
Secretariat memorandum

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Station Travel Plan update

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1. To update members on work to review the effectiveness of station travel plans (STPs) in improving the quality of access to the surface rail network.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1. To continue asking train operating companies (TOCs) and the Department for Transport (DfT) about how they monitor the travel plans. TOCs could be asked to provide specific details about their plans, the work to be carried out as a result and how they plan to monitor modal shift.
- 2.2. If possible, to access the data used in the National Rail Travel Survey, which has informed some of the modal share in current travel plans. This information does not seem to be available publically, but could be useful in understanding modal shift.
- 2.3. To ask RDG to ensure that the best practice information for creating travel plans is available online as currently the links on the website do not work.
- 2.4. During discussions around franchise evaluation, London TravelWatch should stress the importance of ensuring the proposed timetables and deadlines are appropriate for the creation and monitoring of STPs. These controls need to be introduced during the creation of the franchise award as they then become binding.

3 Background Information

- 3.1. STPs have been derived from similar travel plans used to monitor and influence travel to schools, hospitals or workplaces. They are a management tool which focuses on improving access to and from a station, mitigating local transport and parking problems and supporting a sustainable growth in rail usage.
- 3.2. The aim of a station travel plan is to ensure a modal shift. This means changing the way that passengers choose to travel to and from the station. Ideally this will create a shift to a more sustainable mode, such as walking or public transport. A station travel plan recognises that a railway station itself is often not the final destination for passengers. A STP aims to influence the first/last mile transport decisions that passengers make.

- 3.3. From a passenger perspective, travel plans can highlight areas for improvement to make it easier to reach a station by public transport. They can alleviate busy car parks by highlighting improvements for access by public transport. They can also improve the environment and usability of the station by auditing and recording areas for improvement that would persuade passengers to use alternative forms of transport, such as an additional station entrance which means more passengers walk to the station instead of drive.
- 3.4. Travel plans are a document in progress; once written they should be monitored and evaluated to ensure that improvements are completed and that modal share of transport shifts to a more sustainable balance.

4 History and context of station travel plans

- 4.1. A station travel plan acts as an audit which allows TOCs and local authorities to easily identify areas for improvement. This can be in terms of the types of communities served by rail services, and also links with other modes of transport.
- 4.2. The idea for STPs was first highlighted by London TravelWatch in 2005 with the report 'Getting to the Station.' The report focused on understanding how passengers and staff travelled to stations. The Association of Train Operating Companies, ATOC (now the Rail Delivery Group), set up a series of pilots in 2008. 30 stations trialled a travel plan and the results were evaluated in 2012. As a result a set of criteria were created as 'best practice' for TOCs to create their own travel plans. This is no longer available on the ATOC/RDG website and therefore the links on the website should be checked and updated.
- 4.3. A commitment by TOCs to create travel plans has increasingly been written into franchise agreements. However, it is not clear if travel plans are being regularly monitored, or whether any monitoring commitments are currently being written into franchise agreements.

5 Current situation regarding station travel plans

- 5.1. STPs form part of a committed obligation as part of the franchise agreement. This means they are part of the contract between the TOC and the Department for Transport.
- 5.2. The franchise agreement dictates how many STPs are to be created. The TOC is able to choose the stations.
- 5.3. There is often a time limit on when the committed obligation has to be completed by. TOCs are at risks of being fined for breach of contract if this timeline is not met.
- 5.4. An essential part of an STP is the modelling of modal share, and from this creating an action plan to shift travel behaviours.
- 5.5. TOCs will often put the contract for creating the plans out for tender. They can choose one or several providers to create the STPs.

- 5.6. To create an effective STP, there are some key stakeholder relationships that a TOC will have to manage. These include Network Rail, other TOCs, local authorities, rail user groups and local schools and businesses.
- 5.7. There is no one size fits all plan. Each travel plan will be different and should be based around the needs of the local community.
- 5.8. Monitoring and evaluation will often be jointly conducted by the TOC and local authority.

