

Response to the Essex Thameside Franchise Consultation

May 2012

London TravelWatch response to the Essex Thameside Franchise Consultation



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;
- Liaise with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users and respond to their consultations;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

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

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Executive Summary

London TravelWatch welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Transport's (DfT) consultation on the Essex Thameside Franchise. The franchise is due to commence in May 2013 and will benefit from the recent investment in signalling and rolling stock.

We support

London TravelWatch supports the DfT proposals to increase passenger safety and security in the evening at stations and on train services.

We welcome

London TravelWatch welcomes the quality of service that has been delivered on the Essex Thameside network as well as the investment in the rolling stock and infrastructure on the route.

We recommend

London TravelWatch's priorities for the franchise are:

- 'Right-time-railway' – London TravelWatch supports the concept that the performance of this already high-performing route should be taken to the next level. This means that arrival and departure times at all points along the route should be exactly on-time, rather than the current standard that on-time is considered to be when the service is within 5 minutes of its advertised arrival time at the final destination only;
- The provision of increased capacity to address overcrowding on the route. For those areas which do not conform to London TravelWatch's aspirations for the levels of train service, specifically on the Rainham services, an increase in frequency to a minimum of four trains per hour;
- Stations – Minimum station standards from the independent 'Better Rail Stations Report' (<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf>) to be adopted as part of the franchise. A de-cluttering of signage at stations to make passenger information clearer and more consistent at the start of the franchise in combination with station deep cleans;
- Minimisation of bus replacement services – The impact of planned disruption on passengers needs to be reduced in future franchises. Operators must be strongly incentivised to run trains where possible, rather than replacement buses. Where buses are necessary, a minimum standard of service needs to be provided in terms of information and bus quality;

- Investigation of closer working between the new operator and Network Rail, with consideration of an alliance between the new franchisee and Network Rail similar to the trial with South West Trains and Network Rail. This would be an opportunity to provide better service to passengers, especially at times of service disruption;
- Smartcard technology across the whole network is the next logical step as the franchise has a more homogenous market than other areas and would benefit from integrated smartcard ticketing;
- Customer complaints – Train operators to monitor the demographics of their complainants and to advertise their procedures for all passengers to follow helpful complaint procedures, but particularly for those underrepresented in complainant statistics. The franchisee should continue with measures to retain the current low level of appeal complaints;
- Keeping Fenchurch Street as the sole terminal point in London unless it can be clearly demonstrated that passengers would wish otherwise – Our research comprehensively showed that the clear majority of passengers wish to have one terminal station, and the preference of Fenchurch Street was declared by a 5 to 1 majority when surveyed in 2002. This should be assumed to still be the case unless demonstrated otherwise; and
- Close working between the Department for Transport, and the potential franchisees, with London TravelWatch. London TravelWatch represents the clear majority of passengers on the Essex Thameside network, and has produced many reports that have key implications for the franchise, such as “Which Street for Southend” about the use of Fenchurch Street and/or Liverpool Street, “Fare Deals for London” about zonal fares and many others. As the statutory body for most of the passengers affected by the franchise, we would like to see a greater role in assisting the Department and any bidders for the franchise for the benefit of passengers.

London specific issues are discussed from page 7 onwards, as well as the responses to the Department’s individual questions from page 10.

Introduction

In responding to the Essex Thameside franchise consultation, London TravelWatch has categorised its aspirations. Each aspiration is allocated a timescale and these have the following meanings:

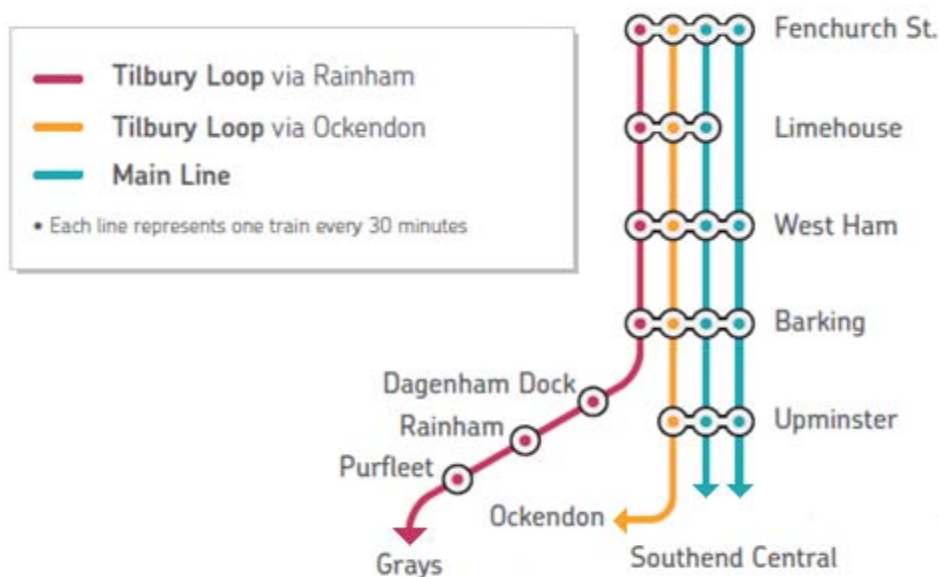
Short term priority – aspirations which require management action but no more than modest investment and should therefore be achievable within the first two years of a new franchise. We would expect many of these items to be achievable within one year or less.

