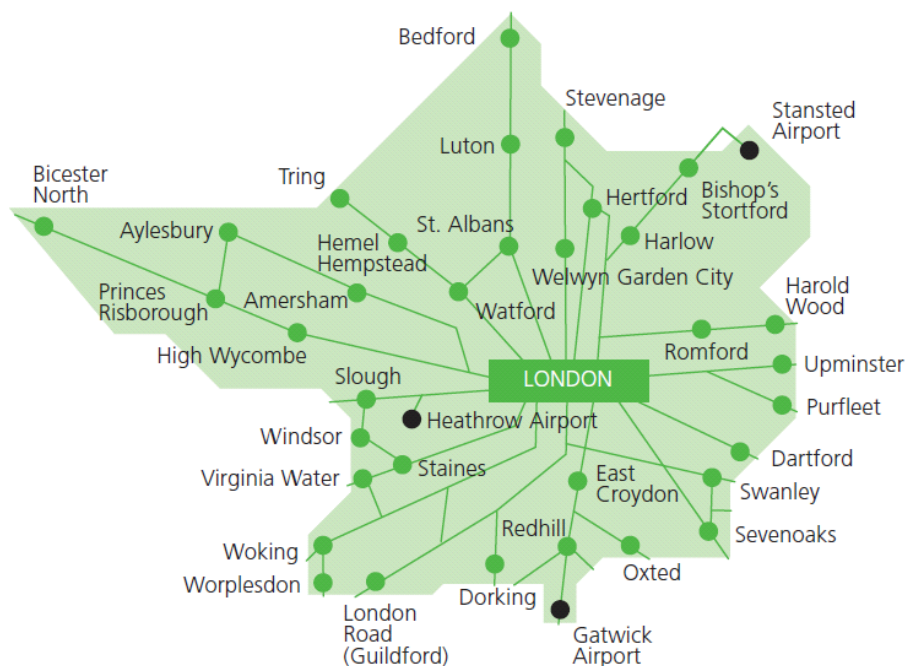
London TravelWatch remit and activity outside of the Greater London Authority area

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To summarise the remit of London TravelWatch outside the Greater London Authority area and to illustrate some of the work we have done for passengers travelling to and from those areas.

2 London TravelWatch role and remit

- 2.1. London TravelWatch has a statutory role in respect of rail services that operate to, from, within or through the London railway area. This area is defined in Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005 as being equivalent to the area previously covered by the Rail Passengers' Committee and it is fixed by primary legislation.
- 2.2. The London railway area is defined by reference to boundary stations rather than by administrative or other geographical areas. A map showing the boundary stations is below.



- 2.3. London TravelWatch is responsible for considering all aspects railway operation as it affects passengers travelling to, from and through this area, including service levels, timetabling, station facilities, ticket offices, fares, ticketing, penalty fares, interchange with other modes of travel and accessibility. It must ensure that in the event of a closure proposal that the correct procedures are applied to protect passenger interestsⁱ.
- 2.4. London TravelWatch is also the statutory watchdog in relation to all Transport for London services including those that cross the Greater London boundary. This includes all bus services contracted by TfL, London Underground where it goes into Essex (Central Line to Epping and the Hainault loop), Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire (Metropolitan Line to Watford, Rickmansworth, Amersham and Chesham), London Overground where it goes beyond the London boundary into Hertfordshire (Watford Junction and from 31 May 2015 Cheshunt) and Crossrail (from 31 May 2015 to Shenfield in Essex and by 2018 to Reading in Berkshire) .
- 2.5. London TravelWatch has an important role in protecting the interests of passengers outside London because decisions about TfL services are taken by the Mayor of London. This role is therefore to help fill the democratic deficit that could occur when decisions taken by the Mayor affect passengers who live outside of London and so are not entitled to vote in Greater London Authority (GLA) elections. This includes the recent proposal to remove ticket offices from London Underground operated stations. In addition, by advocating for passengers in the London railway area, London TravelWatch ensures passengers receive a property joined-up service, covering all the modes of transport they use. London TravelWatch's board is appointed by the London Assembly and is accountable to it.
- 2.6. Where a railway closure is involved this is known as the 'London closures' procedureⁱⁱ. The most recent example of this being used was the proposed closure of Watford (Metropolitan) station in conjunction with the proposed Croxley Linkⁱⁱⁱ scheme which diverts the Metropolitan line to serve Watford Junction station.
- 2.7. London TravelWatch has the power under the Transport Act 2000 to consider matters relating to car and cycle parking, bus, coach, cycle and pedestrian access to rail stations outside Greater London but within the London Railway Area. This enables it to take a wider view of stations as transport interchanges, and make representations about connecting bus services, footpaths and cycling provision to and from such stations^{iv}. This is particularly important in relation to stations that serve airports, as demonstrated by our recent report, Improving public transport access to London's airports^v.
- 2.8. The out of London issues dealt with by London TravelWatch in recent years are summarised in Appendix A.

