

From the Chairman

Tel 020 7726 9985

Fax 020 7726 9999

brian.cooke@londontravelwatch.org.uk

Mr Hugh Sumner
Director of Transport
Olympic Delivery Authority
22nd Floor
One Churchill Place
Canary Wharf
London E14 5LN

06 February 2007

Transport Plan for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Thank you, for inviting London TravelWatch to comment on the Olympic Transport Plan and for presenting some of the details of the plan to our Olympic Task Force.

Since the successful bid London TravelWatch has continued to express its support for the proposed transport strategy of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) as it is clear that the 2012 Games will provide London with a significant transport legacy. However, we are mindful of the scale of works required to make London 2012 a success and of the impact that such works, and the games themselves, will have on those who rely on London's already very crowded transport system. We therefore wish to highlight a number of concerns relating to the impact that the games will have on existing users and over the lack of detail on specific aspects of the plan.

1 The Olympic Road Network (ORN)

- 1.1 In the Olympic Transport Plan (OTP) Para 5.37 there is reference to introducing a package of travel demand measures to reduce the number of non-games vehicles using the ORN. Whilst we are aware of the prediction that traffic in London will fall in volume by 15%, little has been said about what impact analysis, if any, has been conducted for those bus routes that will operate on the affected corridors. As many of the roads selected to be part of the ORN do not have bus lanes road space will surely be constrained for members of the public.
- 1.2 London TravelWatch is keen to learn the ODA's response to the Corporation of London's suggestion that traffic in the city only declines by 2% during August. We note that analysis was carried out of London wide traffic flows for the month of August between 1996 and 2003 but we would like to know whether the ODA is specifically concerned about potential areas of congestion within the city.

2 London Bus services

- 2.1 There is seemingly little legacy proposed for the improvement of bus services. In particular we would like to see bus priority being identified and planned for in the boroughs surrounding the Olympic park. As an example the roads leading to the crossings of the River Lea, from the Waltham Forest side, are heavily congested. This is likely to get worse with the Olympics, and more significantly, the Thames Gateway regeneration, which will increase traffic levels on corridors into Newham.
- 2.2 We are concerned that the aspirations of the ODA, to draw a sizeable proportion of the workforce from the surrounding boroughs, is not going to be achievable without first bringing in some early improvements to the local bus network. At present many people in east London have no access to Stratford by rail and for many people in these areas the sole access to jobs in the Olympic park will be by bus whose reliability is already seen as poor. There is a strong possibility that those from outer parts of Newham, Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Haringey, most likely to be attracted to Stratford and the employment opportunities created by the Olympics, will be put off by the already unreliable bus services. It may be worth considering whether special express buses to/from Stratford should be established, with priorities, beforehand for construction labour and during the Games for spectators on the main corridors from Waltham Forest and Barking, which do not have direct facilities to Stratford.

3 PPP

- 3.1 London TravelWatch understands that the only scheme currently being pursued under the PPP, essential to the Olympics, is that of the Jubilee line upgrade, which is scheduled to be completed in 2009. Whilst the sub-surface upgrades may not have been factored in to the modelling for the games we would suggest that the ODA seek a commitment from Metronet that any slippage on their delivery does not lead to disruption occurring across the network. Although additional capacity on the sub-surface lines may not be vital to delivering people to the games, disruption to them during 2012 will have a significant impact with so many people using the network.

4 Cycling

- 4.1 London TravelWatch believes cycling should be strongly supported in getting spectators to/from the events, either in combination with other transport modes or as the sole method of transportation. Most cycling prior, during and after the games will happen on the existing streets. We want to see safer cycling schemes for the roads which cyclists use which may not necessarily be the London Cycling Network + routes. The plan doesn't contain any plans for proposed infrastructure improvements.

5 Walking

- 5.1 Again most walking prior, during and after the games will happen on the existing streets. We want to see the walking environment improved; and believe in particular that many improvements should be made to the public realm e.g. widening of footways, reduction of clutter and better pedestrian crossing facilities. There should be a programme of public realm improvement in town and district centres, transport interchanges etc, particularly those related to the Olympics and its visitors. London TravelWatch is supportive of the work done by TfL and Central London Partnership on the Legible London project, and would suggest that if it hasn't already done so the ODA take the

opportunity to draw upon the knowledge of those working on the project. The project aims to help people make informed choices about the walking options, and enable them to walk round the city confident that they won't get lost.

6 River services

- 6.1 Although London TravelWatch would like to see the games used to promote the use of the Thames as a transport artery, we also recognise the rivers' limitations as a mass transit system. We are aware that because the current operators do not see any long term commercial gain, beyond serving the Olympics in summer 2012, they are not prepared to invest in procuring additional capacity, at least not on a permanent basis. We would therefore urge the ODA to quickly establish how much demand the games could generate, what the existing capacity is and how realistic it would be for existing operators to draw upon additional resources from outside London if additional capacity is required.
- 6.2 The potential use of the river is two fold. As well as transporting spectators to and from events the river will also play a key part in reducing the 1000's of lorry deliveries that will be required to the Olympic site unless road and river transportation is utilised for freight. London TravelWatch is therefore keen to learn what progress the ODA has made in working towards its previously stated goal of moving 50% of building materials and waste by road and rail transportation? Making best use of such modes is vital for minimising disruption on the road network surrounding the Olympic Park as the infrastructure for the games is being built.

7 The Javelin service

- 7.1 Key to the effectiveness of the transport strategy is the success of the proposed shuttle service between Kings Cross/St Pancras, Stratford International (for the Olympic Park) and Ebbsfleet. Whilst questions have previously been raised by the Transport Committee in relation to train and platform capacity and station dwell times London TravelWatch would like to know what plans there are for handling the displacement of regular Southeastern customers, many of whom will have paid a premium fare to use the high speed service.

8 Affordable travel

- 8.1 With one third of the games visitors predicted to come from outside London (within the UK) it is important for event ticket holders to be able to have access to affordable rail travel. For example, passengers from Bristol and Cardiff, are likely to want to travel to London on the day of the event, and will want to access train services at peak times to do so. The availability of reasonably priced advance tickets is already an issue on some services running in to, and out of London, and there needs to be some protection against people being priced out of attending such a high profile event.

9 Environmental and visual appearance of railway lands

- 9.1 For many years the visual appearance of the railways has been blighted by litter, graffiti, weeds, abandoned railway artefacts and materials etc. This has been in part due to the organisational structures of the railways with its dispersed responsibilities and in part an unwillingness of the industry to invest enough to tackle it. Local authorities who have the enforcement powers to address some of these issues have

not done so. Recently there has been more activity on behalf of Network Rail to address this and we welcome that, but much still needs to be done.

- 9.2 We see the run up to the Olympics as a spur to action to address this issue. We hope that the Olympic Transport Plan will include a plan to improve the visual appearance of the railways over the next five years.

London TravelWatch is generally supportive of the ODA's transport proposals for 2012, and believes that there is significant benefit to be gained for users of public transport by holding the Olympics in London. However, in its current form, the Olympic Transport Plan does not give sufficient detail on what is proposed for a number of the modes, not least London's Bus walking and cycling networks. London TravelWatch would hope that as the plan develops further it will provide more detail on these areas and seek to address some of concerns raised by stakeholders regarding the negative impact that the preparation for the games, and the Olympics themselves, will have on the travelling public.