Medium term priority – aspirations which require investment on a scale which should be achievable (or on which substantial progress should be made) within two to five years.

Long term priority – aspirations requiring complex and large scale measurable investments which will take more than five years to complete. We would expect to see progress in less than five years whilst accepting that implementation may take longer.

London TravelWatch’s response has been informed by our casework appeals, as well as our current and past research. The area of the Essex Thameside Franchise, which we have made comments on is shown in the diagram below:

Figure 1 - London TravelWatch Remit Area for the Essex Thameside



London TravelWatch Casework

London TravelWatch is the body to which transport users appeal if they are not satisfied by the response of the transport operator's complaints process. Across all train operators, London TravelWatch received 1,233 appeals in 2011/12, of which appeals regarding fares and ticketing were the majority. The next two major issues were the performance of train services and conditions at stations.

Of all these appeals, only 15 related to c2c, the current operator on Essex Thameside, showing the high service levels currently operating on the network. The recent investment in rolling stock, infrastructure, good performance of the network and good attention to detail in customer service all combine to lead to a low level of appeals. London TravelWatch expects this good record to be maintained.

Issues for London passengers relating to this franchise

Incomplete journeys incurred on Oyster cards

In 2011 London TravelWatch conducted a major piece of research on the impact on passengers of incomplete journeys, where the passenger has for whatever reason failed to ‘touch in or touch out’ using their Oyster card on their journey. Overall, around £60 million is collected each year by Transport for London (TfL) and train operators in excess maximum fares.

For stations operated as part of the Essex Thameside franchise, the total amounts of excess revenue collected in 2010 is shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 Incomplete journey excess charges at Essex Thameside served stations in 2010.

| Station | Incomplete journey charge (£) |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Fenchurch Street | 170,000 |
| Limehouse | 32,000 |
| West Ham | 70,000 |
| Barking | 347,000 |
| Upminster | 78,000 |
| Dagenham Dock | 3,000 |
| Rainham | 16,000 |
| Purfleet | 8,000 |
| Total | 724,000 |

This is a significant amount of revenue, although TfL believes that around 60 to 80 per cent of the maximum fares charged would have been raised from customers had their Oyster card been correctly validated. Despite work on “auto-fill”, the problem remains and more needs to be done, especially as less frequent users are more likely to be affected. Research has clearly shown that the continuation of such high levels of maximum fares being levied is undermining confidence in Oyster and also making passengers feel that Oyster was not delivering the expected value for money fares, with the cumulative effect hindering travel for infrequent users.

The London TravelWatch research can be found at: - <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13964>

The principal recommendations relating to the Essex Thameside franchise are:

- To provide clear information as to where Oyster balance information can be obtained;
- Enable all National Rail stations with booking offices within the Oyster area to resolve Oyster related problems; and
- Ticket vending machines need to be replaced to include the ability to view balances, top up and add Oyster products.

Providing sufficient capacity

Passengers on the Essex Thameside currently experience high levels of crowding particularly in the peak hours, so we would expect to see measures to help alleviate this situation. Measures to encourage more flexible journey times must be made, but by incentivising off-peak and shoulder-peak travel rather than pricing passengers without alternatives off the peak services.

Providing train services in the evenings and weekends and improving ticket facilities at smaller stations are extremely important growth areas for the franchise to deliver, and the rolling stock is already available. Providing sufficient capacity for the growing off-peak and weekend market is important for the new franchise, and evidence from other areas shows a significant demand for improved services outside the peak times.