3 Major issues affecting passengers in the area immediately outside the Greater London boundary

3.1. Extension of Oyster / contactless tickets and fares

3.2. Passengers tell us that they want fares and ticketing to be simple, easy to understand and provide good value for money. This includes travel to and from places outside of London. In many places London's political boundary does not reflect the continuously build up urban nature of the area. Passengers will need to travel to and from London for jobs, services and social reasons. If places beyond the London boundary are not within the Travelcard/Oyster/Contactless area for rail journeys this often makes fares and ticketing for these journeys more complex and less easy to understand, particularly if as in some cases TfL buses operate as local bus services.

3.3. To address this, London TravelWatch has advocated for the extension of Oyster/Contactless ticketing to rail stations outside London, to places such as Dartford, Swanley, Caterham, Redhill, Epsom, Leatherhead, Dorking, Claygate, Esher, Sunbury, Ashford, Staines, Slough, Denham, Potters Bar, Waltham Cross, Brentwood and Grays. We have been partially successful in that extensions to cover stations in the Caterham, Waltham Cross, Brentwood and Grays areas have been implemented and new franchise and direct award franchises have agreed to extensions that would cover Dartford, Swanley, Redhill and Gatwick Airport.

3.4. Availability of Oyster agents outside the London area

3.5. During the consultation on the introduction of cashless buses in 2013 London TravelWatch successfully highlighted the paucity of Oyster agents in areas such as Redhill, Dorking and other areas of North East Surrey and Kent, with new Oyster agents being appointed in all these areas.

3.6. Closure of ticket offices operated by London Underground

3.7. The recent proposal by London Underground to remove ticket offices from their stations included those outside of the London area. Some of these, notably those on the Metropolitan line in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, have a different character to other London Underground stations as they are also served by Chiltern Railways as a National Rail operator. However, because they have always been operated by London Underground they are not subject to the normal requirements of the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement that would otherwise apply if the station was operated by a National Rail operator^{vi}. This means that there is no statutory obligation on TfL to consult stakeholders in respect of the ticket office closures, which would lead to a restriction on the availability of certain National Rail tickets which up to now could be bought through these offices.

3.8. Maintenance of cross-border bus services

3.9. London TravelWatch has long been an advocate of maintaining and enhancing cross-boundary bus services between Greater London and adjacent areas. It

produced a report in 2009 that looked at this issue and of progress made since 2000^{vii}.

3.10. This showed that the previous decline in such services had been arrested and in some cases reversed as a result of the change of policy by TfL that had been prompted by London TravelWatch's research. Since 2008 cross-boundary service levels have either remained constant or have increased slightly in response to demand.

3.11. However, there are still places where connectivity between Greater London and surrounding areas is not meeting reasonable passenger expectations of services.

3.12. These include the provision of more direct services to Darent Valley Hospital near Dartford which is a major centre for health care for patients living in the London Borough of Bexley. It is served by one TfL bus service (the 428), but this does not serve the major population centres in the borough. There is however, another route (the 96) that does this and passes very close to the hospital, but is unable to serve the hospital because to do so would extend journey times such that it would not be achievable within current resources. However, this would be possible if TfL buses were allowed to use bus priority measures provided for the Kent County Council sponsored 'fastrack' service between Dartford and Bluewater shopping centre. Kent County Council has refused to allow this on the grounds that TfL buses do not meet the standards required for the 'fastrack' service. TfL buses however, do meet the standards for giving priority at traffic lights and it is not intended to pick up or set down passengers other than at Darent Valley Hospital. TfL is keen to serve Darent Valley Hospital with route 96.

