

# Week 10 Monday 7 May all day

## Transport

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Respondent Number: 2145 (John Cox)

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### **(1) 'MINOR SUGGESTED CHANGE' MSC.10.21**

There is a 'Minor Suggested Change' MSC.10.21 in T3 Table 10.1, currently adding the wording:

*"London Overground Extension – West London Orbital"*

That wording is opposed, because it does not, as claimed, provide *"Consistency with other GLA Strategies"*.

I suggest (given the need for enforced brevity in the table) new wording:

*"Infrastructure improvements on West London Orbital route, including for a London Overground Extension"*

Specific improvements on the WLO route are still being studied by the 'West London Alliance' of boroughs and by TfL - for instance, whether to fully electrify the route, remove existing level crossings, or replace and widen bridges.

Nevertheless, there are certain to be significant infrastructure improvements, particularly on the northern section, the Dudding Hill freight line between LB Ealing at Old Oak Common, via LB Brent just south of Wembley, to LB Barnet at Brent Cross Cricklewood.

One result of physical improvements is the chance to add completely new London Overground services.

However, there are other benefits of this investment - the railway can more efficiently handle freight traffic (supporting policies S18, S110, and T7) and can provide a new

passenger route for longer-distance, non-London Overground, south-east regional trains (supporting policy T1), stopping at London's opportunity areas.

The replacement wording above is more positively prepared and justified than the original, and more effectively based on joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.

The change is also in line with wording already included in the submission version (admittedly yet to be examined) of at least one London borough's Local Plan.

The Mayor should change all references in all his documents from "West London Orbital"

to

"West London Orbital route"

because the "WLO" is a valuable infrastructure improvement for London (for instance, replacing 90-year-old signalling) not just some new, short London Overground trains.

Changing the Table 10.1 wording will not harm the case for London Overground trains, but the route will have actual or passive provision for far more than just that.

This fact will also doubtless be repeated in the public's evidence given to Parliament at the Mayor's Transport and Works Act application, in the next two or three years.

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## **(2) MATTER M76**

**M76:**

**(a) Are all of the transport schemes set out in Table 10.1 necessary and adequate to deliver the development proposed in the Plan?**

**(b) In the context of the identified funding gap of £3.1 billion per year, is there a reasonable prospect that the transport schemes set out in Table 10.1, and any other essential strategic transport schemes, will be delivered in a timely fashion in relation to the timing of development proposed in the Plan?**

### **Response to (a):**

The stated question above is whether there should be more schemes added or some schemes removed, in Table 10.1: "Indicative list of transport schemes".

"Indicative" means "serving as a sign or indication of something" (OED).

I would add entries.

It would be a disappointing form of strategic planning that did not allow really long-term London transport schemes, only completable over multiple London Plan periods. In other words, why can't they be "indicative" as well?

I do not consider the table entry "*National Rail capacity increases (other lines)*" is a specific-enough entry in this respect to satisfy 'long-termism' and policies T1 and T3.

Such schemes might require nurturing in the current London Plan, including providing only such short-term fixes that do not harm longer-term plans.

An example is Willesden Junction station, where short-term TfL plans to add new escalators between low- and high-level platforms will wipe out two bay platforms likely needed by new services later (*for instance, extending some East London Line services through Camden Road and Queens Park stations to a future booming Old Oak Common/Willesden Junction opportunity area*).

What the more detailed new table entries ought to say is really up to the Mayor's long-term planners.

However, since they don't currently mention any, they might include:

- an aspiration to use London's surface railways overwhelmingly for London's trains. That is the only feasible way to provide metro-frequency (i.e. tube-like) services for south London.

It implies a table entry of: "*Studies to consider station-free tunnels from edges of London towards central London termini for long-distance passenger trains and freight*". (Completion by 2070?)

- a reinstatement of new rail (and bus) interchange aspirations mentioned in the Mayor's Transport Strategy but since dropped from the London Plan.

A typical entry can be: "*Studies of new railway interchanges at Streatham Common and Brockley*". (Actual implementation by 2050?)

The former study might not justify new Streatham Common platforms or a whole station being moved. However, just as an illustration of how matters could develop over the next few decades, supposing the Sutton tram link took over at least the northern half of the Sutton-Wimbledon railway; Thameslink trains could later run only to Sutton and the Wimbledon-Tooting line converted to trams; then trams could be extended on-road to both Streatham and Streatham Common current stations, producing the desired interchange in an entirely different and perhaps unexpected

way. This possibility is stated here not as an actual London Plan submission, but as an illustration that Table 10.1 must keep alive aspirations of the Mayor that may take several decades to implement, and any short-term, perhaps borough-only, improvements must keep the Mayor's documented long-term options in mind.

**Response to (b):**

There is nothing wrong if Table 10.1 contains mere aspirations. Those entries can still be sound, if they are positively prepared, justified and effective.

My contention is that, perhaps counter-intuitively, it is actually Table 10.1's new long-term aspirations that are likely to survive, regardless of affordability worries, because their short-term, current London Plan costs are probably very low – just the expense of desk-top studies, or some 'good-enough' temporary infrastructure fixes.

It may well be that it is the shorter-term bigger projects in Table 10.1 that are far more vulnerable, not the new, appropriately chosen, long-term golden eggs.

*(end)*