London Assembly Crossrail Scrutiny - Consultation Response

January 2010

London TravelWatch Response to the London Assembly Transport Committee Crossrail Scrutiny


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
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service provider and
- Monitor trends in service quality.

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

Published by:

London TravelWatch
6 Middle Street
London EC1A 7JA

Phone: 020 7505 9000
Fax: 020 7505 9003

Contents

Executive Summary

London TravelWatch's function is to represent the interests of the users of transport services provided by or on behalf of Transport for London, and of the National Rail network in and around London. It fulfils this responsibility by:

- Acting as the appeals body for complaints from or on behalf of transport users that have not been dealt with to the complainants' satisfaction

- Responding to consultation and scrutiny exercises initiated by service providers, regulatory bodies, central and local government and others on matters relating to services within its remit and to transport policy in general

- Undertaking pro-active research into transport needs in its area

London TravelWatch has been asked to provide input into the London Assembly Transport Committee's review of Crossrail. This document provides that response and is divided into the following sections:

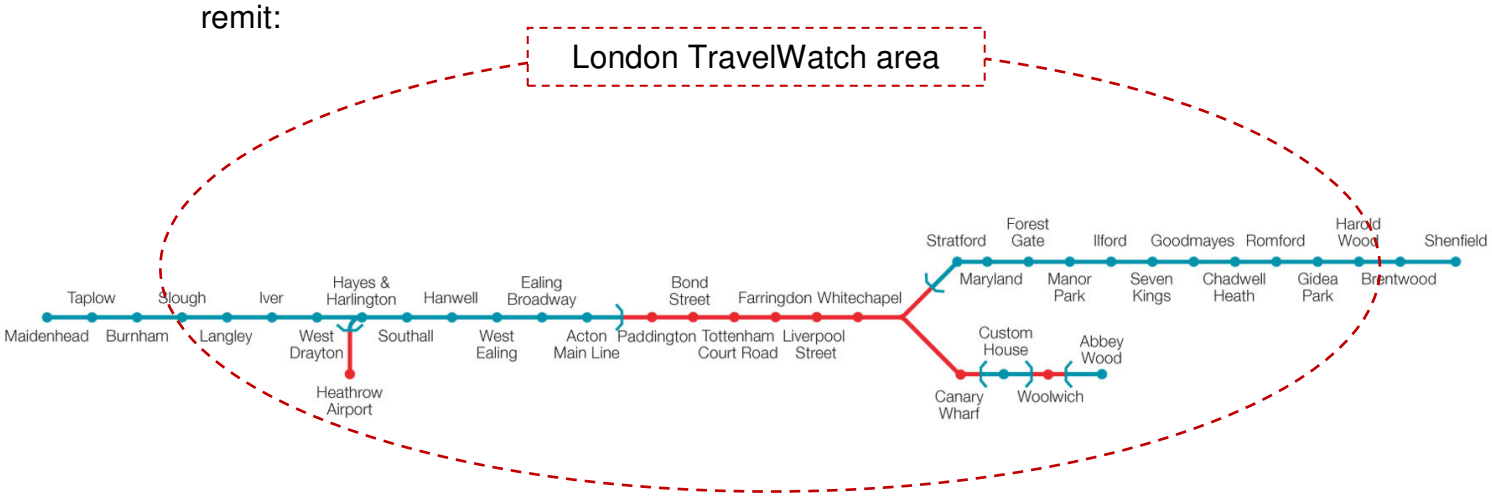
- Crossrail Train Services – the challenges and opportunities for Crossrail train services

- Stations – the interchange requirements and the upgrade of existing stations

- Construction Works – mitigating the impact of Crossrail and keeping transport users informed, as well as effectively coordinating with other major projects

1 Introduction

On the route of Crossrail, London TravelWatch's remit extends from Slough in the west to Harold Wood on the Great Eastern Mainline (GEML) and Abbey Wood in Kent. The map below shows the Crossrail route as it is currently proposed, and within the red dashed circle the area within London TravelWatch's remit:



London TravelWatch's response to the scrutiny of Crossrail by the London Assembly Transport Committee relates to the areas within our remit, shown within the red dashed circle in the diagram above. However, where issues beyond this boundary have an impact on the scheme as a whole, these have also been commented upon on the basis that they affect passengers within our remit.