3.13. Cost of fares and their variation between different lines and services

3.14. Within the Travelcard/Oyster/Contactless area rail fares are calculated by the number of zones travelled through. However, outside of this area rail fares are subject to the commercial requirements of individual train operators, but also reflect government policy. This means that some lines are potentially more affordable than others, but the ability to take this up is dependant on the availability and type of local housing stock. This means that a person on a low income relocating from London, but still working there, might live in an area of cheaper housing but face significantly higher transport costs and longer duration of journey to work. There are also significant variations in service levels that mean that some areas are more accessible than others.

3.15. This is illustrated in the table shown in Appendix B that compares the cost of an annual Travelcard from principle stations immediately outside zone 6.

3.16. Removal of calls from stations on the edge of London in favour of shorter journey times and more services on long distance routes

3.17. The table in Appendix B illustrates the complexity of fares in relation to areas just outside the Greater London area. However, a further complication is the trend in recent years of long distance train operators reducing the numbers of

calls at stations within a 15 to 30 mile radius of central London (henceforth referred to as 15-30 mile zone), as operators might be tempted to prioritise longer distance routes which are more profitable.

3.18. Examples of this include:

- The withdrawal in 2008 of calls at Watford Junction by Virgin Trains on services to North West England, North Wales and Scotland on the basis that they would be partially replaced by extra London Midland services, which was followed in 2012 by the withdrawal of calls at Watford Junction by London Midland on services to North West England in order to compete with Virgin Trains on journey times
- The reduction of service levels at stations between Princes Risborough and Gerrards Cross by Chiltern Railways in order to run additional and faster long distance services to the West Midlands to compete with Virgin Trains and London Midland.
- A proposed reduction of calls by long distance services at Slough by First Great Western consequent to the introduction of Crossrail in 2018 and a desire to reduce journey times.
- A proposed reduction in the number of required calls by long distance services at Stevenage by Virgin East Coast Trains by 50% in the new franchise in order to reduce journey times.
- Reduction in Southern and Thameslink services to Redhill, because of capacity pressures on the Brighton Main Line, and a desire to speed up journey times to south coast towns.

3.19. There are also similar pressures on other rail routes out of London, particularly where capacity is an issue or where journey times are perceived to be slow e.g. Norwich on the Great Eastern route. This could potentially lead to the withdrawal of stops in this 15-30 mile from London zone in an effort to speed up overall end to end journey times.

3.20. The withdrawal of such stops has a number of downsides for passengers both within London and the area immediately beyond the Greater London boundary. These include:

- Reduced connectivity from population centres in the 15-30 mile zone and outer London to other parts of the UK.
- Slower journey times to central London from these stops as faster services are withdrawn and greater reliance is placed on slower services e.g. Slough to London Paddington
- Increased crowding on remaining slower services, becoming more acute closer to central London as on the inward journeys passengers from outside London would have priority of seats available
- Increased demand on services into and out of central London as passengers 'double back' in order to access services to and from other parts of the UK that formerly would have stopped at about 15-30 miles outside e.g. Southall to Bristol via Slough replaced by Southall – Bristol via London Paddington. At peak times this would increase crowding issues in and out of London Paddington.

- Increasing pressure to reduce stops on slower services closer to central London so as to improve journey times from the 15-30 mile zone.
- Increasing fares as passengers would be required to purchase tickets 'via London' instead of a cheaper 'not London' fare.
- Potential modal shift from rail to private car as journeys become more difficult by public transport.

3.21. London TravelWatch has been active in attempting to resist and mitigate the effects of such changes and opposed all of the changes outlined in paragraph 3.17. It has done this through responses to franchise and rail industry planning consultations and through on-going dialogue with the industry.

