

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Transport Committee

Track to the Future

The London Assembly Transport Committee's review of rail services in London
July 2007

The Transport Committee

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|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Roger Evans | - Chairman (Conservative) |
| Geoff Pope | - Deputy Chair (Liberal Democrat) |
| John Biggs | - Labour |
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| Graham Tope | - Liberal Democrat |

The Transport Committee's general terms of reference are to examine and report on transport matters of importance to Greater London and on the transport strategies, policies and actions of the Mayor, Transport for London, and the other Functional Bodies where appropriate. In particular, the Transport Committee is also required to examine and report to the Assembly from time to time on the Mayor's Transport Strategy, in particular its implementation and revision.

The Transport Committee agreed the following terms of reference for this review on London's rail services on 1 December 2006:

- Whether the Mayor and TfL's proposals for the next phases of London Rail best meet current and future requirements, both in a Crossrail and no Crossrail scenario (but excluding consideration of the specific route, scope and funding of Crossrail)
- Whether these proposals require major capacity upgrades to allow maximum frequencies and explore conflicts with other rail services
- The funding requirements and franchising issues around extending London Rail and how these might be met.

The Committee would welcome any feedback on this report. Please contact Bonnie Jones on 020 7983 4250 or via e-mail at bonnie.jones@london.gov.uk if you have any comments. For press queries, please contact Lisa Moore on 020 7983 4228 or via lisa.moore@london.gov.uk.

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Chair's Foreword

There is much in this Assembly scrutiny report which should be of serious concern to Londoners. We have been looking in detail at the future of overground rail in the London area over the next two decades. The future of London's economy – and therefore the future of the UK economy as a whole – depends upon efficient and imaginatively designed public transport. In this report we question whether the planning or the funding of rail in London is effective or adequate.

The document published by Transport for London "*A rail strategy for London's future*" enshrining the Mayor's vision for 'Rail 2025' is an excellent prospectus put together by a team which has energy and vision. However, it is likely to remain a paper plan because as matters stand the planning process for rail is hopelessly fragmented. Planning cycles are too short. Infrastructure plans and financial time cycles are not synchronised. With planning that is too centralised and yet lacking in coherence we have the worst of all worlds. Many local proposals are unlikely to be developed efficiently – or at all – unless planning models are improved.

It is all too apparent that the plans for 'Rail 2025' are not fully funded – or funded at all in important areas. We still await Government approval for Crossrail One and for Thameslink Phase One. These key west-east and the north-south rail routes remain in doubt as they have done for the past decade. Meantime demand and overcrowding is burgeoning to a level unimaginable even at the start of the decade.

Government must make clearer the role of business in funding an important rail network for London. The commitment of organisations like London First make clear their belief in the importance of Crossrail so the goodwill is plainly there. We await an announcement of an effective mechanism for business in London to make its financial contribution to rail infrastructure improvements.

Self-evidently it is important to balance the demands of inter-city express trains with suburban commuter services. This is always going to be a challenge, but the report makes it clear that the current network is not being used to its full potential. Work on enabling longer trains is urgently needed – such as signalling upgrades and longer platforms. TfL London Rail indicate we could gain up to 40% additional capacity in this way.

TfL's ambitious plans for the "London Orbital" – the North London Railway and the East London Line extensions – are hugely welcome but will almost certainly release a lot of suppressed demand. In a previous report we pressed for six-car operation and it is ever clearer that wherever engineering work is being carried out longer train options should be introduced. Again, we urgently need a decision to fund Phase 2 [Surrey Quays- Peckham-Brixton-Clapham Junction].

Managing the demand for rail becomes ever more crucial – as does the integration of rail with other modes (Tube, bus, DLR and tram) and the encouragement of cycling and walking. Buses are not integrated with trains and cyclists are not well provided for on trains. Improvements to stations and passenger facilities are needed urgently and these need to be planned strategically.

Publication of our report comes shortly after the inauguration of a new administration in central Government. We have to hope that a new approach will follow where a survey is made of all the bottlenecks and inadequate infrastructure on our rail network, and the work to eliminate them put in priority order according to cost/benefit. Then a plan published attaching funding and a timetable for carrying out the necessary work. Nothing less will do unless we are to look forward to another twenty years of make-do and mend.

Geoff Pope

Deputy Chair, Transport Committee

Executive Summary

London's rail services are in need of vital modernisation. Crowding, cancellations, delays and poor journey times have contributed to high levels of passenger dissatisfaction, despite the high level of usage of rail services. The rail network is key to both London and the UK's economies, and the capital is the origin or destination for 75% of all rail journeys undertaken in this country. Demand has grown considerably over the last ten years, and will continue to do so in the future.

In this report, the Committee set out to assess what improvements need to be made, the strategic approach that needs to be taken and how this should be funded. We examined Transport for London's Rail 2025 document, which sets out a series of improvements to boost rail capacity by 40% in London. We also spoke to Network Rail, who manage the UK's rail infrastructure and will be responsible for implementing these improvements. The Association of Train Operating Companies submitted useful ideas about how small scale improvements can be made, and the Committee heard from rail user groups on how they believe rail services in the capital should be taken forward.

We examined broader policy objectives, such as the need to tackle carbon emissions, facilitate modal shift and ensure the rail network continues to serve the economy. Population and employment growth are also vital planks in planning the future of the rail network. It is also likely that more power over rail planning will be devolved down to local government – in London's case, to the Mayor – and we consider the impact that this will have on investment and planning.

The Committee is strongly supportive of Rail 2025, but is concerned about the consequences of it not being fully funded. In particular, the Thameslink and Crossrail projects will be central to ensuring London continues to drive the UK economy and a high class of rail travel is delivered. We make specific recommendations about the need to secure full funding for these projects and implement them swiftly.

Both Rail 2025, and Sir Rod Eddington's examination of the links between the UK economy and the transport network conclude that the current network is not being used to its full potential. Through tackling congestion at pinchpoints, and what we describe as rationalising the rail network, large amounts of capacity can be unlocked. The Committee examines the types of small scale improvements that need to be made, and how these can be implemented in a strategic way, with comprehensive funding packages attached.

However, the Committee believes it is not just capacity that is the key to providing a first class rail network. Demand management policies need to be in place to ensure that the most efficient use is made of existing services. Modal shift has an important role to play and it is vital that Mayoral climate change, transport and planning strategies are properly integrated to deliver this.