There is an under-reporting of passenger usage in the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) station usage statistics. This is due to insufficient account being taken of the use of Travelcards, Freedom Passes and Oyster Pay As You Go (PAYG) trips. As a result of this under-reporting of passengers, Purfleet and Dagenham Dock have never been surveyed by the National Passenger Survey (NPS), and decisions based on perceived demand are likely to be made without the correct baseline data.

Stakeholders inform us that passengers consider the provision of late evening and Sunday services at the same level as currently provided at other off peak times to be a priority. In addition, passengers wish to see the improvement of ticketing facilities, particularly where no Oyster top up facilities and no means of purchasing a ticket from vending machines exist.

Improving the passenger experience of Fenchurch Street station

Fenchurch Street is a critical part of the journey for a large proportion of passengers on the Essex Thameside franchise. In 2011, we undertook a research project to identify best practice at interchanges in the London area. This can be found at: <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14002>

We found that there were serious shortcomings in wayfinding, signage and information provision, and bus and London Underground interchanges. There are lessons that should be applied that will lead to an improvement at Fenchurch Street station for many passengers.

Responses to the individual consultation questions put by the Department

Question 1

How does this vision align with stakeholders' view of the future Essex Thameside franchise?

London TravelWatch agrees with the vision for the route that promotes the continuation of the excellent service, rolling stock and satisfaction levels that are currently experienced on the Essex Thameside routes. We particularly emphasise the importance of growing the off-peak market as a means of significant revenue growth and better utilisation of rolling stock. New ticketing opportunities from the expansion of the smartcard system to cover the entire route, along with station improvements and off peak growth align strongly with our vision. **Short term priority**

London TravelWatch is however concerned that an increased focus on franchisee capital investment over a longer term could be to the detriment of passengers using inner London services, as fewer passenger kilometres are travelled per passenger. This means that although the numbers may be higher, the shorter distance travelled generates a lower level of revenue per passenger journey. We feel that investment by bidders is potentially likely to focus on the most lucrative passenger flows as they offer the greatest potential return on investment.

For most of the Essex Thameside services, London TravelWatch represents passengers of metro style services. London TravelWatch would be very concerned if, in the pursuit of longer franchises, bidders target investment solely at longer distance passengers. With the increase in the length of franchise, capital investment must be distributed across the franchise so that an operator cannot just 'cherry-pick' lucrative revenue streams. **Short term priority**

Potential investment in the inner London area should include the development of stations. The station buildings and associated land in Greater London represent a considerable potential for revenue generation which should be used to invest in facilities at stations to the benefit of passengers. **Short to medium term priority**

Question 2

What increments or decrements to the specification would stakeholders wish to see and how would these be funded?

Please see our response to question 5. We feel that off-peak services should be specified in accordance with a similar standard to London Overground, and funded in the same manner.

As with London Overground, we would also wish to see investment made to the station environment, with staffing from first to last train at all stations in our area.

Question 3

Are there specific research findings, evidence or publications stakeholders wish to bring to the attention of the Department as part of this refranchising process?

In 2002, the London Transport Users Committee (the predecessor body to London TravelWatch) carried out a major report entitled "Which Street for Southend?" which surveyed passengers' preferences as to whether trains should serve both Fenchurch Street and Liverpool Street. This reflected the situation where some services, in order to allow engineering work at Fenchurch Street, would cause the diversion of trains into and out of Liverpool Street. A clear 5-1 majority of passengers preferred all services to go to Fenchurch Street. With the strong growth since this report at West Ham and Limehouse, we would expect all services to continue to terminate at Fenchurch Street with the exception of rare occasions connected with engineering works. We would expect Fenchurch Street to remain as the sole terminus unless clear evidence to the contrary is shown that passengers have changed their opinions since our study. **Short term priority**

Evidence is emerging that the ORR station usage data is considerably under-estimating passenger numbers in and around London; with the discrepancy wider the closer the station is to central London. Comprehensive studies done by the West Anglia Routes Group (WARG) have shown that on the West Anglia route, the variance is around 95% more passengers than reported across stations within Travelcard zones 2 and 3, around 70% for zones 4-6 and 31% for the "inner home counties". This is largely due to the non-reporting of Freedom Pass tickets in the ORR data, the incorrect allocation of Travelcards, a lack of Oyster PAYG being fully accounted for, as well as those figures being based on the 2001 London Area Transport Survey data, which is based on significantly different travel patterns as today. Provisional surveys of other areas indicated the same problem as for the West Anglia route, and it is likely that this will apply for the Essex Thameside franchise area. Basing decisions and prioritising longer-distance services over metro services on the grounds of official passenger counts is therefore something that should not be done until this discrepancy is resolved. **Short term priority**

Given that London TravelWatch represents an area that the clear majority of Essex Thameside passengers travel in at some point of their journey, it would be appropriate for the Department to include London TravelWatch along with Passenger Focus in the specification process, and to include London TravelWatch in the document to detail the role we can play. Despite being the statutory body acting on behalf of the huge majority of passengers during the franchise, London TravelWatch is not mentioned at all in sections 7.15 to 7.18

inclusive. We expect the DfT to seek advice from London TravelWatch as the statutory passenger body for the London area on passenger priorities for this area before the final tender invitation for this franchise is made.