3.22. Devolution of responsibility for rail services to the Mayor of London

3.23. This has been actively supported by London TravelWatch because of the clear accountability and planning benefits to passengers travelling in Greater London and surrounding areas. Nevertheless, London TravelWatch has also been keen to ensure that the interests of passengers who live outside of London but who are dependent on services that would be provided by the Mayor are protected. To this end a protocol^{viii} was developed that addresses this, and which has been adopted by TfL as a means of ensuring such protection.

3.24. London TravelWatch's priorities for passenger safeguards in the event of devolution of rail services to the Mayor of London were published in June 2013 and are included at Appendix C.

3.25. Provision of appropriate rail infrastructure

3.26. London TravelWatch has supported the provision of new or reinstated rail infrastructure outside of the Greater London area where this benefits passengers both within London and the wider London railway area. Examples of this include:

- The 'Croxley link' rail project in Watford linking the Metropolitan line to Watford Junction (providing greater connectivity to rail routes in North West London and Hertfordshire)
- The extension of electrification to the Hurst Green to Uckfield, Reading to Gatwick Airport and Ashford to Ore routes (providing more capacity on routes from Croydon into London, releasing existing capacity between Gatwick Airport and London, and releasing capacity on routes from Sevenoaks, Orpington and Swanley into London)
- The enhancement of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton via Peterborough freight route where this would release capacity on the Great Eastern and West Coast Main Lines and the North London route of London Overground.

3.27. Public transport access to London's airports

3.28. London's airports are major transport interchanges located within the London railway area, with three being outside of the Greater London area (Gatwick,

Luton and Stansted) and two within (Heathrow and London City). Improving the public transport accessibility of these airports has been explored in the recent report by London TravelWatch on this subject.

3.29. This report made a number of recommendations which have benefits for passengers in the areas outside of London including:

- Extension of Oyster/contactless to Gatwick Airport
- Extension of Oyster/contactless to cover journeys on Heathrow, Express and Heathrow Connect, allowing passengers to make journeys across the Oyster network including areas outside London, and on journeys to and from Luton and Stansted airports
- Passengers able to buy the full range of National Rail tickets from the three rail stations at Heathrow Airport
- A range of passenger improvements that would benefit passengers both within and outside London
- Provision of new interchanges that reduce journey times and increase consumer choice such as West Hampstead on the Chiltern line (London-wide benefits and also to passengers from Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Kent, Surrey and West Sussex)
- Provision of new direct rail links from South London, North West Surrey and the Thames Valley to Heathrow Airport (also benefitting Kent, West and East Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and south west England)

4 Recommendation

4.1. It is recommended that London TravelWatch:

- Continues to support the appropriate extension of Oyster / Contactless ticketing to places outside Greater London where there would be a wider passenger benefit in doing so, including ensuring easy access to Oyster agents.
- Supports the consequent simplification of fares and ticketing arising from such extensions.
- Supports the maintenance and enhancement of cross boundary bus services
- Continues to press for the retention and enhancement of stops in longer distance train services at stations with large population catchments in the 15-30 mile from central London zone. Clarification will be sought from Virgin East Coast trains as to what their exact intentions are in respect of services calling at Stevenage.
- London TravelWatch continues to support the provision of additional rail infrastructure where this benefits passengers in the London railway area

5 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 5.1. As noted above there are potential issues about access to jobs and services for people on low incomes.

6 London TravelWatch priority

- 6.1. This issue falls within the core remit of London TravelWatch.

7 Legal powers

- 7.1. Section 248 of the Greater London Authority (GLA) 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). Section 252A of the same Act (as amended by Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005) places a similar duty upon the 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.
- 7.2. Schedule 6 of the Railways Act 2005 defines the extent of the London railways area.
- 7.3. It should be noted that the GLA act 1999 requires that at least one member of the London TravelWatch Board should be a non-Greater London resident. This is not currently being fulfilled under the current Board appointments. However, Board members also make out of London visits and we have dialogue with local user groups to ensure we understand the issues. In addition, five members of staff currently reside outside of Greater London, and regularly report on issues affecting their area.