Demand-management also encompasses a particular problem of London's rail network – competing service priorities. Where space on certain tracks is limited, there is an issue over which services have priority – fast, long distance inter-city services or slower, more frequently stopping commuter services for Londoners. We believe a more transparent explanation of how these competing priorities should be managed should be provided by Government.

Funding of the rail network has always been problematic and we examine how more stable and transparent funding mechanisms can be put in place to ensure projects are fully supported where they are needed. This includes the role of business and the fare box to ensure all those who benefit from the rail network are also contributing towards it. The recent Lyons Review set out the possibility of business levies to fund specific infrastructures projects and we offer our support for this innovative proposal.

London's rail network is largely self-funded because of the high levels of passenger usage. However, this has not been matched by investment in the network to ensure the infrastructure can hold up to levels of demand. This should be addressed through the alternative funding proposals the Committee has recommended, including business levies and a specific pot of funding for London from the Transport Innovation Fund.

The measures the Committee sets out in this report will enable rail planning to be undertaken in a strategic and comprehensive manner. It is time to deliver a broad ranging strategy, co-ordinated with a number of other policy areas, to provide a sustainable and efficient rail network capable of fuelling the economy in future years.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Dingy, cramped stations, trains delayed or cancelled, overcrowded carriages: this is the daily reality for many rail passengers in London. Passenger dissatisfaction, overcrowding and fares have been steadily rising¹. Use of rail is set to increase in years to come and everyone from train operating companies to transport watchdogs, local councils and central Government agree that improvements must be made. But key questions remain: what are the solutions and who will pay for them?
- 1.2 TfL has recently published 'A rail strategy for London's future', also known as Rail 2025. This is a companion document to Transport 2025, the strategic planning document for London's long term transport needs. Both documents set out arguments predicting the growth of London's population and economy and how TfL plans to create the transport capacity necessary. Rail 2025 sets out a series of relatively straightforward and cost effective measures which will increase rail capacity by up to 40%. The Transport Committee asked the question: will this be enough to support London's future growth? Furthermore, is this 'predict and provide' approach to rail viable, and are there other options?
- 1.3 The Committee strongly supports Rail 2025 but is concerned that the proposals would only deliver the very minimum necessary to satisfy increasing demand for rail travel. Also, there is a danger Rail 2025 may not be fully funded in the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). The Committee believes ambitious alternative policy options should be considered.

The Context

Transport 2025 and Rail 2025

- 1.4 These two documents set out convincing and comprehensive evidence of London's future population and economic growth. Employment is expected to grow by 20%, around one million, between now and 2025 and will be located mainly in central London, particularly the West End, the City and the Isle of Dogs. Population growth, however, will be much more spread out across London. Areas likely to have particular growth will be in the Thames Gateway, Colindale and Brent Cross.
- 1.5 This means that more people will be undertaking more journeys. There will be a further increase in commuting, from both inside and outside the capital to central London. Rail has a particularly important role to play in facilitating these journeys. 43% of all trips into central London involve overground rail, and 75% of all rail journeys in Britain have an origin or destination in London².
- 1.6 However, the quality of London's rail services is poor. Though passenger numbers have increased, this has not been accompanied by a subsequent rise in service capacity³. This has led to significant overcrowding – a third of services to

¹ Passenger Focus, 'National Passenger Survey', Spring 2007, p6

² Transport for London 'A rail strategy for London's future', p13

³ Since 1994/95, the volume of passenger kilometres has increased by 60%; volume of service has increased by 25% (less in peak hours).

London exceed the guidelines in terms of overcrowding. The lack of growth in London's rail services has also led to longer journey times, as waiting times at stations increase. Passenger satisfaction is unsurprisingly low, compounded by annual fare rises well over inflation levels.

- 1.7 Rail 2025 argues that for these reasons, combined with London's forecast economic growth, there is compelling evidence for investment in the capital's rail network.
- 1.8 Rail 2025 has four main aspects – the construction of Crossrail Line 1, the major upgrade of Thameslink, the upgrading of Waterloo Station and a series of individual small scale infrastructure projects which will provide additional capacity of about 40%. These smaller schemes are improvements that TfL believes should be made to the existing network, such as providing longer trains and platforms. TfL has drawn up a timetable but emphasises its flexibility in implementation. Excluding Crossrail, TfL estimates this will cost £500 million pa (£10 billion over 20 years), which is a relatively small sum in rail terms. Funding for these schemes is being applied for as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review which will take place in the autumn.

The Eddington Transport Study

- 1.9 The argument that investment in transport needs to be made in areas vital to economic growth is central to the Government-commissioned Eddington Transport Study, published in December 2006. Sir Rod Eddington was asked to advise the Government on "the long-term links between transport and UK's productivity, growth and stability, within the context of the Government's commitment to sustainable development"⁴.
- 1.10 Eddington found that overall the UK has the right transport connections in the right places and that a high proportion of the population is well connected to key networks. The report also found that the UK is rated as a better place to do business than many of its European competitors because of its transport connections. Therefore, the UK's transport network is a key driver of the UK economy.
- 1.11 However, the report also found that parts of the network are "under severe strain"⁵ and that sustained investment is needed to ensure the network does not seize up. Three areas are recommended to be targeted – growing and congested urban areas, inter-urban corridors and international gateways⁶.
- 1.12 The report attracted widespread attention for its support for road pricing, but this is only part of a new strategy for transport investment which Eddington advocates. He argues, "transport's key economic role is likely to be in supporting the success of the UK's highly productive urban areas in the global marketplace"⁷. To put it bluntly, this equates to 'follow the money'.

⁴ Sir Rod Eddington, 'The Eddington Transport Study: Transport's role in sustaining the UK's productivity and competitiveness', December 2006, p1

