

# London TravelWatch response to the South Eastern Franchise Consultation

September 2012

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**London TravelWatch** is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Liaise with the transport industry, regulators and funders on matters affecting users and respond to their consultations;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and the surrounding area.

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London TravelWatch  
Dexter House, 2 Royal Mint Court,  
London, EC3N 4QN

Telephone: 020 3176 2999

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## Glossary

Term	Definition
DfT	Department for Transport
DLR	Docklands Light Railway
SQUIRE	Service Quality Incentive Regime
TfL	Transport for London

## Executive summary

London TravelWatch welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Transport's (DfT) consultation on the South Eastern franchise. The franchise is due to commence in April 2014 and will face challenges associated with the construction works of the Thameslink programme.

### We support

London TravelWatch supports the DfT proposals to ensure that the overall passenger experience improves throughout the life of the franchise.

### We welcome

London TravelWatch welcomes the implementation of smart technology and integrated ticketing, along with the increased focus on the passenger experience.

### We recommend

London TravelWatch's priorities for the franchise are:

- We believe that the optimum outcome for London passengers would be for the DfT to devolve responsibility for the Metro part of this franchise to the Mayor of London through Transport for London (TfL);
- Close working between the DfT, and the potential franchisees, with London TravelWatch in both this and other franchise consultations. London TravelWatch represents the clear majority of passengers on the South Eastern network, and produces many reports relevant for the franchise, for example "Fare Deals for London" about zonal fares. As the statutory body for most of the passengers affected by the franchise, we would like to see a greater role in assisting the Department and any bidders for the franchise for the benefit of passengers;
- Current levels of overcrowding on the route are significant. The provision of additional capacity through increasing services and good utilisation of rolling stock would enable a reduction in overcrowding levels. For those areas which do not conform to London TravelWatch's aspirations for levels of train service, an increase in frequency to a minimum of four trains per hour is our priority;
- 'Right-time-railway' – London TravelWatch supports the concept that the improved performance of these routes is achievable by creating a focus on right-time arrivals. This means that arrival and departure times at all points along the route should be exactly on-time, rather than the current standard

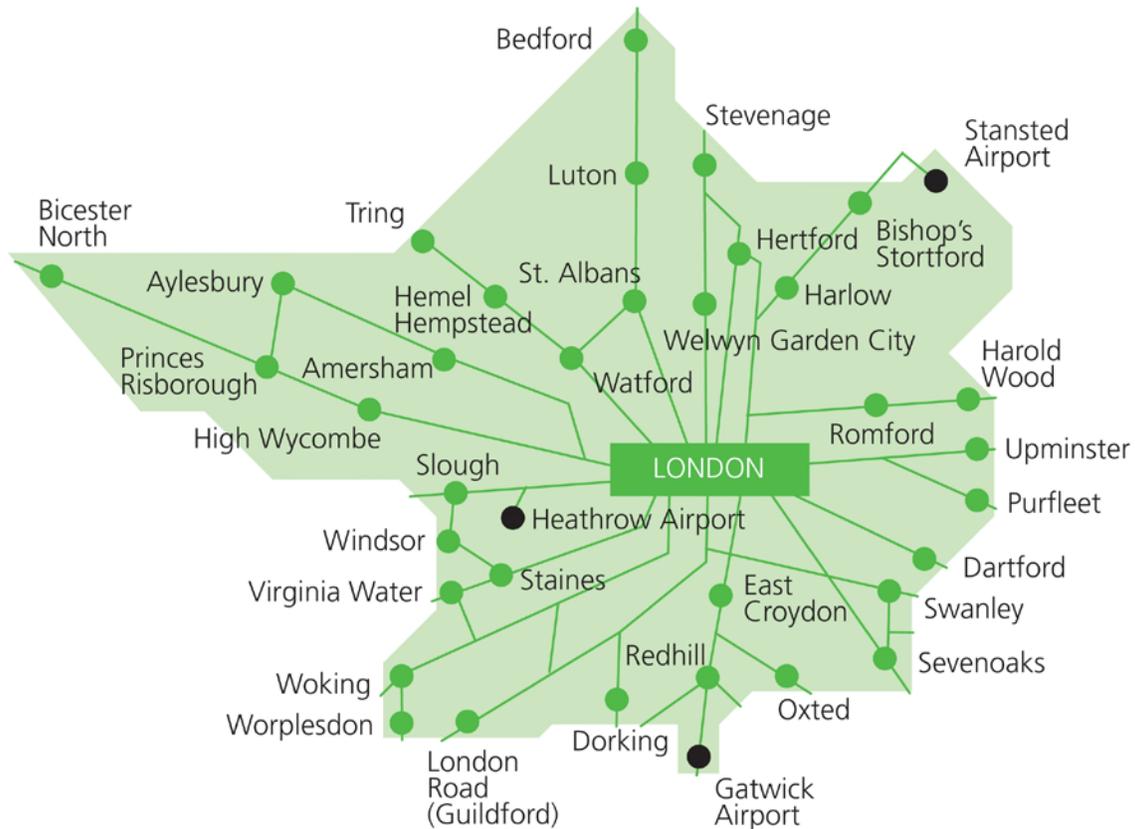
- that on-time is considered to be when the service is within five minutes of the advertised arrival time at the final destination only;
- Smartcard technology across the whole network, as it would benefit from integrated smartcard ticketing;
  - Stations – Minimum station standards from the independent ‘Better Rail Stations Report’ (<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf>) to be adopted as part of the franchise, with further standards required beyond the minimum for stations that have greater passenger numbers than the Network Rail ranking of station classification suggests. Details of measures to achieve these standards and the correct application of the standards according to a reasonable classification should be part of the franchise obligations. A de-cluttering of signage at stations to make passenger information clearer and more consistent at the start of the franchise in combination with station deep cleans;
  - Minimisation of bus replacement services – The impact of planned disruption on passengers needs to be reduced in future franchises. Operators must be strongly incentivised to run trains where possible, rather than replacement buses. Where buses are necessary, a minimum standard of service needs to be provided in terms of information and bus quality;
  - Investigation of closer working between the new operator and Network Rail. This would be an opportunity to provide better information about the service to passengers, especially at times of service disruption; and
  - Customer complaints – Train operators to monitor the demographics of their complainants and to advertise their procedures for all passengers to follow helpful complaint procedures, but particularly for those underrepresented in complainant statistics.