8 Financial implications

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

Appendix A – Summary of London TravelWatch local activity outside of the Greater London area by county

Kent

1. Lobbying for extension of Oyster / contactless ticketing to Dartford, Swanley and Sevenoaks in Southeastern direct award franchise – agreed for Dartford and Swanley.
2. Lobbying for improvements to Eynsford, Shoreham (Kent), Bat & Ball and Dunton Green stations in new Southeastern direct award franchise
3. Lobbying for diversion of TfL bus 96 to serve Darent Valley Hospital – not yet achieved.
4. Successfully lobbied for a Sunday service on TfL bus B15 to Joydens Wood Estate – began in 2013.
5. Lobbying for inclusion of local stopping services serving Dartford and Sevenoaks in devolved rail concession to the Mayor of London, including appropriate safeguards for the interest Kentish passengers.
6. Lobbied for improved capacity on limited stop routes from Sevenoaks, Otford and Swanley.

Surrey and Gatwick Airport

1. Travelcard / Oyster / Contactless area extended to cover the Caterham, Tattenham Corner and Epsom Downs branches in 2007.
2. Undertook various consultations on ticket office hours changes by Southern and South West Trains.
3. Successfully lobbied TfL to retain many cross – boundary bus links in the early 2000's when threatened by withdrawal by commercial bus operators.
4. Successfully lobbied TfL to add extra Oyster agents in 2014 when cashless bus operation introduced. Included innovative arrangement with Dorking Library.
5. Participated in rail industry consultations on major station rebuilds at Epsom, Redhill and other locations.
6. Participated in rail industry planning process for routes through Surrey and to Gatwick Airport. Lobbied for completion of electrification of routes such as London Bridge – Uckfield and Reading – Gatwick Airport to improve overall capacity.
7. Published report on improving public transport access to London's airports that recommends better links to Gatwick and new lines to Heathrow Airport from South London and North West Surrey.

Berkshire

1. Scope of Crossrail to be extended to Reading
2. Support for western rail access route to Heathrow Airport from the Great Western main line.

3. Support for retaining stops at Slough in longer distance First Great Western services.
4. Supported the case for extending Oyster / contactless to Slough.

Buckinghamshire

1. Objected to the whittling down of local services on the Chiltern route in favour of faster and additional services between London and the West Midlands.
2. Supported the provision of an all day through London Underground service to Chesham.
3. Published report on improving public transport access to London's airports.

Hertfordshire

1. Objected to the withdrawal of cross boundary bus services on the Lea Valley corridor between Hertford and Enfield
2. Undertook various consultations on ticket office hours changes by First Capital Connect and London Midland.
3. Objected to and later got modified proposals by First Capital Connect to restrict use of off-peak tickets at various stations in the evening peak.
4. Supported the provision of the 'Croxley Link' extension of the Metropolitan line to Watford Junction
5. Undertook a public hearing on the closure proposals for Watford (Met) station under the London closures procedure.
6. Objected to the withdrawal of calls at Watford Junction by Virgin Trains in services to and from North West England, North Wales and Scotland in 2008.
7. Objected to the withdrawal of calls at Watford Junction By London Midland in services to and from North West England in 2012 that had been provided as a partial alternative to the previously withdrawn Virgin Trains services.
8. Submitted response to East Coast franchise opposing proposed 50% reduction in calls at Stevenage in new franchise, in order speed up journey times to places further out of London – still awaiting confirmation from Virgin East Coast as to whether this will take place or not.
9. Supported the devolution of West Anglia rail services to London Overground.
10. Lobbied for and got extension of Oyster / contactless to Cheshunt.

Bedfordshire and Luton Airport

1. Lobbied for and got additional calls at Luton Airport Parkway station in early morning / weekend East Midlands Trains services.
2. Lobbied for and got reinstatement of evening peak calls at Bedford in East Midlands Trains services
3. Supported the development of the East – West rail route (Oxford – Bicester – Milton Keynes – Bedford). Stage 1 now funded and agreed by government. Stage 2 extension to Cambridge under discussion. This will provide an

alternative route to travelling via central London and therefore provide some crowding relief.