⁵ *ibid*, p1

⁶ *ibid*, p5

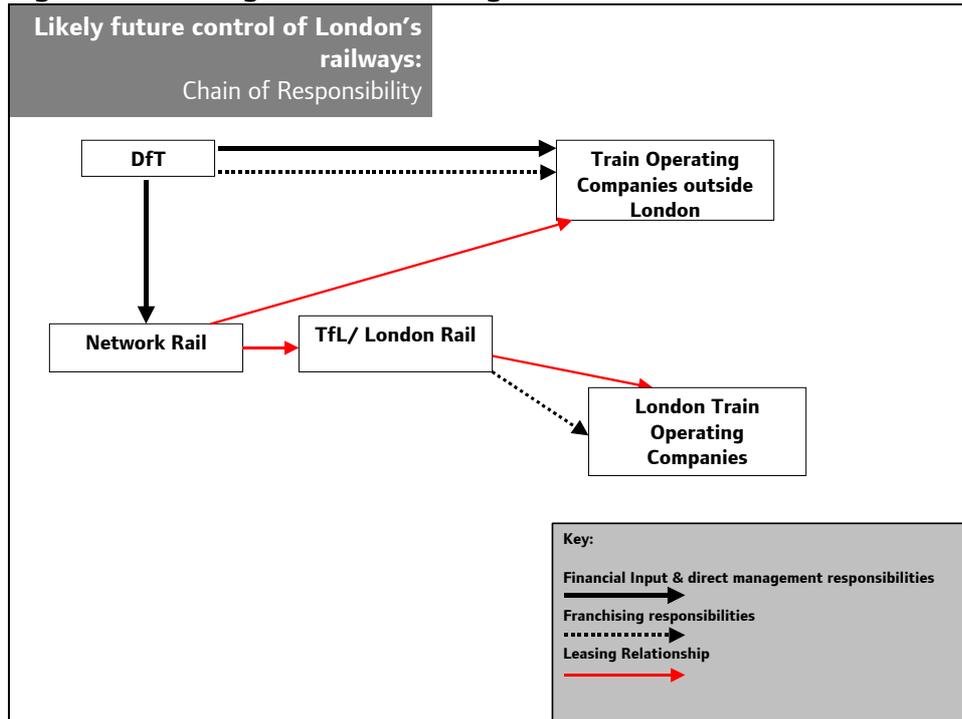
⁷ *ibid*, p11

- 1.13 Another key argument, which also overlaps with Rail 2025, is to move the emphasis of investment in transport away from brand new infrastructure, and towards improving the performance of the current network. This involves unlocking capacity through relieving pinchpoints – such as the proposals that Rail 2025 puts forward. Crossrail was cited as an exception to the rule in terms of building new infrastructure by Sir Rod Eddington in his press launch of his report, though no explicit mention was made of it in his report.
- 1.14 Eddington recommends a sophisticated policy mix, including investment in key areas, unlocking potential capacity and travel demand-management to ensure the best use is made of the existing network. It is also argued that the transport sector (including the aviation industry) should meet its own environmental costs to ensure economic growth is sustainable.

The role of central government

- 1.15 Since the demise of the Strategic Rail Authority in December 2006, the Department for Transport (DfT) has taken on the strategic planning role for railways in Britain, though powers have also been devolved to local bodies, such as TfL and county councils. The DfT's role includes franchise specification and allocation of funding. Network Rail is responsible for the day to day infrastructure management of the railways.
- 1.16 There are currently two key issues which will have a significant impact on the future of London's rail network. The first is the issue of franchising. The Railways Act 2005 made possible the handover of the franchising of the North London Railway to TfL. The DfT consulted on further rail powers for the Mayor beyond the London boundary last year. This proposed that the Mayor be handed franchising powers for the rail network in London, which in some cases would go beyond the GLA boundary.
- 1.17 The proposals would give the Mayor control over intra-London services, but not inter-city routes. The diagram below sets out the likely governance arrangements that will be in place:

Figure 1: Future governance arrangements for rail in London



1.18 The Transport Committee, in its response to this consultation, highlighted the issue of democratic accountability for those who do not vote in London elections but potentially could have train routes in their area controlled by the Mayor. The Committee recommended that any expansion takes place on a case-by-case basis, and that robust accountability measures with Local Transport Authorities outside the GLA boundary need to be in place.

What this means for rail

1.19 TfL has already signalled its intent in terms of the likely contents of future franchise agreements. The London Overground, comprising the former Silverlink franchise and the upgraded East London Line, will see significant service improvements. TfL Rail has described London Overground as 'nothing less than a new mode for London'⁸. This will include more frequent and longer trains, stations brought up to the standards of outer London tubes and the introduction of pre-pay Oyster. This will also mean stations will be gated and there will be an increase in staffing presence. The Committee would expect these improvements in service standards to be introduced across London's whole suburban network if the Mayor is granted franchising powers as expected.

1.20 The Committee has been disappointed by the lack of progress in the rail sector on issues such as providing public conveniences, step-free access and a full staffing complement. Upgrades to station and passenger facilities are needed urgently. At present, where work is being carried out this is often on an *ad hoc* basis. We hope that TfL now take the lead on implementing what the Committee views as basic service standards, and believe TfL should carry out a study to identify priorities for station enhancement and publish a timetabled plan for the necessary work to be carried out.

⁸ TfL Rail presentation paper to the Committee, 31 January 2007, p3

- 1.21 Furthermore, the use of Oyster pay-as-you-go and the modest support it has received from Association of Train Operating Companies (they have concerns over funding)⁹ has been a longstanding issue for many rail users. The Committee urges train operating companies and TfL to come to a swift agreement to ensure that fare structures are properly integrated across transport modes.
- 1.22 The Committee would also like to make two points about better levels of service provision. Firstly, four-car trains are planned on the London Overground by 2011. We believe that provision should be made for the introduction of six car operation so that if a capacity upgrade were needed it would be relatively straightforward. Secondly, we would also like to see better planning on bus links to rail stations. There does not always appear to be joined-up thinking in the way these services are co-ordinated and the Committee would expect this to improve if TfL gain more controls over rail services.

Forthcoming funding decisions

- 1.23 A series of forthcoming funding decisions will have a significant impact on the future of London's rail network. Later in the month, the DfT is expected to publish a high level output specification (HLOS) and a statement of funds available (SoFA), which will define the Government's priorities for Network Rail in the period 2009 – 2014. A White Paper will accompany the HLOS, setting out a long-term strategy to 2025 and beyond. The Comprehensive Spending Review, due now in autumn 2007, will set out the overall spending plans for transport from 2008 – 2011. TfL have submitted Rail 2025 effectively as a bid to secure funding for these projects.

The scope of the Committee's investigation

- 1.24 The Transport Committee's review of London's rail network sought to examine and reach conclusions on:
- Whether the Mayor and TfL's proposals for the next phases of London Rail best meet current and future requirements, both in a Crossrail or no Crossrail scenario (but excluding consideration of the specific route, scope and funding of Crossrail)
 - Whether these proposals require major capacity upgrades to allow maximum frequencies and explore conflicts with other rail services
 - The funding requirements and franchising issues around extending London Rail and how these might be met.
- 1.25 The Committee examined the strategies relevant to the future of rail in London, including Transport 2025, Rail 2025, Network Rail's Business Plan and relevant route utilisation strategies (RUS), the Eddington report and ATOC's Exploring the Potential report. Meetings were held with TfL Rail and Network Rail. The Committee also held a seminar for rail user passenger groups.
- 1.26 This report first examines TfL's proposals to increase capacity up to 2025 on the London rail network and their potential to deal with future demand. We then examine alternative ways capacity can be created; different options to the predict-and-provide approach to rail planning; and alternative sources of funding for the rail network.