Coverage of London specific issues begins from page 10 onwards, as well as the responses to the Department’s individual questions from page 18.

## Introduction

Casework appeals, along with our current and past research, inform London TravelWatch's response. The area that London TravelWatch is responsible for is shown below:

**Figure 1 - London TravelWatch Remit Area**

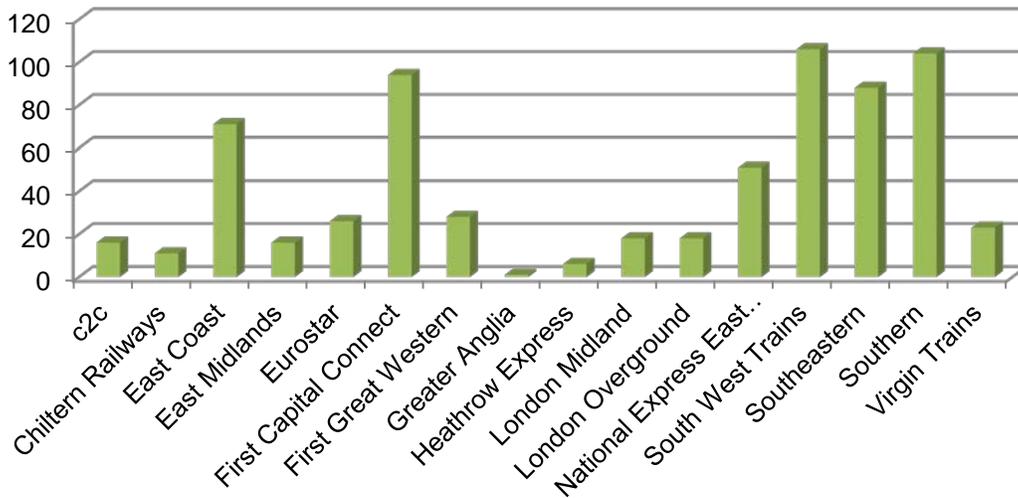


For the South Eastern franchise, the London TravelWatch boundary covers all services within the London area, as far as Dartford, Swanley and Sevenoaks.

## London TravelWatch Casework

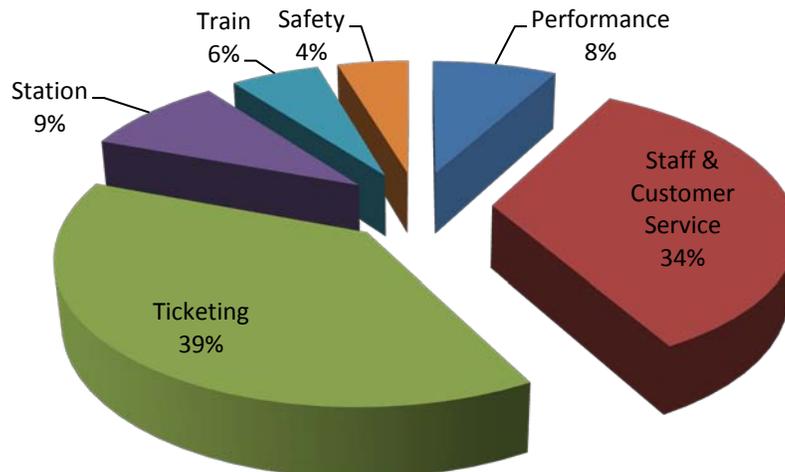
London TravelWatch is the body to which transport users appeal if they are not satisfied by the response of the transport operator's complaints process. Across all train operators, London TravelWatch received 677 appeals against National Rail operators in 2011/12, the majority of which regarded fares and ticketing.