We would also expect earlier and more significant consultation between ourselves and the Department regarding the Thameslink refranchise process and any other refranchising processes that significantly impact on the London region.

Short term priority

One of the major issues that need to be addressed in relation to stations is the fragmented responsibilities for their upkeep. A considerable issue that London TravelWatch has campaigned to resolve is the responsibility for the cleaning of litter. This is split variously between the station facility owner (Train Operating Company), Network Rail and local authorities. This complex interaction is mirrored in many areas relating to stations. London TravelWatch recommends that the Franchise Agreement emphasises the franchisee's role in the upkeep of the station and its environment, to attempt to counter these confusing relationships. **Short term priority**

In London there is a widely adopted "Continuing your journey" mapping system based on TfL mapping and the Legible London pedestrian wayfinding system. This system has been designed around the needs of pedestrians as opposed to the adaptation of mapping systems designed for motorists. It appears in all London Underground stations, bus stations and stops and has been adopted by some Train Operating Companies.

We would expect franchisees to work with TfL to introduce TfL style "Continuing your journey" and Legible London mapping in and around its' London stations. Outside London we wish to see bespoke pedestrian mapping systems introduced, that have been designed specifically for onward pedestrian journeys, including journeys to interchange points such as bus stations. **Short term priority**

Question 4

What improvements do stakeholders believe could be made to partnership working between Network Rail and the operator on the Essex Thameside franchise?

London TravelWatch is watching the development of the “Deep Alliance” between Network Rail and South West Trains with interest. If a similar scheme were to be introduced in the Essex Thameside area, we would support it if the alliance benefits passengers, through improved information provision, recovery from poor operational performance and improved communications. If alliancing develops into a primarily financial arrangement then we would not have any comments regarding alliancing in franchises and would look for other partnership working opportunities to improve the journey experience for the travelling public.

We are also aware that the implementation of different alliances around London could potentially lead to a situation where each alliance focuses on a narrow area of responsibility and London wide co-ordination is missed.

Closer working on issues such as the management of Fenchurch Street station, the united implementation of litter and graffiti clearance and the provision of information to passengers at times of disruption are all important, regardless of whether there is an official alliance or not. **Short term priority**

Question 5

Which aspects of the specification would stakeholders wish to see mandated and which aspects of the specification could be left to commercial discretion? What changes would stakeholders propose and why?

London TravelWatch believes that passengers primarily want services that are frequent and reliable, with good interchange and affordable fares. However, the current Essex Thameside timetable, especially covering Sundays, no longer reflects the needs of passengers particularly in Greater London. The specification for this franchise therefore needs to reflect current passenger needs rather than current service provision. **Short term priority**

Ideally, within the Greater London area, this would be provided by a regular 10 minute interval service from first to last train covering the period 0600 – 2400. However, we recognise the constraints of the current infrastructure, and we would suggest therefore that the off-peak service improvements detailed below should be the first step taken to improving services in the London area. **Short term priority**

London TravelWatch would like to see improvements to the late evening and Sunday services so that they operate at the same frequency and stopping pattern as the off-peak Monday to Saturday timetable. Research shows that passengers who travel at off-peak times place greater value on regular interval services with consistent stopping patterns and journey times. In the London area over the past 10-15 years, late evenings and Sundays have seen large increases in activity so these times are often as busy if not busier than Monday to Saturday daytimes. London Underground traffic volumes and bus usage at these times have also increased dramatically, showing the demand within London for this service level. **Short term priority**

We wish to see the Sunday timetable for the route enhanced to the level operating off-peak on Saturdays, and believe that the weekday evening service between 2100 and 2400 should be enhanced to the same pattern as that, operating between 1900 and 2100 with four trains per hour on all routes as the minimum in line with the changes above. **Short term priority**

We would like all aspects of train service provision to be enhanced in the short term in accordance with London TravelWatch paper 'Requirements for Trains Services' (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/772/get>). **Short term priority**