⁹ ATOC press release, 31 January 2007, found at: <http://www.atoc-comms.org/dynamic/atocpress-story.php?atoc=997793>

2. Rail 2025's proposals to increase capacity

- 2.1 TfL's projections set out in Transport 2025 predict a 30-40% increase in demand for the rail network over the next twenty years. This takes account of the 18% predicted growth in London's job market and a population increase of just under a million people. London acts as a driver for the UK economy and will continue to do so, with London and the South East generating a third of the UK's Gross Domestic Product. It is vital that the capital is able to sustain this growth and has the transport capacity to ensure people are able to gain access to job growth areas.
- 2.2 Rail 2025's proposals deliver an increase in capacity of around 40%. There is always a risk that predictions of future growth will result in under provision. When examining the future growth predictions in detail, the Committee had some concerns. For example, Rail 2025 cites a 60% increase in rail use since 1994/95¹⁰, which averages out at 5% growth per year. A 40% increase in capacity in the next twenty years suggests a little over 2% growth in use of rail per year. We compared population and economic growth over the last ten years, with the forecast growth in the next twenty years (see table 1 below). This shows a similar level of growth in future years, albeit over a longer period. This does not suggest that demand for rail will decrease in future years and therefore there is a risk the predictions may understate likely increases in demand.

Table 1: Past and future population and economic growth in London

| | 1994-2005 | 2006-2025 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Percentage of population growth | 8% | 10% |
| Percentage of economic growth | 14% | 16% |

Source: Experian Business Strategies and ONS Crown Copyright and Transport 2025 figures

- 2.3 The Committee believes there are a number of factors that will further increase the use of rail significantly over the next twenty years. The Mayor's commitment to modal shift away from cars and towards public transport should result in increased use of rail. Rail 2025 projects only a 1% modal shift from car to rail¹¹. This is discussed in further detail in the Mayor's 'Climate Change Action Plan'. This estimates that a 10 – 20% reduction in carbon emissions can be made facilitating modal shift towards public transport and sustainable modes such as cycling and walking, and outlines policies to support this¹². However, there are no specific targets for modal shift within the Action Plan.
- 2.4 The possibility of further road pricing, also aimed at creating a modal shift towards public transport, may have an impact on rail services into the capital.

¹⁰ Transport for London 'A rail strategy for London's future', p9

¹¹ *ibid*, p16

¹² GLA, 'Action Today to Protect Tomorrow: The Mayor's Climate Change Action Plan', February 2007, p134

Rail is likely to be the most attractive alternative mode for car users, particularly for long distance journeys. The Chief Executive of the Office of Rail Regulation has raised concerns about the capacity of the country's rail network to deal with the likely increase in passenger numbers caused by significant modal shift¹³.

- 2.5 London TravelWatch highlighted another of the potential problems with the 'predict and provide' approach when they discussed future demand with the Committee during our passenger user group seminar¹⁴. They cited the example of the upgrade of the Jubilee line to seven car trains in December 2005. This delivered a 20% capacity increase in peak hours, which was almost immediately filled with crowding levels remaining around the same levels. London TravelWatch stated that it was not obvious where this growth had come from, but it did not appear to be a result of modal shift¹⁵.
- 2.6 One reason, which also arose during a previous scrutiny investigation on the North London Railway, could be suppressed demand. As services improve and become more attractive, passenger numbers grow as travel becomes easier. The Committee thinks there is reason to believe that the same pattern could occur with capacity growth and upgrading on London rail lines.
- 2.7 Overall, however, the Committee is strongly supportive of the schemes laid out in Rail 2025. Despite the Committee's concerns at the overall levels of demand, the individual schemes may ease congestion on particular lines, though we emphasise the possibility of suppressed demand. The Committee has also been impressed with TfL Rail's willingness to plan strategically over a twenty year period and notes that similar far-sightedness has not to date been demonstrated by other rail authorities, including Network Rail or the Department for Transport.
- 2.8 These organisations produce short to medium term planning documents, which are certainly vital, but the Committee has been disappointed at the lack of a long-term strategic approach by these key players. Network Rail's Cross London Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), for example, states in reference to planning beyond 2014 "[it] has not been possible to identify infrastructure deliverable within the scope and timeframe of this RUS that would accommodate TfL's ultimate aspiration of four trains per hour on each of a number of overlapping routes"¹⁶.
- 2.9 The Committee believes that a more holistic approach, that takes account of population and economic growth, sustainability issues and regional trends, needs to be in place to ensure that aspirations such as a metro rail service are met. To date, the Committee has not seen evidence of long-term strategic direction for the railways emanating from the DfT.

¹³ <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23387275-details/Is%20your%20rail%20journey%20really%20necessary/article.do>

¹⁴ Transcript of Transport Committee meeting, 22 February 2007, p5
Minutes and transcripts of Transport Committee meetings are available at <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/transport/index.jsp> or on request from the London Assembly Secretariat

¹⁵ Transcript of Transport Committee meeting, 22 February 2007, p5

¹⁶ Network Rail, Cross London Route Utilisation Strategy, p5

- 2.10 TfL is limited in terms of the scope and geographical limits of its operation. Furthermore, the Committee recognises there is always pressure on Government to reduce public spending. London's rail services cannot be looked at in isolation: given the dominance of London in the rail sector, with 75% of all rail journeys having an origin or destination in the capital, the network must be looked at in the round. Problems and issues on parts of the rail network around the country can have a direct impact on London's rail services, and vice versa. The current rail bottleneck at Reading Station restricts both frequency and capacity of trains using the line between Reading and London.
- 2.11 A plethora of other examples such as this are set out in the next chapter, where we explore alternative methods of increasing capacity on the rail network. The fundamental point is this: **that for the performance of London's rail network to improve significantly, and in line with its projected economic growth, spare capacity on London's rail network needs to be unlocked by improvements both inside and outside the capital.**

3. What more could be done to increase capacity?

- 3.1 The Committee agrees with both TfL and the Eddington report that the best way to unlock potential capacity is through better use of the existing network rather than the construction of new lines and stations (except in the case of Crossrail). This approach is more efficient in terms of both time and money. What has become evident to the Committee during this investigation is that the rail network is in great need of rationalisation. **Infrastructure is often not used to anywhere near its full potential and often actively constrains services running more effectively.**
- 3.2 Both Rail 2025 and ATOC's 'Exploring the Potential' discussion paper highlight numerous examples of inefficient junctions and single line tracking on busy routes which limit the number of trains able to pass along lines. Furthermore, many station platforms are too short to allow extra carriages to be added to trains.
- 3.3 One of the key problems facing the rail network is the mixed use of track. Segregation and more effective use of different services, such as fast and slow services, inner city and commuter or passenger and freight, requires infrastructure work to junctions, track, platforms and signalling. In this chapter, we examine these issues, highlighting specific examples and making recommendations for how these can be tackled in a logical and strategic manner. It should be emphasised that these are not a detailed appraisal of works the Committee is recommending to be undertaken, but an outline of the main problems in increasing capacity, with examples.

