
Secretariat memorandum

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LTW569

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Passenger issues at Victoria

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To give members a broad overview of issues affecting transport users in this area and to stimulate discussion.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are recommended to note this report.

3 Background

- 3.1 Victoria is one of London's largest and busiest multi-modal interchanges, with National Rail¹ and London Underground² rail stations, a local bus station, and three separate coach station elements dedicated to long distance and international coaches³. Taxis and private hire vehicles also feature heavily as means of transport in and around the area. The Congestion Charge boundary and Inner Ring Road also pass through the area, adding complexity for motorists and cyclists.
- 3.2 Over the past ten years the area in and around Victoria has been, and is in the process of being, redeveloped to provide additional passenger capacity on public transport, and also general redevelopment of offices, shops and theatres in close proximity to the public transport facilities.
- 3.3 The largest public transport development currently being completed is the expansion of the London Underground station to include additional ticket halls, entrances and exits and step-free access to all the platforms. These works have also required displacement of a number of bus services that use the bus station directly on top of the London Underground ticket hall, and the taxi rank that formerly occupied the area in front of the main pedestrian entrance to the National Rail station.
- 3.4 Full details of the Victoria station upgrade from TfL's perspective can be found at <https://tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/victoria> .

¹ 81million passenger journeys in 2015/16

² 83 million passenger journeys in 2016

³ Usage around 14million passenger journeys per annum

- 3.5 So far this project is on schedule for completion in 2018. However, during its progress a number of issues affecting passengers have come to light partly because there have also been building and road works by other parties that have affected passengers as they need to pass through the area. London TravelWatch successfully highlighted these in 2015⁴ with the result that TfL provided additional signage in and around the area. London TravelWatch has urged that lessons learnt from the experience of Victoria are transposed to future redevelopments around major London Terminals such as Euston.
- 3.6. The extent of the redevelopment of the area by both TfL and other developers has had a big impact on passengers whilst works have been taking place. These include:
- Displacement of bus services and bus stops away from the main line railway station resulting in longer walking distances to bus stops for passengers, and diversion of buses resulting in longer journey times and congestion affecting local bus and long distance coach operations.
 - Displacement of taxi ranks to locations further away from the main line railway station.
 - Road closures affecting traffic on the inner ring road and boundary of the Congestion Charging zone.
 - Poor conditions for cyclists and pedestrians moving through the area.
 - Regular emergency closures of the London Underground station due to overcrowding at peak times, that also have an impact on the operation of the National Rail station.
- 3.7 The National Rail station has also had a number of works take place over the same period, but has also experienced problems of in its own right, largely associated with the poor performance of the GTR franchise e.g. the decision in May 2017 to withdraw late night services operated by Southern after midnight on Monday to Thursday evenings as a result of the recommendations of the Gibb review.

4 Future developments at Victoria

- 4.1. The development of Crossrail 2 will have a major impact on the Victoria area if approved. In the construction phase it will require the closure of the current Victoria Coach Station arrival and departure buildings to facilitate the construction of Crossrail 2. In order to do this, coaches will need to be relocated to another or other terminal points within central London. To date no alternative site(s) have been identified that would be suitable to receive the level of coach activity that is currently concentrated in and around the Victoria area. Westminster City Council, representing residents, would like to see Victoria Coach Station relocated to a site other than in their area.
- 4.2. London TravelWatch has previously noted in its joint research work 'Living on the Edge' that people on lower incomes are more dependent on coaches for long

⁴ <https://twitter.com/search?q=victoria%20signage%20%40lontravelwatch&src=typd>

distance and international travel because of their relative affordability compared to rail and air travel.

5 London TravelWatch position

- 5.1. The Victoria area has seen major upheaval for passengers and users in recent times, and it will be important that once the current sets of works are completed in 2018 that there is a period of relatively normal operation if passengers are to feel the benefit of the investment that has been put into the transport infrastructure here.
- 5.2. In terms of good interchange, it is important that bus routes and taxi ranks are restored to positions after the works that minimise walking routes with the National Rail station.
- 5.3. In the development of Crossrail 2, whilst this is an essential transport investment in London, it will be necessary to ensure that the needs of long distance and international coach travellers are protected and considered, if Victoria Coach Station in its current form is closed. There will also be a need to ensure that during construction that Victoria is able to function as the major interchange that it is.

6 London TravelWatch priority

- 6.1. The issues raised in this report reflect London TravelWatch's prioritisation criteria.

7 Equalities and inclusion implications

- 7.1. There are no equality and inclusion implications directly arising from this report.

8 Legal powers

- 8.1. 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).
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. Section 228 of the Transport Act 2000 places a duty upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) to keep under review matters affecting the public in relation to railway passenger services and station services, and to make representations about them to such persons as it thinks appropriate.

9 Financial implications

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