London TravelWatch wishes to see specific improvements for the following routes:

- An increase in off-peak frequency of train services to Purfleet to four trains per hour, including Saturday and Sunday. The stations at Dagenham Dock, Rainham and Purfleet are within the London Travelcard boundary yet only currently receive two trains per hour, and just one per hour on Sundays. **Short term priority**
- Later train service to Purfleet, to be in line with the last journey times of the London Underground of around 00:30. This has particular relevance on Saturdays when the current last train leaves Fenchurch Street at 23:35. **Short term priority**

London TravelWatch wishes the improved off-peak and weekend services to be mandated within the new franchise.

London TravelWatch suggests that consideration is given to the performance regime to provide more positive impacts for passengers. For example, financial penalties for delays could be used specifically for railway network investment. On this basis both Network Rail and train operators would be regulated by the Office of Rail Regulation to invest any proceeds from delay minutes in schemes to the benefit of the network. **Medium term priority**

London TravelWatch suggests that a Service Quality Initiative Regime (SQUIRE) is applied to this contract. While London TravelWatch supports the National Passenger Survey, a minimum standards regime must be in place to back up the passenger perception based targets. This ensures that an absolute level of service and facilities are achieved. The independent auditing for such a scheme also needs to be external to the train operator to ensure that it is impartially enforced. **Short term priority**

Question 6

What do stakeholders consider to be the drivers for service frequency on the Essex Thameside routes? What would be the opportunities created from increasing off peak service frequencies and the impact of reducing off peak service frequencies?

London TravelWatch's vision for passengers is that:

- Services should run frequently and reliably at all reasonable times of the day and week;
- Networks should provide good access, adequate capacity and offer easy and convenient interchange between different types of transport;
- Staff should be helpful, informed, alert and committed to offering high-quality customer service;
- Information should be available, understandable, relevant, up-to-date and accurate;
- Tickets should be easy to use, easy to understand, flexible and integrated between appropriate operators and modes of transport;
- Stations or stops should be well-designed, properly maintained, fully accessible and offer a good quality waiting environment;
- Journeys should be safe and free from crime and the fear of crime;
- Carriages should be accessible, comfortable, clean, safe, quiet, easy to identify, and suitable for passengers travelling with luggage, shopping or children; and
- Transport providers should communicate clearly and properly with their users, be approachable, open to suggestions, take complaints seriously and have proper mechanisms for redress when things go wrong.

The Essex Thameside franchise currently provides a good service at peak times, but parts of the network only have an hourly service at some off-peak times. The Sunday service is sparse and the first train from Purfleet to London on a Sunday is not until 0904. Given the phenomenal growth in off-peak travel shown on other modes, as well as on those National Rail routes that have provided improved services already, the latent demand is clearly there for improved off-peak services. With relatively under-utilised rolling stock being available for use, there is little reason to not provide this much needed service level.

In addition to the significant growth seen by other operators and modes, London is becoming more of a 24/7 city, with the 24 hour economy playing a key role in economic recovery. Provision of a train service which allows earlier arrivals into London in the mornings and later departures in the evenings will become increasingly important during the life of the long franchise.

The following service commitments should be part of the next franchise within the London area:

Saturday daytime services

To be the same as weekday midday off-peak services. **Short term priority**

Saturday evening services

To be the same as weekday midday off-peak services. **Short term priority**

Saturday first train

All stations in the London area should have first departures that facilitate connections with the first tranche of long-distance services from main London termini such as Paddington, Euston, King's Cross, Liverpool Street and Waterloo, and where possible to facilitate catching an early (pre-06:30) Eurostar departure from St Pancras International. In general, this means a first arrival in London by no later than 06:00 on Mondays to Saturdays, 07:30 on Sundays. **Short term priority**

Saturday last train

For the benefit of both long-distance travellers and passengers visiting London for evening entertainment, last departures every day from London termini should be no earlier than 00:30 to stations in the Zones and 24:00 to other London area stations. **Short term priority**

Sunday daytime and evening services

Except for a later start-up, Sunday service frequencies should be the same as Saturdays. It is recognised that Network Rail's present maintenance practices lead to restricted Sunday services, particularly on multi-track routes. These maintenance practices should be reviewed in line with the objectives of the Seven Day Railway to allow train service to operate on the basis of our requirements. **Short term priority**

Sunday first train

All stations in the London area should have first departures that facilitate connections with the first tranche of long-distance services from main London termini such as Paddington, Euston, King's Cross, Liverpool Street and Waterloo, and where possible to facilitate catching an early (pre-06:30) Eurostar departure from St Pancras International.