4. Published report on improving public transport access to London's airports.

Essex and Stansted Airport

1. Lobbied for and got extension of bus 498 to provide a direct link between Brentwood and Queen's Hospital, Romford
2. Lobbied for and got extension of Oyster / contactless to Brentwood, Shenfield and Grays.
3. Published report on improving public transport access to London's airports, including support for better rail links to Stansted Airport.

Appendix B – Table of comparative costs of annual season tickets including zone 1 from selected rail stations outside of the Greater London Authority area.

Station	Miles from main London Terminal	Cost of Annual Season Ticket (including zone 1 to 6 Travelcard) £	Commentary
Potters Bar	12	2932	
Dartford	13	2992	
Cuffley	14	2892	
Cheshunt	14	3008	
Radlett	16	3148	
Swanley	17	3136	
Watford Junction	17	3348	
Leatherhead	18	2840 3020	Southern only Any permitted
Brentwood	18	3496	
Gerrards Cross	18	3296	
Slough	18	3252	
Chorleywood	19	2544	TfL set fare
Grays	19	3352	
Staines	19	3152	
Oxted	20	3004	
St.Albans City	21	4128	
Redhill	21	3432	More expensive than Dorking fare which is valid at Redhill
Sevenoaks	21	3944	
Dorking	22	3096 3324	Southern only Any permitted
Amersham	23	3336	TfL set fare
Woking	24	3792	
Gatwick Airport	26	4880* 5556*	Thameslink only Southern only
Three Bridges	29	3240 4228	Thameslink only Any permitted

Note :* Three Bridges is beyond Gatwick Airport on the Brighton Main Line. Any season ticket from Three Bridges toward London is valid at Gatwick Airport. Therefore the cheapest Season Ticket from Gatwick Airport towards London would be one valid from Three Bridges.

Appendix C – Passenger safeguards in the event of devolution

Essential passenger safeguards to ensure successful and fair devolution of rail services

London TravelWatch is seeking these to make sure that the interests of all passengers, regardless of where they are travelling to or from, are taken into account in any agreement to devolve more responsibility for train services to the Mayor of London through Transport for London (TfL).

1. **Guaranteed even handedness in track access** between continuing Department for Transport franchises and any devolved concession operations so as to ensure that the needs of all passengers are catered for equitably.
2. **Guaranteed interavailability of ordinary tickets over common routes within the London travel area** irrespective of operator.
3. **A commitment to work together with other operators in providing seamless information to passengers**, especially during times of disruption and at interchanges between services provided by franchisees and the concessionaire.
4. **A commitment to an operational agreement to work together in the best interests of all passengers**, sharing resources at times of disruption and where separate provision is not justified, to maximise efficiency.
5. **Separation of the formulae for setting fares** between franchises and concessions, to ensure that political or commercial decisions in either do not have unintended negative or anomalous consequences for the other.
6. **A commitment to regular and meaningful consultation** by all parties with London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus on all issues affecting passengers. This should be inclusive from the tender design stage by TfL through to day to day operation by the concessionaire, and should at a minimum be comparable to that currently required of train operating companies under the existing franchise arrangements and licensing regime.
7. **A commitment to regular and meaningful dialogue with passengers and user groups on issues affecting them.**
8. **A commitment to work with local authorities**, both inside and outside London, to ensure a better whole journey experience, by means of improved interchanges and through ticketing schemes with local public transport operators.
9. **A commitment to transparency of data**, on items such as delay attribution and service performance.

June 2013

Endnotes

ⁱ National rail closure procedure http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/our_work/railway_closures

ⁱⁱ London closures procedure http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/london_closures

ⁱⁱⁱ Watford (Met) closure hearing papers

[http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/view?id=137&x\[0\]=news/list](http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/news/view?id=137&x[0]=news/list)

^{iv} Getting to the Station

http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3035&age=&field=file

^v Improving public transport access to London's airports

http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3894&field=file

^{vi} Also applies to West Brompton, West Ruislip, South Ruislip, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Highbury & Islington, Old Street, Moorgate, Kentish Town, Seven Sisters, Blackhorse Road and West Ham stations within London.

^{vii} Crossing the border 2008

http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=1898&field=file

^{viii} Devolution rail passenger protocol

http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=3705&age=&field=file