2 Crossrail Train Services

The Crossrail timetable has been developed through a series of iterations and will continue to develop between now and the end of 2017, when services are scheduled to be introduced.

2.1 Great Western Mainline

In 2009 it was announced that the Great Western Mainline (GWML) would be electrified. The precise details of this scheme are now being developed by Network Rail and the Department for Transport. This decision has significant implications for Crossrail. It means that instead of being a suburban electrified railway surrounded by diesel long distance high speed (LDHS) and Thames Valley services, Crossrail will now be amongst other electric trains. This presents an opportunity for service flexibility and integration with other services. For example, the extension of Crossrail to Reading would not require such a level of additional infrastructure investment on the part of Crossrail to provide traction power from Maidenhead to Reading.

2.1.1 Great Western Thames Valley Branch Lines

As the Crossrail scheme is currently proposed, train services to branch lines such as Marlow, Windsor, and Henley would be operated by DMUs (Diesel Multiple Units). Direct services to London Paddington are challenging to fit within the current timetable because these DMUs (Diesel Multiple Units) are limited to 90 mph, whereas LDHS operate at 125 mph and Crossrail EMUs (Electric Multiple Units) will be 100 mph. The electrification of these branch lines does not have committed funding but their inclusion in the wider GWML electrification offers the opportunity to integrate the branch line services and provide direct connections to London, rather than requiring an interchange onto Crossrail at locations such as Maidenhead.

2.1.2 Intercity Express Programme

While electrification presents opportunities for Crossrail there are also some challenges on the GWML. The Intercity Express Programme (IEP) is currently being developed by the DfT and is the replacement for the HST, the 30 year old high speed trains. The new trains will be either electrically powered or be able to generate their own power and take electricity from overhead wires. The timetable for these trains is at the early stage of development and will not be in commercial service until the end of this decade.

The uncertainty about the IEP timetable presents some problems for developing the Crossrail timetable and also assessing the actual impact on train performance of Crossrail services. The IEP timetable may also mean that even if

branches are electrified there may still be insufficient capacity to operate direct services to London Paddington.

2.2 Freight Capacity

London TravelWatch as a passenger consumer body primarily represents the interests of rail passengers. However, we are interested in rail freight where it has the potential to impact upon passengers. Crossrail train services use line capacity on both the GE and GW which are key freight arteries. As a result much of the freight related infrastructure is about preserving existing rather than creating new capacity.

London TravelWatch is therefore strongly supportive of rail schemes such as the Felixstowe to Nuneaton project. This project will allow freight trains from the Port of Felixstowe to reach their destinations in the West Midlands via Peterborough without having to transit London or the south of the West Coast Mainline. Such schemes will relieve pressure on London as a freight route freeing up capacity and improving performance.

2.3 Performance

The impact on the performance of the railway network by Crossrail will be a critical element in the success of the project.

2.3.1 Normal Operations

Crossrail will link two sections of the railway network east west across London, which has the potential to transmit disruption across the railway network. This can be illustrated in the performance of current Thameslink network, which is very challenging to operate because it links the network south and north of the Thames. The consequence is that disruption that would otherwise not affect the opposite side of London is linked by the Thameslink service. For this reason it is vital that the service and infrastructure is designed to maximise the potential for good performance.

2.3.2 Major Disruption

London TravelWatch recommends that capacity is built into the infrastructure to cope with more major disruption to allow the operation of effective services. For example, at times when the Crossrail tunnels do not allow through operation sufficient rolling stock and infrastructure should allow trains to operate elsewhere on the Crossrail network. Again the challenges faced on the Thameslink network illustrate the importance of investment in capacity to cater for disruption.

3 Stations

London TravelWatch is concerned that the plans for upgrade of existing stations may be scaled back to control the project's budget. London TravelWatch would resist any attempts to reduce the scope of works in this area. This is because there are a considerable number of stations on the route which are not sufficient for the current needs of passengers. A good example of this is Ealing Broadway station which in 2008 handled 21.4 million passengers between London Underground and National Rail. The station facilities do not match this volume of passengers, with all users having to use a single deeply in adequate entrance. The photograph below shows the existing entrance arrangements.