In general, this means a first arrival in London by no later than 07:30 on Sundays. In addition, on Sundays within the Zones, rail start-up times should be synchronised with the night bus network in such a way that for any locality with a direct night bus to central London there should be no more than a 30-minute

interval between the departure of the last night bus and the departure of the first train. **Medium term priority**

Sunday last train

For the benefit of both long-distance travellers and passengers visiting London for evening entertainment, last departures every day from London termini should be no earlier than 00:30 to stations in the Zones and 24:00 to other London area stations. **Medium term priority**

Question 7

How might better use be made of the capacity currently available? What are the future capacity requirements, what steps should bidders be expected to meet passenger demand and what are the most appropriate mechanisms for managing demand?

London TravelWatch would support an approach that requires operators to monitor passenger demand on a continual basis, and which incentivises them to deal with overcrowding as and when it occurs on a continuous basis. The franchise should require a commitment to additional resources to increase capacity, at the busiest points and times of day on the network. This increase should be incrementally brought forward during the franchise. The proportion of additional capacity required should be related to the amount of increase in usage that occurs over time, and the percentage of existing capacity that this uses up.

Short term priority

We would urge the use of passenger load weighing devices to account for usage of individual services on vehicles and the use of gating/ticket barriers at stations to ascertain volumes of travel. At stations such as Barking, where there is significant interchange, we would urge the use of other passenger counting technology to calculate accurate volumes of interchange and 'churn' on existing Essex Thameside services. **Short term priority**

We would also like to point out that there is currently considerable uncertainty over the use of the ORR station usage data as well as the NPS figures, and would expect passenger numbers to be verified before decisions are made about prioritisation of one service group over another. **Short term priority**

We would like to see pricing incentives for travel at times outside of the peak, with discounted travel used to incentivise passengers to use the shoulder peak or off-peak services where possible. However, many passengers have no choice but to use peak services, and we would oppose any measure to increase fares in the peak to attempt to price demand away from the peak. **Medium term priority**

Question 8

Should the bus service between Tilbury Town and Tilbury Riverside be retained in the new franchise?

This question falls outside of London TravelWatch's area of responsibility.

Question 9

What improvements do stakeholders believe could be made to fares and ticketing for the Essex Thameside franchise?

There are a number of improvements that would make the fares and ticketing system easier to understand for passengers, as follows:

- Harmonisation of TfL's Conditions of Carriage with those of the National Rail network. At the moment the usage of Oyster Pay As You Go on the National Rail network falls between both TfL and National Rail Conditions of Carriage. This situation is not just confusing for passengers, but can also lead to financial detriment. **Short term priority**
- Extension of a multimodal zonal fares structure for wider areas than the current London Travelcard boundary. The simplification is particularly important in connection with ticket vending machines where confusion of ticket type can lead to passengers not getting the best value for money. **Medium to long term priority**
- We would like to see all stations on the Essex Thameside network gated with Smartcard technology to allow seamless ticketing throughout the network, including beyond the current Oyster boundary. **Short term priority**

Better integration between the franchisee and London Underground fares needs to be provided along with the integrated smartcard technology. Currently, a different fare is charged for journeys from the c2c network to zone 1 London Underground stations depending on which operator the passenger buys their ticket from, regardless of the route taken. This anomaly is symptomatic of the lack of integration and problems that passengers face, and closer working should eliminate these examples.

Question 10

What local considerations do stakeholders feel need to be taken into account when providing passenger information?

The new franchisee must embrace both 'old and new' media to communicate with the range of passengers that use the franchise. We also suggest that the good practice from London Overground of showing alternative routes/means of travelling from each station to other stations should be adopted. **Short term priority**

London TravelWatch wants to see far greater industry emphasis on reducing the impact of planned disruption on rail passengers. Over the past 10 years, considerable effort has been put into addressing unplanned disruption and while there is still a longer way to go, passengers have seen the benefits. The next hurdle is therefore planned disruption with the industry needing to be able to find a way of keeping the railway 'open-for-business' throughout the week. This means that the wholesale replacement of services at the weekends by buses is not acceptable. **Short term priority**

Network Rail and the franchisee must share information with other transport providers such as London Underground and the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) where applicable, with regard to the alternative options available to passengers at times of disruption. If an alliance is in place, it must also take account of alternative journey possibilities away from the alliance area that could be used at times of disruption.

