

**NETWORK RAIL CROSS LONDON ROUTE UTILISATION STRATEGY
DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION
RESPONSE BY LONDON FORUM OF AMENITY AND CIVIC SOCIETIES**

The London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies, formed in 1988, is an umbrella organisation for some 120 residents, conservation and civic societies, community organisations and other affiliated bodies with an aggregate membership of over 100,000. It also serves as the Civic Trust's regional federation for London.

The London Forum welcomes this Route Utilisation Study by Network Rail, and the effort made to take account of the impact of growth in London's population and employment on the demand for travel by overground rail. We believe strongly that London's future success and quality of life will be dependent on an efficient and convenient public transport system.

London's orbital rail routes are unattractive, with substandard stations, relatively infrequent trains, poor connections with other routes and modes and often inadequate capacity at peak periods. Calculations of future usage which take the present situation as the baseline are likely to underestimate the potential demand for a higher-quality service. The modelling used assumes that travellers in 2016 will use expanded Underground services in preference to overground rail (5.2.7). It is not clear whether that takes into account other developments which may increase pressure on the Underground, such as the possible reinstatement of Bakerloo Line services to Watford Junction (mentioned at 2.6.2).

The description of this as a 'Cross London' Strategy 'which covers the orbital routes around London' is misleading. The claim (4.4.1) that 'TfL's aspirations for ... orbital rail services' have been covered raises expectations which are not fulfilled. This document seeks to develop a Strategy for the North London Line and the West London Line. It says nothing substantive about the East London Line, and deals only marginally and inconclusively with the South London Line. In effect, therefore, it is largely a preparatory document for the tendering of the Silverlink Metro franchise; its end date, 2016, is explained as the end of the originally expected franchise period for Silverlink (executive summary, 4th paragraph). The reference to the implications of refranchising for the North London line (7.4.1) should also have covered the West London Line.

While there may have been practical arguments for this limitation in the scope of the present document, the result is that it ignores any wider stimulus that the phase 1 extension and upgrading of the East London Line may give to orbital rail travel in inner London and, more specifically, issues about interchange between the extended East London Line and the North and South London Lines, and between the South London Line and the West London Line. We are concerned that, when a Route Utilisation Strategy for South London comes to be prepared, it may have a strong focus on other issues and give inadequate attention to the demand for orbital travel in inner London, although that fear might turn out to be unfounded if it were also to cover phase 2 of the East London Line extension (7.4.2).

A further limitation of the present document, in our view, is the decision not to consider the possible implications of longer-term or uncertain developments. It claims to identify any relevant major factors beyond 2016, but that appears to apply only to freight and not to passenger traffic (executive summary, 4th paragraph). Only incidental references are made (2.6.1, 6.3.1) to the proposed phase 2 extension of the East London Line to Highbury and Islington (along the route of the North London Line) and Clapham Junction (along the route of the South London Line). The effect of transferring Eurostar services from Waterloo to St Pancras is disregarded on the ground that Eurostar might retain rights to use the West London Line (2.6.4).

Extension of the East London Line to Clapham Junction would have significant implications for that station. But Clapham Junction in any case has serious problems, including poor general access to all the platforms (3.13.5), and we urge Network Rail to address those urgently in some more appropriate context. The present document merely considers platform 1 and platform 17, each in isolation. It is not clear which side of the station a diverted South London Line service (option 7) would use.

Despite our reservations about the limited scope of the present document, we wish to express strong support for option 5, under which there would be 8 trains an hour between Stratford and Camden Road, 6 trains an hour between Clapham Junction and Shepherds Bush (on the assumption option 6 is also adopted), 4 trains an hour between Clapham Junction and Barking, 4 trains an hour between Camden Road and Queens Park and 4 trains an hour between Stratford and Richmond. Option 5 would be an important measure to improve access to employment and other opportunities for people living in the more deprived areas of London.

Unless the Gospel Oak-Barking line is electrified, however, the Clapham Junction-Barking trains would be diesel-powered. We would still regard option 5 as an overall improvement on the present position; but, with the majority of the trains between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction 2-car diesel units rather than 3-car electric units as at present, there would be some reduction in the quality of service in aspects other than frequency.

In the case of freight we regret this study was not able to take into account the possible demands resulting from the establishment of Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges in London (4.3.20). We also regret that it does not consider the case for a Freight By-Pass for London. We hope that issue will be fully explored in preparing the future Freight Route Utilisation Strategy, including the possibility of routeing Channel Tunnel freight traffic through Redhill, Guildford, Reading and Oxford. We are not clear whether the Channel Tunnel freight paths taken into account in analyses in the present document are the paths currently used or the larger number of paths safeguarded under international agreement.

From the analyses of freight traffic in this document it appears there are significant amounts of construction materials that could be diverted from rail to river. We would support such a transfer; and, although the subject is in part outside its terms of

reference, we urge Network Rail to take the initiative in ensuring that this possibility for freeing up capacity on London orbital routes is fully investigated.

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