Junctions

- 3.4 Renewal and improvement of infrastructure has not kept pace with demand and increased service provision. This is particularly evident in the case of junctions. Flat junctions, where tracks cross each other at the same level, will have speed restrictions placed on them because of the possibility of derailments. Grade separated junctions are built at different levels so that trains can pass through without disrupting the flow of traffic.
- 3.5 Many key junctions on important routes are still flat. The vital Brighton mainline, for example, which carries Thameslink services, has a number of flat junctions all along the route, including Balham, Windmill Bridge, South Croydon, Three Bridges and Preston Park¹⁷. South Eastern lines, along which also carries some Thameslink services, also have a number of poorly designed junctions including Herne Hill, Bermondsey and Lewisham¹⁸. The South West Mainline which brings key services into Waterloo from Reading and parts of the south coast, would operate a lot more efficiently if a grade separated junction was built between Clapham Junction and West London Junction¹⁹.
- 3.6 The cost of grade separated junctions are relatively high, though this will vary according to the specific junction, as the location, number of lines and so on will

¹⁷ ATOC, 'Exploring the Potential', April 2007, p8

¹⁸ *ibid*, p4

¹⁹ *ibid*, p15

affect the scope of work that has to be undertaken. The examples above show how junctions on routes outside of central London and even the GLA boundary can directly affect short distance journeys within London.

Tracking

- 3.7 Further pinchpoints are created by limited track paths for services. Different types of services are running along the same track, including freight sharing track space with passenger operations, and fast and slow services constricting each other's movement. In particular, this is a major issue for commuter trains running between cities and inner city services operating wholly within London.
- 3.8 One example of this is on the First Great Western services into Paddington Station where frequently stopping trains constrain faster services and vice versa²⁰. The Committee requested further information from Network Rail on other examples of conflicts between services, in particular relating to where suburban commuter services are limited by longer distance trains. However, we were disappointed that no specific information was forthcoming. An example which has had a good deal of press coverage is the potential reduction of services from London Bridge via New Cross Gate once the East London Line extension starts operating fully. Instead of the eight trains per hour that now operate on the London Bridge - New Cross route, this may be reduced to six²¹.
- 3.9 Many instances exist where adding additional track along some sections would create segregated paths for services and allow them to operate more effectively. Rail 2025 contains such a proposal, on the West Anglia service. An increase from two tracks to four is proposed on the Lea Valley line to Liverpool Street. This would allow four trains per hour to run at every inner suburban station along this line. A further example is at Streatham Junction where single tracking exists in the link between Dorking and the fast lines into London. A second track here would enable trains to operate much more efficiently along these lines²².
- 3.10 However, the Committee believes there is a wider argument to be had here, with a more comprehensive approach to which services get priority where track space is limited. During the Committee's questioning session on this issue with Network Rail, we enquired as to how these decisions were made. Network Rail stated that they follow Government guidance on this matter, but their explanation of how this worked was made in only the very vaguest terms, which prompted one Committee Member to comment that it sounded as though priority was given to "those who shout [the] loudest". The Committee has yet to see any evidence to the contrary on this point, but would welcome a full explanation from Network Rail.

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that Network Rail publishes the guidance it follows from the Government on how decisions over competing service priorities are resolved.

²⁰ Network Rail Business Plan 2006, appendix 20, p16

²¹ Transcript of Transport Committee meeting, 31 January 2007, p6

²² Association of Train Operating Companies, 'Exploring the Potential', April 2007, p8

- 3.11 With the Mayor likely to gain franchising control over stopping services in London, this conflict could be brought to a head. Negotiations will have to be undertaken with relevant Local Transport Authorities where this will affect their residents. If agreement cannot be reached, the case will be referred to the DfT. A robust and clear policy on which type of service will be favoured and under what circumstances will need to be in place to deal with potential disagreements. **The Committee believes commuter-style services should not be reduced in favour of high speed lines.**

Platform capacity

- 3.12 Platform length naturally limits the number of cars on each train. Additional cars are a particularly easy and quick way of increasing capacity, and are indeed where the majority of Rail 2025's additional capacity is created. This will also involve lengthening many platforms, which can be difficult in some circumstances – for example if the station is located on a viaduct or near a bridge.
- 3.13 Selective door opening is a rail practice that allows trains that are longer than the platform to use the station. As long as clear announcements to passengers are made, this is a reasonably efficient and cheap 'stop-gap' solution where longer trains are needed.
- 3.14 However, it is not just the length of the platforms that is an issue, but the capacity that they provide, for example, the ease of access to other parts of the station or escalator availability. This is the case at Gatwick Airport, where the Gatwick Express service has to cross from fast lines to slow lines to use larger platforms which can accommodate the number of passengers. The Committee understands that plans are in development by Network Rail to address this issue²³. A similar situation exists at Victoria Station where the longest platform is blocked for services from Brighton in the morning peak by the Venice Simplon Orient Express. These two examples show that our rail services are operating in a very inefficient environment.