There is a hierarchy of decision making, which is required when mitigating the impact of engineering work on the passenger. There are two stages, which must be considered before a full bus substitution is considered:

- Diversion of trains or a reduced service making use of single line working; and
- Partial bus replacement to intermediate locations, for example, to different main line routes or Underground lines.

If bus replacement is necessary then the full bus replacement must be of a quality that is sufficiently high. London TravelWatch has received a number of appeals about the quality of bus replacement services, particularly focusing on the lack of information provision to passengers. Where bus substitution is required due to engineering work, London TravelWatch would like bidders to follow a code of practice:

- Adequate and prominent publicity to be disseminated at least 10 days in advance and on the day, both on the route and on lines connecting with it (even if the latter are run by a different operator e.g. other train companies, London Underground or Docklands Light Railway);
- A weekly network wide map of engineering disruption;
- The equivalent London Underground or Docklands Light Railway notice should be displayed at 'network' stations and the 'network' map at Underground and Docklands Light Railway stations;
- Low-floor fully accessible buses to be used (except for long journeys where coaches are required, in which case special arrangements should be made to assist disabled and luggage-laden passengers);
- Adequate facilities for luggage, buggies and cycles to be provided;
- Temporarily closed stations to be clearly identified as such, with the replacement bus timetable clearly displayed with clear directions to the bus stops;
- Bus stopping points to be clearly marked by temporary bus stop signs, so that passengers and drivers alike know where these are and to prevent disputes;
- Buses to display destinations and intermediate calling points clearly on the front of the vehicle;
- Adequate numbers of well informed staff to be provided at all affected stations to direct passengers to buses and trains and answer ticketing questions;
- Where interchange between buses and trains takes place at stations with automatic ticket gates, the gates should be configured to ensure that all tickets are returned to the passengers when the gates are not in use. Adequate staff must be provided at the gateline to direct and assist passengers with luggage etc. to use the manual gate; and
- Only reputable bus companies to be used, with drivers who have the necessary local knowledge and ability to follow the route. **Short term priority**

London TravelWatch's report, "When is a train not a train? - A study of rail replacement bus services" (2004) should be used as guidance when planning rail replacement bus services.

Possession disruption index for passengers – the disruption to passengers by possessions can be very significant, particularly at the weekends. Publication by route would allow passengers to see the availability of the network at a level, which is meaningful to their usage of the railways. London TravelWatch wishes to see publication of the statistics for bus replacements as a percentage of scheduled services for each route broken down by weekday, Saturdays and Sundays. **Short term priority**

Question 11

What's important to stakeholders in the future use and improvement of Fenchurch Street and other stations?

In 2002, the London Transport Users Committee carried out a major report entitled "Which Street for Southend?" which surveyed passengers' preferences regarding whether trains should serve both Fenchurch Street and Liverpool Street. This reflected the situation where some services, in order to allow engineering work at Fenchurch Street, would cause the diversion of trains into and out of Liverpool Street. A clear 5-1 majority of passengers preferred all services to go to Fenchurch Street. With the strong growth since this report at West Ham and Limehouse, we would expect all services to continue to terminate at Fenchurch Street with the exception of rare occasions connected with engineering works, unless new research is carried out that shows a change in the travelling public's opinion. **Short term priority**

London TravelWatch has published its own research and requirements for stations in the London area at:-

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839>

Attention is drawn to our 2006 report 'Getting to the station', which explores standards for improving cycle and pedestrian access to stations as well as car parking and public transport access.

This franchise should specify the adoption of secure car and cycle parking standards at stations. **Short term priority**

Improved car parking should be supported at stations where this can reduce overall car trip length. In particular smaller stations outside of Greater London have the potential for additional car and cycle parking to be installed. **Short term priority**

Adoption of travel plans for individual stations are also a good way to ensure that the use of car parking spaces is optimised and reduce the impact of the railway on surrounding streets. To set a good example, the franchise operator should also have its own company travel plan. **Short term priority**

Secure cycle storage could also be improved at stations particularly in the inner London area and at towns such as Southend. **Short term priority**

Charging periods for car parks should also be consistent with the train service operational day and validity of train tickets. **Short term priority**

Limehouse station should be staffed from first train to last train at all times in order to retain the cross-platform connection with the Docklands Light Railway and the convenient interchange there.

Question 12

What do stakeholders see as the most important factors in improving security (actual or perceived and addressing any gap between the two)?

