railfuture

Promoting Britain's Railway
for Passengers and Freight

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Railfuture response to consultation questions on 'London's Transport Infrastructure'

Dear Sir,

Railfuture is a national independent voluntary organisation campaigning for a bigger, better railway in Britain, so we welcome the opportunity to provide an informed response to the questions posed by the consultation.

We recognise the importance of the provision of a responsive growing railway in contributing to wider economic, employment and skills, social inclusion and environmental issues.

If you require any more detail or clarification please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Chris Page

Chris Page
Railfuture
Vice Chairman

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Response to National Infrastructure Commission consultation 'London's Transport Infrastructure'

1. What are the major economic and social challenges facing London and its commuter hinterland over the next two or three decades?

London has been an economic success based upon population and economic growth. This has in some way been sustained by London's legacy transport system but continued growth has led to a position where London is becoming a victim of its own success. Transport capacity has become a key issue with some major rail capacity schemes coming on stream in the near future, namely further London Overground, Crossrail (1 and 2) and Thameslink, together with continued investment in the Tube.

This investment will continue to sustain growth in the short term but further investments are necessary, particularly in two areas of National Rail general infrastructure: mostly radial plus addressing orbital links.

2. What are the strategic options for future investment in large scale infrastructure improvements in London –on road, rail and underground, including, but not limited to Crossrail 2?

Strategic investment, if it is to be strategic as apart from for example building more road based river crossings, needs to address the future economic and social sustainability of London.

As well as sustained investment in the Tube and improving the road network to accommodate a greater range of road users, the two areas issues of concern are outer London (and beyond) radial rail capacity and outer London orbital links (journeys currently mainly undertaken by car).

London radial rail links

Strategic investment in increased infrastructure capacity and operational resilience is needed on existing radial rail routes to accommodate the following:

- Increased capacity and frequency metro style London Overground operating within Greater London and some adjacent towns.
- Growing outer suburban services (in some cases Inter City also but alleviated by HS2) allowing for commuting and further growth in the provision of housing
- Further capacity (and journey time improvements) on key airport corridors serving Gatwick, Stansted and Luton
- Far greater operational resilience
- Better integration with orbital and Overground links away from London terminals.

London Orbital rail links

TfL's statistics show that the car is used for the predominant number of orbital trips, with bus sharing the same infrastructure not making significant inroads. Popular opinion was that rail

could not provide an effective solution here until the provision of the London Overground, now carrying a staggering 120m passengers per year.

Further strategic investment is proposed in infrastructure provision for orbital London links as follows:

- Better integration of the now existing London Overground London orbital route by provision of additional interchanges with radial routes and the bus network in particular at: Brixton, Old Oak Common (2 lines), Brockley and extension beyond New Cross (as at New Cross Gate)

- Provision of a second orbital London Overground route involving new route infrastructure further out from the centre than the existing route but well within the M25 corridor, connecting suburban centres such as Ealing, Kingston, Sutton, Croydon, Bromley, Lewisham, Woolwich (Crossrail), Barking, key North London interchanges (Underground and main line including Crossrail 2) and linking with the new centres of economic development at Old Oak Common, Stratford and Docklands

- Provision of further infill light rail routes, initially based on the Croydon/Wimbledon tram system again carefully integrated with Overground, rail and bus routes.

3. What opportunities are there to increase the benefits and reduce the costs of the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme

Crossrail 2 suffers from a similar issue as faced with Crossrail 1 ie lower ridership projections at the extremities than in the centre. Crossrail 1 also has a wider core from Paddington to Liverpool Street projected to the massive traffic generators of Stratford and Canary Wharf and Heathrow.

The key to increasing outer ridership on Crossrail 1 was integration with other routes. Two examples are quoted: Abbey Wood and Whitechapel. Abbey Wood in one sense is similar to interchanges from the national network but ridership is boosted by Crossrail providing for other destinations than Central London, for example Canary Wharf. Whitechapel was added later to provide interchange with the orbital London Overground line (as well as the Tube) and is now projected to be one of the busiest stations on Crossrail 1.

It is proposed that to achieve increased ridership, Crossrail 2 should include:

- Maximum integration with the orbital London Overground system, national rail, the Tube and a properly integrated bus service

- Integration with a new outer London orbital Overground system (proposed above)

It is suggested that delivery of Crossrail 2 in cost terms would be improved by:

- Reduction in the number of branches, particularly in South London (compensated by more or better interchanges)

- Provision of a client side team to oversee the project with a strong Network Rail component fully integrated into the project.

4. Funding and Financing

Railfuture is not an investment bank so comments in this area are confined to practical suggestions as seen from other projects.

It is clear that traditional Network Rail RAB style funding is not appropriate for the 'on network' or the new elements of such a programme. TfL is better equipped to undertake new construction, certainly any light rail element. However for Crossrail as a national project a special purpose vehicle and funding was proposed to deliver the project. The weakness with this arrangement is the contracted Network Rail element. In the case of Crossrail 2 this gains particular significance so a straight read across to adopt the Crossrail model is not right either.

Railfuture has responded to the Connecting Northern Cities consultation and sees provision of infrastructure projects in London as on a similar basis with a special purpose client side body including Network Rail, Highways Agency and TfL with a degree of stakeholder participation from the London boroughs. TfL and DfT/Treasury would be principal sponsors.

Ring fenced funding would be a function of the benefits and the beneficiaries of such benefits, achieved as with Crossrail from government (as currently funded by Network Rail, TfL, the farebox and benefits to businesses and housing either hypothecated or by specific local taxation). The workstream on this is sizeable on previous experience, but probably worth it.

5. Have other metropolitan areas in other countries responded to similar challenges and priorities? Are there any responses to be learned and applied to London

Other than the obvious, but relatively simple cases in land ownership and governance terms of Hong Kong and Singapore, London itself in the form of TfL is probably the best example of derivation and implementation of a strategic transport solution set against wider economic criteria. TfL has through the London Overground and Crossrail 1 developed into the area of national rail sponsorship and projects although the structures here may be somewhat different.

Paris RATP has formed a strong partnership with London and has applied a very long term strategic approach of sustained investment. More particularly RATP is well advanced in the sustainable provision of orbital services with its fast developing orbital light rail projects. Like London, Paris has had a difficult relationship with SNCF/RFF as providers of national rail infrastructure.

New York, for years a traditional system like London has also embarked upon a series of major transport infrastructure projects designed to increase capacity and resilience of the system. The strengths of this example are in the area of coping with complex stakeholder and governance systems, hampered by geography in that a key part of the catchment area of the city is in a different state -New Jersey. This has in the recent past led to some very ill conceived transport projects, but New York has delivered generally in a very much more complex stakeholder scenario than London. New York had also set up a major projects division to deliver large infrastructure projects.