Signalling

- 3.15 London TravelWatch has highlighted several examples of where poor signalling infrastructure limits the use of platforms and lines in their paper 'Small is Beautiful – medium term rail improvements for the London area'. On the West London line, services will be unable to run all day to Imperial Wharf station, which is an isolated area in terms of its public transport links, because of the poor signalling system. This is also the case at Shepherd's Bush, where new platforms have been constructed to ensure better connections to the Central line. This demonstrates the lack of joined up thinking – better interchange links are designed and implemented, but other factors limit the frequency of services that can make use of these facilities²⁴. This type of limitation on potential capacity must be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

Frequencies

- 3.16 Increased frequencies are widely agreed to be the most effective way of increasing capacity, yet they can also be the most difficult to achieve. The

²³ *ibid*, p9

²⁴ London Transport Users Committee, 'Small is Beautiful – medium term rail improvements for the London area', March 2004, p6-7

infrastructure works described above are the key factors in allowing services to run at greater frequencies. The Mayor and TfL's vision of a 'turn up and go' metro-style service has also been mentioned and the Committee would expect to see some increase in frequency where this is possible. Where it is not, the Committee believes there must be some serious consideration given to the priorities between certain services – most particularly to resolve the ongoing tension between inter-city and suburban commuter services.

Case study – Waterloo

Waterloo International station is an excellent example of a lack of forward planning. In 2004, the decision to move the Eurostar terminal to St Pancras was announced. To date, no decision has yet been made as to the use of the vacated platforms at Waterloo. The service will move to St Pancras on 14 November 2007, and in a recent debate at the House of Commons, Tom Harris MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, said that Network Rail were currently examining options to convert the vacant platforms for use in the short term. It is hoped that this plan would then be implemented by December 2008, which means the platforms will be unused for over a year. Mr Harris went on to say “[a] significant amount of work has still to be done by Network Rail to develop a scheme that has a robust business case and is affordable. That means that full implementation is still some way off – we do not expect it before 2015”²⁵.

Furthermore, the Committee was told by Network Rail that there is a severe bottleneck over a viaduct outside Waterloo when accessing the station, the removal of which would free up significant extra capacity. Yet no work is planned.

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that Network Rail publishes a timescale by the end of 2007, with milestones, setting out how it plans to remodel Waterloo International.

Funding for small scale projects

3.16 The Committee would like to see a solution to the funding gap currently experienced by smaller scale but vital infrastructure projects, as discussed in this chapter. The Committee does not believe that radical new measures, with their exceptionally high costs and lengthy construction periods are needed, except in the case of Crossrail. But, as is reflected in the Eddington report, better use of, and improvements to, the network are swiftly needed.

3.17 Rail 2025 highlights the difference in subsidy for regional and London train operating companies – London receiving 10% per passenger mile of the amount of subsidy allocated to the rest of the country. The Committee asked Network Rail during its hearing on 15 March 2007 why this was the case, but did not

²⁵ Westminster Hall debate, 14 March 2007, found at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070314/halltext/70314h0006.htm>

receive an entirely satisfactory answer. Certainly London's train services carry larger numbers of passengers than in other areas of the country, particularly rural areas, and will therefore be more profitable.

- 3.18 Additional funding and investment for London and the wider south east's rail infrastructure would go some way towards addressing this imbalance. The effects of the lack of investment in rail infrastructure which is heavily used is felt every day by commuters paying ever increasing ticket prices, for ever more crowded trains. Investment must be made in services which act as a driver for the London and UK economy, and we make recommendations on this later in the chapter.
- 3.19 The Mayor has made the same argument in 'The Case for London' which argues for additional investment, including on the transport network, to encourage further growth in the economy²⁶. In particular, the document notes that rail subsidy for London has been falling over a number of years, despite it accounting for over two thirds of all passenger journeys, and demonstrates London rail subsidy offers higher value for money than any other region. The president of the CBI, Martin Broughton, also highlighted the need for proper investment in the railways. In a speech at the organisation's annual dinner, he said "[the] bottom line is we invest less in our infrastructure than any other major European economy. What assets we do have are contracting or deteriorating"²⁷.

The role of the Transport Innovation Fund

- 3.20 The Committee believes that more investment is necessary, and must take place within a strategic framework. The Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) offers a good mechanism for funding projects, though it has been criticised for appearing to favour road-pricing schemes at the expense of other modes of transport.
- 3.21 TIF funding is awarded to schemes which:
- Demonstrate an ability to assist in demand management and modal shift
 - Provide new mechanisms to raise additional funding at a local level
 - Are beneficial to national productivity whether at regional, inter-regional or local level²⁸.
- 3.22 TfL recently applied for gauge enhancement of the Gospel Oak to Barking line to increase significantly capacity and reduce the impact freight trains currently have on the line. An initial agreement that the scheme offered value for money has been made and the DfT will now take this forward²⁹.
- 3.23 The TIF also allows and encourages joint applications from local transport authorities to tackle problems more effectively at a regional level. This would certainly be one way of tackling pinchpoints outside of the GLA boundary. We

²⁶ GLA, 'The Case for London', March 2004, p26

²⁷ as reported in the Guardian, 16 May 2007, found at:

<http://business.guardian.co.uk/story/0,,2080415,00.html>

²⁸ Guidance on the Transport Innovation Fund:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/tif/transportinnovationfund?page=1#1000>

²⁹ Rail Transport Advisory Panel minutes, 16 December 2006, p3, found at:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/Agenda-RTAP-32.pdf>

would like to see TfL undertaking such an exercise if the Mayor is granted franchising powers over rail in London.

- 3.24 We believe many of the issues set out in this chapter could be resolved through bidding for TIF funding. Each case would naturally have to be judged on its merits and be subjected to rigorous value for money scrutiny. But more money must be made available to unblock the multitude of pinchpoints that exist both within London, and on the lines that serve it.
- 3.25 The Committee believes that the discrepancy in funding between London's rail services and the rest of the country needs to be redressed. London's rail services are not as heavily subsidised because of the high number of passengers, enabling services to be funded almost wholly through the fare box. **Investment in London's rail infrastructure to increase capacity and reduce overcrowding would benefit a very large number of people. We believe a specific pot of funding for London should be set up within the Transport Innovation Fund to facilitate this.**

Recommendation 3:

The Committee recommends that the Department for Transport allocate a pot of funding to London from within the Transport Innovation Fund for infrastructure enhancements and measures to reduce overcrowding.

Recommendation 4:

Many examples exist of small to medium scale projects to unlock potential capacity, such as ATOC and London TravelWatch's studies referenced in this report. The Committee recommends that TfL and Network Rail carry out feasibility studies by the end of 2007 on the best proposals in terms of cost effectiveness and funds should be sought for implementation from a specific London funding pot from the Transport Innovation Fund.

Recommendation 5:

TfL should examine the potential for developing joint applications for Transport Innovation Funding with neighbouring transport authorities and report back to the Committee on the scope of such potential by the end of October.