We would urge that priority should be given by the new franchisee and by Network Rail to tackling the significant amounts of trackside graffiti and rubbish that occur particularly in the London area. This not only creates the impression of an uncared for and unattended railway, but also disruption when trespass is reported or trains ingest rubbish/ litter/overgrown vegetation in their mechanical and electrical parts. Measures to monitor this, along with incentives to comply should be introduced, and an independent body should be able to provide some degree of enforcement power if the situation worsens. **Short term priority**

Question 13

What local accessibility and mobility issues do stakeholders see and how might they be addressed?

All bidders should be required to adopt, as a minimum, the standards proposed in the 'Better Rail Stations' report. London TravelWatch believes that it is essential that minimum standards and not a passenger perception approach are used to monitor station quality and facility provision. This is because perceptions can vary substantially over time and by area for reasons that are unconnected with the standard of service. There are also absolute requirements in terms of facilities, which are not easily reflected in peoples' perception. London TravelWatch therefore strongly favours the approach taken by TfL in the London Rail Concession such as on the London Overground network, which has very explicit minimum standards to adhere to. **Short term priority**

We would wish to see a pragmatic approach taken to accessibility whereby stations which could be improved by means of simple and easy to maintain ramps at small to reasonable cost could be done so providing step free access. This should be funded by an alteration to funding streams to allow 'easy to do' and 'small cost' schemes to be brought forward, even if current passenger numbers make the case for improvement marginal. This is especially relevant with the under-reporting of passenger numbers making business cases harder to achieve. **Short term priority**

Consideration of the use of "Harrington Humps" which allow level access onto trains from the platforms and would be a cost-effective method to improve accessibility which has been shown to be effective on the London Underground network. **Short term priority**

Question 14

What environmental targets would stakeholders like to see within the franchise specification?

Also outlined in question 12, we believe that there should be a concerted effort by the new franchisee and Network Rail to reduce the amount of trackside graffiti, litter and rubbish. Targets should be set for the removal of this, and the total volumes left uncleared. **Short term priority**

Conclusions

London TravelWatch has reviewed the proposals for the Essex Thameside Franchise in the light of passenger expectations and appeals received. Our key priorities for the new franchise are as follows:

- Train service performance to ensure that punctuality along the length of the journey is maximised;
- Stations facilities and customer service standards improvements based on minimum station standards;
- Rolling stock investment to provide 12-car capacity on all trains services where demand is sufficient;
- Reduction in planned disruption to passengers particularly at weekends;
- Oyster acceptance across the metro network rather than ending arbitrarily at the Travelcard boundary and extension of smartcard ticketing throughout the Essex Thameside network;
- Retaining the simple and well understood service pattern and network that operates today, with Fenchurch Street as the sole terminus in London; and
- Keeping an Olympic legacy, with better interchange arrangements and station management at key interchanges such as Fenchurch Street and West Ham.

Appendix A – Views of Stakeholders

In responding to this consultation, London TravelWatch has analysed casework studies as well as liaising with user groups and local authorities in areas affected by the franchise within London TravelWatch's remit. We have utilised our experience and previous research which is related to the Essex Thameside area, as well as holding regular discussions with the current operator and Network Rail. We have also held surgeries in the area at Stratford and Romford and conducted research and monitoring, all of which has informed our response.

Appendix B – Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|--------|-----------------------------------|
| DfT | Department for Transport |
| DLR | Docklands Light Railway |
| NPS | National Passenger Survey |
| ORR | Office of Rail Regulation |
| PAYG | Pay as you go |
| SQUIRE | Service Quality Initiative Regime |
| TfL | Transport for London |
| WARG | West Anglia Routes Group |

Appendix C – References

London TravelWatch

Requirements for Train Services – Principles (2003)

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/166/789>

Which Street for Southend? -The choice of terminus for c2c late evening trains (2001) <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/311/get>

Good riddance to bad rubbish – A guide to getting litter cleared from railway land (2002)

Reaching the Skies – Policies for surface access to London’s airports (2002) <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/488/get>

Where am I? – Street name signs in London (2003)

http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/view_event.php?id=163

Report on initial findings of research into the transport needs of Minority Faith Communities

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/3747/get>

When is a train not a train? A study of rail replacement bus services (2004) <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/1354>

Getting to the station – Report on access to Rail and Underground Stations (2006) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/2319/get>)

Incomplete Oyster Pay As You Go journeys research (2010)

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13964>

Walking and Interchange in London (2010)

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14002>

Requirements for Train Services

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/772>

Station Standards Report (2010)

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839>

Independent

Better Rail Stations Report 2006:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf>