

Subject: Survey of National Rail Passengers

Report to: GLA Oversight Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 30 June 2015

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report asks Members to approve expenditure on a survey of National Rail passengers, to be commissioned by the Transport Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee agrees that expenditure of up to £5,000 be authorised for the Transport Committee to commission an external contractor to conduct a survey of London residents on attitudes to National Rail services; and**
- 2.2 **That the Committee notes that the Executive Director of Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Transport Committee, will commission the external contractor to carry out the rail survey, subject to the Committee approving the recommendation.**

3. Background

- 3.1 In line with its terms of reference, the GLA Oversight Committee has the power to approve all scrutiny-related Assembly expenditure and proposals for use of rapporteurs, in conformity with the Assembly's decision-making framework procedure. The Committee is therefore being asked to consider the use of resources to facilitate the investigation, rather than to discuss the details of the investigation.
- 3.2 The Transport Committee is undertaking an investigation into National Rail services in London. The following terms of reference for the investigation have been agreed:
- To consider major problems facing the rail network in London and how these could be addressed.
 - To examine the case for devolving more National Rail services to the Mayor and Transport for London, and different models of devolution that may be used.
 - To identify steps the Mayor and Transport for London could take to help achieve further devolution of National Rail services.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Committee's investigation should include a survey of London residents, to establish current attitudes towards, and experience of, National Rail services in London, identify passenger priorities for improving services and their views on proposed devolution options. The respondents to the survey would all be National Rail passengers.
- 4.2 It would not be possible to undertake this work in-house due to a lack of expertise in specialist survey design and implementation and resources. An external contractor would have the relevant expertise and experience to design, conduct and analyse a properly weighted survey in order to produce findings for the Committee to pursue in its investigation.
- 4.3 Existing passenger surveys have tended to review passenger satisfaction with existing services, rather than seeking to explicitly identify the key service improvements which passengers would like to see prioritized in franchise discussions. The survey will also provide an indication of the extent to which passengers are supportive in principle of plans to devolve national rail services in London to the Mayor and TfL. This could potentially provide the Committee with evidence to support recommendations to Government in support of these proposals.
- 4.4 The Assembly has recently used external contractors to conduct surveys for its investigations on taxi and private hire and online crime, which worked well. This proposal has been developed in light of that experience. In summary, the external contractor would be required to:
- Design and conduct a survey of Londoners' current views on National Rail services in London;
 - Set out the findings from the analysis of data in a written report in autumn 2015; and
 - (Potentially) present the findings from the analysis of data to the Transport Committee.
- 4.5 Officers have already tested interest in the work with a number of market research companies. Subject to advice from potential contractors, we expect that the research would be carried out via a telephone or internet survey of at least 500 Greater London residents who use National Rail services, potentially as part of an omnibus survey also including questions on other topics. No formal agreement has yet been made with a contractor. The GLA Oversight Committee is asked to approve this expenditure, in order that the Assembly can appoint the contractor to begin work in early July 2015.
- 4.6 The Assembly's Decision Making Framework includes a requirement that all four of the following criteria be considered by committees in deciding whether external technical assistance is required and appropriate on any given project. Paragraphs 4.5 – 4.9 of this report are designed to demonstrate that all four of the criteria set out below have been addressed and that the proposed external support is necessary and appropriate.
- That the proposed project requiring technical assistance is clearly and tightly defined. This would ordinarily mean that the consultant would be used for a discrete piece of technical analysis or research rather than simply as an adviser for the whole of a scrutiny;
 - That the proposed project cannot be readily undertaken by in-house staff, either because of a lack of necessary expertise or because of a lack of capacity;

- That the analysis required from consultants is not readily available and cannot be acquired elsewhere; and
- That the information required from consultants would be a significant contribution to the aims of the scrutiny.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 All costs arising from the appointment of an external contractor to provide technical advice and support for the investigation would be met from the 2015/16 scrutiny programme budget. Subject to approval, there is provision of £5,000 for commissioning this external support during 2015/16.

6.2 The contract would be let and managed in accordance with relevant GLA policies and procedures. As this project is consultancy based, the requirements of the GLA's Expenses and Benefits Framework and the Financial Regulations would also be adhered to.

List of appendices to this report:

None.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers: None
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