6 Positives outcomes

- 6.1. Creating a travel plan is an expensive process. Therefore, TOCs commissioning and paying for STPs as part of their franchise agreement is a positive commitment. Stations and local authorities gain a travel plan which otherwise would be unaffordable.
- 6.2. By using a third party (often a transport planning consultant) to create the plans, TOCs can ensure best practice is used. There is also guidance from what is now the RDG and also the RSSB about what best practice looks like, with a template for conducting the surveys.
- 6.3. TOCs will often have a budget set aside for works which arise as a result of STP audits. Travel plans can result in improvement work being carried out quickly because of these ring-fenced funds.
- 6.4. STPs ensure joint working and good communication between TOCs and local stakeholders. Improvements are often a direct result of stakeholder input and therefore reflect stakeholder needs.
- 6.5. TOCs encourage local authorities to take ownership of the plan. Whilst there will often be a point of contact at the TOC, local authorities are better placed to co-ordinate transport solutions as they have wider reach and perspective. Some TOCs will set up a steering group to ensure that there is local control. Others will provide the funds but allow local authorities to set up the process from the outset.

7 Areas to focus on in future to ensure maximum effectiveness

- 7.1. **Choosing which stations get travel plans:** There is a risk that the choice of which stations get a travel plan is dictated by the timeframe included in the franchise agreement. Yet it should be noted that by introducing travel plans in the first place, local communities can gain a lot, and TOCs can improve their relationships with local stakeholders.
- 7.2. Due to committed obligations in franchise agreements having a clear and sometimes short timeframe, STPs can result in only 'quick fixes' being identified. The timeframe for the STP is set before the franchise is won, and can sometimes conflict with a local authority's planning timetable. This can mean that a TOC's travel plan may not feed in to a wider masterplan for an area, and therefore may result in the travel plan being less effective than it otherwise could be. However, the short timeframe for implementing work does mean that issues arising from the travel plan are seen as a priority and therefore improvement work is completed quickly.

- 7.3. Internal deadlines within a TOC due to the timing of committed obligations, can also lead to a focus on stations where there are good existing ties with local authorities. This is not negative in itself. Travel plans are more likely to be successful if there is buy-in from local authorities. However, it can mean that stations are chosen because they are an easy choice, due to pre-existing relationships with local authorities. In turn, this could mean that perceived 'tricky' stations are not assessed in their need for a travel plan.
- 7.4. **Monitoring and evaluation:** There is a risk that some travel plans may end up being more effective than others. Monitoring and evaluation may vary quite dramatically from TOC to TOC. There is an additional risk that a travel plan becomes a short term project which is created and then forgotten about, instead of being essential in shaping the future of the station.
- 7.5. The RDG has created a best practice guide for station travel plans, although it is currently unavailable on the website. Additionally, no single station travel plan will look the same, as each set of action points arising will be station specific. Yet there is a risk that across the industry, some travel plans may be of a better standard than others, depending on the budget of the TOC and how often the plan is updated.
- 7.6. There is a risk that once the travel plans have been created, they are no longer monitored. The committed obligations in the franchise agreement only apply to the initial work which is involved in creating the travel plan. Therefore, there is little concrete incentive for the TOC to monitor and evaluate the STP going forward-although many TOCs have plans in place to do so. However, the most effective STPs will be championed by local authorities. Additionally, TOCs do set up internal monitoring systems to ensure that improvement work in stations are completed.
- 7.7. Due to the franchising system, there is a risk that travel plans will be forgotten about as franchises change. However, as they are a joint project between local authorities, user groups and TOCs, there is an incentive for local authorities to ensure they are updated. Additionally, with emerging technologies, such as electric cars or dockless bikes, there may well be a need to re-plan each travel plan at the start of each franchise, as both the technology and the passenger needs are changing so fast.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1. Travel plans are expensive to create. By TOCs funding travel plans through franchise agreements, the plans are created where they otherwise would not have been. Station travel plans can be a useful tool for auditing what improvement works need to be carried out to improve transport links to a station. In turn, this can ensure that sustainable forms of transport are used when travelling to a station. The plans can allow TOCs and local stakeholders to build relationships and introduce improvements that local communities actually need and want. However, station travel plans must be monitored proactively, as otherwise instead of creating lasting improvements, the plans may end up forgotten.

9 London TravelWatch priority

- 9.1. The items and issues raised in this report fall within the remit of London TravelWatch and they meet the criteria for relevance and impact on transport users in the London

TravelWatch area. In particular, encouraging the modal share of travelling in London to shift towards more sustainable means.

10 Equalities and inclusion implications

10.1. None – report is for information only.

11 Financial implications

11.1. None – report is for information only.

12 Legal powers

12.1. 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).

12.2. 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.