- 3.26 Throughout this chapter, it has become clear that forward planning has either not been undertaken or has been done in a very haphazard manner. It is absolutely vital that any increase in funding takes place within a strategic framework of long term planning on the railways. This is an issue not only of ensuring that growth occurs in a coherent and sustainable way, but that value for money is achieved. The Committee's views on this are set out in the next chapter.

4. Where now for London's rail services?

- 4.1 The previous chapter highlights many examples of where infrastructure planning has taken place on a short term or even retrospective basis. Many problems with the rail network have been left unaddressed as the network has expanded. The Committee is seriously concerned about this, given the important role transport has to play in maintaining economic growth. Furthermore, the necessity of moving towards a more sustainable transport system has never been more apparent.
- 4.2 The Committee strongly supports the proposals laid out in Rail 2025, but has concerns as, it appears, do TfL, that the programme will not be fully funded. When appearing in front of the Committee, representatives of TfL Rail talked about "encouraging signs" from the Government in terms of funding³⁰. We understand that TfL needs to be cautious about asserting that they will get funding if no guarantee has been given. But this lack of certainty is part of the problem – the London rail network is in dire need of investment and there is no alternative plan in existence.
- 4.3 The Committee believes that Rail 2025 is the absolute minimum London needs to keep its head above water in the years to come. As we noted previously we welcome the fact that Rail 2025 provides a long term strategy and contains wide reaching consideration of likely changes to both population and employment. We would like this to be the model upon which rail planning across the country is based.
- 4.4 The Department for Transport, with its strategic planning role, and Network Rail, responsible for managing the infrastructure of the railways, should be producing documents similar to Rail 2025 at a regional level, rather than line by line, as occurs with Route Utilisation Strategies. There also needs to be much better appraisal of issues such as demand management, population and employment growth, sustainability and environmental impact. Transport planning must be strategic and fully integrated with other aspects of society, yet all too often planning and policy are created in isolation.
- 4.5 The Committee has identified a number of different ways in which capacity can be created on the existing network, by making better use of the infrastructure in place. We believe that specific funding should be allocated to London from the Transport Innovation Fund, given the importance of the capital's rail network to the rest of the country and its economy.

Alternatives to 'predict and provide'

- 4.6 The Committee's concern about 'predict and provide' is that capacity could be filled as soon as it is created. The Committee believes that growth on the rail network is finite and therefore alternatives to this approach need to be considered. Demand management has a vital role to play in ensuring that demand does not outstrip supply even further. Full consideration of the likely changes to the way people travel and how this can be influenced in future years needs to be made.

³⁰ Transcript of Transport Committee meeting, 31 January 2007, p27

- 4.7 TfL has a major role to play with regards to demand management and we note the work that it has already undertaken in this area and plans to do so through its Travel Demand Management directorate. The role of demand management is acknowledged in Transport 2025, which sets out a series of ‘hard’, ‘soft’ and land use Travel Demand Management (TDM) measures. Land use TDM includes mixed use developments to improve local amenities and siting “trip generating development” in areas where good public transport links already exist³¹. Soft TDM includes travel plans for schools, workplaces and individuals to encourage more sustainable methods of travel and that efficient use of the transport network is made.
- 4.8 Hard TDM measures include pricing, regulation and physical restraints to discourage people from making unnecessary journeys. Road pricing is a good example of a hard TDM measure. However, it is vital to ensure a balanced mix of these measures is in place. Hard TDM in particular cannot be implemented in isolation – alternatives must be provided. In the case of road pricing, attractive public transport alternatives need to be in place before pricing is implemented. The London Plan has a significant role to play in ensuring that best use of the transport network is made and that hard TDM measures are balanced with softer incentives to promote sustainable travel.
- 4.9 The Committee welcomes TfL’s emphasis on demand management but is keen to ensure that there is consistency in strategies from the Mayor and the functional bodies and that the effects of separate policy developments are taken into account. For example, we would like to see how TfL’s plans to facilitate further modal shift away from cars will affect its projections for rail and whether the Rail 2025 projection that rail will only account for a 1% shift remains TfL’s best estimate.
- 4.10 In particular, we would ask TfL whether the projections take into account the emphasis on modal shift in the Mayor’s Climate Change Strategy. Rail is likely to be the most attractive alternative mode for commuters who currently travel by car on commuting journeys, and the Committee is concerned that rail capacity increases will not keep pace with demand generated by demand management unless such policies seek to divert people towards alternatives to rail. As such, we believe that TfL should evaluate the costs and benefits of its rail investment programme against other forms of transport investment and Travel Demand Management to ensure that investment is directed appropriately.

Recommendation 6:

TfL should report to the Committee by September on what its latest predictions are for modal shift from car to rail; what account it has taken of the Mayor’s climate change strategy and what effect it believes this will have on its modal shift predictions; what steps it is taking to manage overall travel demand and encourage commuters to move from car and rail to other more sustainable forms of transport; and what effect it expects such policies to have on future demand for rail services.

³¹ Transport for London, ‘Transport 2025: Transport Challenges for a growing city’, p65

Securing funding for the rail network

- 4.11 The Committee sees it as absolutely imperative that Rail 2025 is now fully funded and implemented swiftly. The groundwork has been done in that TfL have designed a phased timetable which takes account of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, work already planned and the most urgent priorities identified. There is no reason why, if funding is secured, work cannot begin on time.
- 4.12 In particular, the Committee would like to single out three schemes that need urgent decision making. Funding should be made available for phase two of the East London Line extensions, connecting New Cross to Clapham Junction via Peckham and Brixton, on which the Transport Committee previously made a recommendation. This would create an orbital railway around London, linking the East London and North London railways.
- 4.13 Thameslink is absolutely vital to Rail 2025, and delivers the single largest capacity increase. Timing has become critical on this project. Network Rail has said that phase one of the project needs to begin this summer to ensure that almost half the additional capacity is to be delivered in time for the Olympic Games in 2012³². The full capacity benefit would be delivered by the end of 2015.
- 4.14 Crossrail is not part of the funding proposals for Rail 2025, but it delivers a large amount of additional capacity in itself. Furthermore, it strengthens the case for the various individual projects by offering better interchange options, and facilitating easier movement around London. The Crossrail Bill is still going through Parliament, but the Government has said they are “absolutely committed” to the project³³. There is also strong support from the business community, the Mayor and general cross party support. In November 2006, the London Assembly passed a motion re-affirming its support for Crossrail and the proposed additional station at Woolwich³⁴, which has now been accepted by Ministers. However, the Committee would note that various forms of Crossrail have been proposed for almost twenty years, and progress has been very slow.
- 4.15 It is expected that Crossrail funding will be divided equally between Government³⁵, London businesses and the fare box. The recently published Lyons Inquiry into Local Government suggested a local funding mechanism on business rates for specific, ring fenced infrastructure projects. This would allow the Mayor to raise funding for Crossrail through a business levy and was strongly supported by London First, who helped create this proposal.
- 4.16 Though the Committee has recommended that the Transport Innovation Fund be used for small scale projects, it also recognises the limits on public funding