Photograph 2 – the entrance to Ealing Broadway station, which is shared between London Underground and National Rail

With the increase of patronage under Crossrail this will put further pressure on these existing assets.

3.1 Interchange

3.1.1 HS2

Crossrail may well have a role in the dispersal of people who are brought to London by an eventual High Speed 2 (HS2). This role could either be at its central London station or in linking up with the line to carry passengers to Heathrow airport. This is an important role and HS2 will require careful planning in order not to overload the existing transport infrastructure or Crossrail.

3.1.2 Paddington

Paddington station requires considerable engineering work to accommodate both Crossrail and the IEP. London TravelWatch urges that these works are coordinated to the maximum benefit of passengers.

3.2 Kensal Green Station

London TravelWatch supports the suggestion for a station at Kensal Green. We believe that this area of London would benefit from greater connection to the transport network and that the impact of Crossrail would be enhanced.

4 Construction Works

4.1 Communication Strategy

London TravelWatch believes that for the most part the Thameslink Programme's strategy of communication has been successful in informing passengers of the impact of disruption and the rationale for the engineering works. Crossrail has an effective internet presence as well as a proactive stake holder engagement programme. As the Thameslink Programme is some years in advance of Crossrail there is an opportunity for the latter to learn considerably from both its successes and failures.

As Crossrail increasingly impacts upon Londoners the importance of clear and informative communication of disruption will be vital. It is therefore imperative that every opportunity is taken to learn from the experience to date of Thameslink.

4.2 Impact of Crossrail in 2010

From 2010 onwards Crossrail is going to have an increasing impact on the lives of people living in and around London. The Thameslink Programme has been quite successful at communicating essential information to transport users about its impact through its website and the train operating companies involved. As Crossrail begins to enter the construction phase of the project, this will become increasingly important. London TravelWatch believes that an effective engagement with train operating companies in the communication strategy along with a clear website decimating key information will be essential.

Crossrail will also lead to the disruption of other modes of transport and for example, the disruption of bus routes. The challenge of communicating the message of Crossrail about the nature and reason for the disruption will be very hard. For this reason it is very important that the whole of the transport industry works in a coordinated manner to keep Londoners informed.

Communication to date has been effective but the key test will be from 2010 onwards.

4.3 Other Major Projects

There are a number of other major projects that will affect passengers in addition to Crossrail. These projects are all scheduled for delivery around the middle of this decade between 2010 and 2017.

4.3.1 Electrification

Electrification is planned of the GWML with completion of the project from 2016 onwards. To erect the overhead line electrification equipment and power supply will be complex and will require closures of the railway to allow engineering access. This work will be conducted at the same time as Crossrail. It is important that the works are planned in such a way as to minimise the impact to passengers.

4.3.2 Reading Station

The Reading Station area scheme will see a massive remodelling of the station and track layout. To achieve this will require extensive engineering work which will disrupt trains into and out of London Paddington. The scheme is due to be completed in 2016.

4.3.3 Paddington Station

In addition to Crossrail, Paddington station will require work to provide for the capacity to accommodate IEP. This work has not been specified in detail but is likely to require additional long platforms to accommodate all IEP services. This work has the potential to be combined with Crossrail to ensure the least disruption to passengers.

4.3.4 ERTMS

There are plans to re-signal the GWML with ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System). It is not certain exactly when the GWML will be re-signalled, but it is likely to be required at some point from the end of this decade. The engineering work required to implement this project would also result in passenger disruption.

5 Conclusion

With the start of 2010, Crossrail is about to move into the main construction programme. The impact that the project will have on London's transport users is going to significantly increase. London TravelWatch believes that if Crossrail is able to build on the communication strategy of the Thameslink Programme that it will be able to meet this challenge. However, there are some very substantial issues that will need to be addressed in that period:

- Coordination with other major projects
- Effective cross mode communication of information about the impact of engineering work, and
- The Olympics

Appendix – Glossary

Term	Definition
ERTMS	European Rail Traffic Management System
GWML	Great Western Mainline
GW	Great Western
GEML	Great Eastern Mainline
GE	Great Eastern
HST	High Speed Train
HS1	High Speed 1
HS2	High Speed 2
LDHS	Long Distance High Speed
TfL	Transport for London