**Graph 1: Appeals received by London TravelWatch from April 2011 to March 2012**

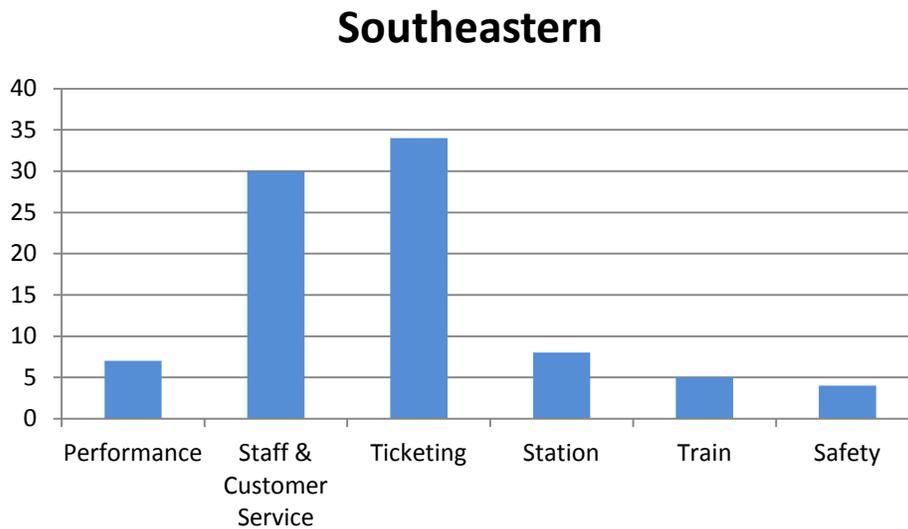


Of all these appeals, 88 related to Southeastern services.

**Graph 2: Southeastern appeals by category**



**Graph 3: Southeastern appeals by category**



For Southeastern operated services, 34 appeals were received by London TravelWatch regarding ticketing, with 30 appeals relating to staff and customer service.

In responding to this consultation, London TravelWatch has collaborated with Passenger Focus and we have shared our research with each other to expand our evidence bases. We have analysed casework studies as well as liaising with user groups and local authorities in areas affected by the franchise within London TravelWatch's remit. We have utilised our experience and previous research that relates to the South Eastern area, as well as holding regular discussions with the current operator and Network Rail. We have conducted research and monitoring, all of which has informed our response.

## Issues for London passengers relating to this franchise

### The importance to London passengers of this franchise

It is crucial that London TravelWatch has a significantly larger role in working with the DfT in developing the specification for franchises that are predominantly affecting passengers within the London area, with our research relevant and targeted to franchises such as this one. We can offer guidance in assisting with bidders and with the drafting of the consultation documents for franchises that relate strongly to London. We can also offer an unrivalled insight into issues that affect a clear majority of passengers across the proposed franchise. We cover some of our London-focused research below.

This franchise will be subject to significant operational challenges from the Thameslink Programme engineering works, and the change management process will inevitably be more successful and responsive to the needs of passengers if there is a strong management awareness of local issues. It is crucial that the new franchisee consults with London TravelWatch throughout the franchise in order to share best practice on dealing with these challenges.

The frequent changes to both services and facilities available at London Bridge through the life of this franchise will require careful management, and particular focus on the information provided to passengers will be crucial during this period.

The importance of London to this franchise underlines our belief that a separate franchise devolved to the Mayor of London through TfL covering the Metro services of this franchise would deliver the best outcome overall for passengers, with greater local accountability and management focus.

### Incomplete journeys incurred on Oyster cards

In 2011, London TravelWatch conducted a major piece of research on the impact on passengers of incomplete journeys, where the passenger has for whatever reason failed to 'touch-in or touch-out' using their Oyster card on their journey. Overall, TfL, and train operators collected around £60 million each year by in excess maximum fares.

For stations operated as part of the Southeastern franchise, the total amount of excess revenue collected in 2010 was £10.3 million, which is broken down by station in Annex 1.