³²<http://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=2860&NewsAreaID=22&SearchCategoryID=-1>

³³ <http://www.crossrail.co.uk/pages/latestdevelopments.html>

³⁴ Minutes of the London Assembly Plenary meeting, 15 November 2006, p3

³⁵ Possibly through the TIF, see http://66.102.9.104/search?q=cache:RSwdTIAEu60J:www.gos.gov.uk/497468/docs/457370/457374/BP7_2006_09_28_Transport.doc+crossrail+funding+transport+innovation+fund&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=8&gl=uk

and believes that other sources of funding should be considered. This should not just be for Crossrail, but other self contained rail and transport projects, particularly where they are directly beneficial to businesses. Organisations such as London First and the CBI have offered strong support for Crossrail and investment in the rail network because of the benefits it will bring to the business sector.

- 4.17 **A decision on whether to implement Lyons' proposal will need to be taken soon if swift action on funding for Crossrail is to be taken.** The Committee is strongly supportive of the proposal and sees it as an innovative method of raising funding for vital infrastructure. The Committee would like to see some fundraising powers devolved down to local transport authorities to accompany the strategic powers that were granted to them under the Railways Act 2005. This would allow transport authorities to be more responsible and accountable for rail in their area.
- 4.18 The Committee also believes the fare box has a role to play. A third of funding for Crossrail will come from the fare box. Passengers often fail to see how their fares are being invested and we would like to see more transparency on this issue from the Government and train operating companies.

Recommendation 7:

The Committee recommends that the Government sets out a mechanism for funding Crossrail at the time of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Recommendation 8:

The Committee recommends the Government commits full funding to the Thameslink programme.

Recommendation 9:

The Committee reiterates its support for phase two of the East London Line extensions to be funded and recommends this be allocated as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

- 4.19 Both Rail 2025 and the Eddington report emphasise the role rail will play in delivering economic growth. **The Government must now signal clearly how it plans to take the Eddington report and Rail 2025 forward by providing a strategic lead.** The White Paper that will follow the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn will provide the Government's long term rail strategy. We expect this to take account of demand management, population and employment growth, sustainability and integration with other modes. We also believe that alternative and innovative fundraising options should be considered and mechanisms for their operation included as part of the White Paper.
- 4.20 Recent reports have signalled positive intent from the Government, with a strategy based around 'carbon, capacity and customers'³⁶. This must include co-

³⁶ <http://environment.guardian.co.uk/travel/story/0,,2090207,00.html>

ordination of policy with regards to modal shift away from the roads, with the requisite means of funding attached. **Sustained economic growth needs sustained investment in the infrastructure which drives this growth. In short, an integrated transport policy is essential for London's and the UK's growth.**

Appendix A - List of evidence submitted to the Committee

The Committee would like to thank all the organisations who took the time to contact the Committee and submit evidence to the scrutiny.

If you wish to obtain any of the evidence listed below, you can e-mail bonnie.jones@london.gov.uk or download transcripts or submissions from <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport.jsp>.

Oral Evidence

London Assembly Transport Committee, 31 January 2007

- Ian Brown (Managing Director, TfL Rail)
- Geoff Hobbs (Head of Strategy, TfL Rail)
- Howard Smith (Chief Operating Officer, TfL Rail)

London Assembly Transport Committee, 22 February 2007

- Brian Cooke (Chairman, London TravelWatch)
- Ron Brewer (Member, London TravelWatch)
- Rufus Barnes (Chief Executive, London TravelWatch)
- Suzanne Fry (Rail Policy Assistant, London TravelWatch)
- Gerry Devine (North Orbital Rail Partnership of the 18 local authorities which border the current Silverlink Metro Network)
- Malcolm Alderman (Western Enfield Rail Users Group)
- Peter Woodrow (Chingford Line Users' Group)
- Roger Gilham (Chingford Line Users' Group)
- Ray King (Cambridge Heath & London Fields Rail Users)
- Richard Price (East London Line Group)
- Roger Blake (West Anglia Routes Group and Hackney Council)
- Graham Larkbey (Secretary, Barking and Gospel Oak Line Committee)
- Richard Pout (Chair, London Thames Gateway Forum and Secretary Railfuture, London)
- Tony Adams (Kingston Area Travellers Association)
- Tony Dempsey (Chair, Windsor Lines Passenger Association)
- Mark Balaam (Chairman, West London Line Group)
- Nick Woolven (Vice Chairman, West London Line Group)

London Assembly Transport Committee, 15 March 2007

- Paul Plummer, Director of Planning and Regulation
- Paul Harwood, Principal Route Planner
- Janet Goodland, Director, Network Development, and
- Andrew Mitchell, Thameslink Project Director, Network Rail

Written evidence

The Committee also examined the following strategies and documents as part of its investigation:

- Transport for London, 'Transport 2025: Transport challenges for a growing city', June 2006
- Transport for London 'A rail strategy for London's future', autumn 2006
- Sir Rod Eddington, 'The Eddington Transport Study: Transport's role in sustaining the UK's productivity and competitiveness', December 2006
- Network Rail's Business Plan 2006 and relevant route utilisation strategies (RUS)
- GLA, 'Action Today to Protect Tomorrow: The Mayor's Climate Change Action Plan', February 2007
- GLA, 'The Case for London', March 2004
- ATOC, 'Exploring the Potential', April 2007
- London Transport Users Committee, 'Small is Beautiful – medium term rail improvements for the London area', March 2004

Appendix B – Orders and Translations

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Appendix C: Principles of scrutiny

The powers of the London Assembly include power to investigate and report on decisions and actions of the Mayor, or on matters relating to the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, and on any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Londoners. In the conduct of scrutiny and investigation the Assembly abides by a number of principles.

Scrutinies:

- aim to recommend action to achieve improvements;
- are conducted with objectivity and independence;
- examine all aspects of the Mayor's strategies;
- consult widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost;
- are conducted in a constructive and positive manner; and
- are conducted with an awareness of the need to spend taxpayers money wisely and well.

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