This is a significant amount of revenue, although TfL believes that around 60 to 80% of the maximum fares charged would have been raised from customers had their Oyster card been correctly validated. Despite work on "auto-fill" easing the problem, it has not solved the problems completely, especially as less frequent

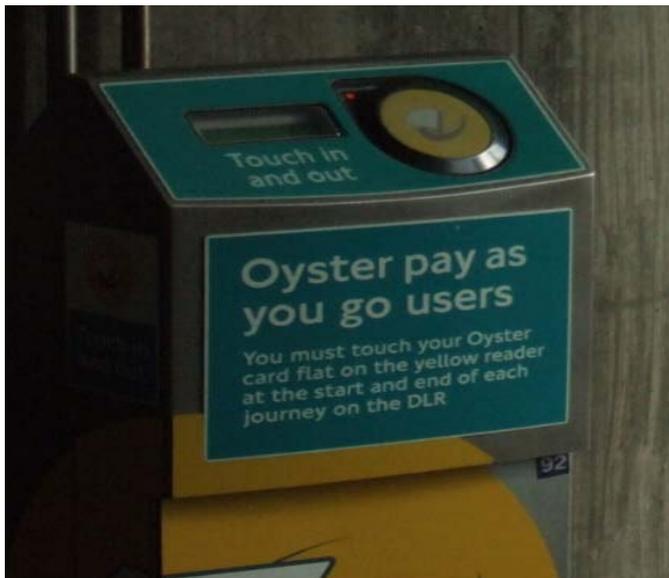
users are more likely to have problems. Research has clearly shown that the continuation of such high levels of maximum fares charged is undermining confidence in Oyster and making passengers feel that Oyster is not delivering the expected value for money fares, with the cumulative effect hindering travel for infrequent users.

The London TravelWatch research is available from <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13964>

The principal recommendations relating to the South Eastern franchise are:

- To provide clear information as to where Oyster balance information can be obtained;
- To enable all National Rail stations with booking offices within the Oyster area to resolve Oyster related problems; and
- Ticket vending machines need to include the ability to view balances, top up and add Oyster products.

To fulfil these recommendations, all standalone card readers should have vinyls of a similar sort to that employed on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), as shown in the picture below:



In addition, it would be worthwhile to install ticket vending machines at stations where no machines are available, such as Bat & Ball, Brixton, Dunton Green, Eynsford and Shoreham (Kent). These would enable passengers to buy Oyster products and help reduce ticketless travel.

### **Ticket machines that do not accept cash**

Of great concern to us has been the decision by First Great Western and London Midland to disable the ability to accept cash at some of their ticket vending machines. This has major implications for those passengers who do not have access to credit or debit cards, such as those under 16, vulnerable adults by virtue of disability, or those who wish to buy a low value fare for which they do not necessarily want to use a card. In particular, such users may expose themselves to the risk of a Penalty Fare. We would like to see mandated that all stations on the South Eastern network have at least one ticket machine that can accept cash.

### **Gating of stations**

There are a number of stations on the South Eastern network that we consider should have ticket gates installed given the volumes of passengers using them, and the need to reduce ticketless travel and associated crime and disorder. Those stations we feel should be gated are listed in Annex 2.

### **Providing sufficient capacity and making best use of the capacity currently provided.**

Passengers on the South Eastern network currently experience high levels of crowding, particularly in the peak hours, so we would expect to see measures to help alleviate this situation. Measures to encourage more flexible journey times must be made, but by incentivising off-peak and shoulder-peak travel rather than pricing passengers without alternatives off the peak services. This will be of critical importance during the rebuilding of London Bridge station. The use of travel demand management techniques will be of paramount importance in managing passenger expectations and experience during this period.

The franchisee should consider introducing additional services to London Victoria and St.Pancras International on routes which also serve the catchment area of services that pass through London Bridge. This would enable those passengers who can to avoid the route through London Bridge. These should include evening and Sunday services from Dartford to Victoria via Peckham Rye, and an all day, all week Bromley South to Victoria service via the Catford Loop (calling at all stations including Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street). Potentially, a limited stop peak hour only service from Sevenoaks and/or Orpington to Blackfriars (and potentially beyond) calling only at Bromley South, Loughborough Junction or Denmark Hill and Elephant & Castle could be operated by either the South Eastern or the Thameslink franchise to help encourage passengers to avoid London Bridge.

The franchisee should consider promoting interchange with the DLR at Lewisham, Woolwich Arsenal and Greenwich. Interchange at New Cross with

London Overground could also ease pressure at London Bridge. London Cannon Street should open in the late evenings and weekends on a permanent basis, which would also act as an interchange with Bank/Monument London Underground stations, and negotiation with London Underground to create an interchange here would be very beneficial. The maximisation of these interchange possibilities will significantly improve the efficient use of capacity on the network by its users.

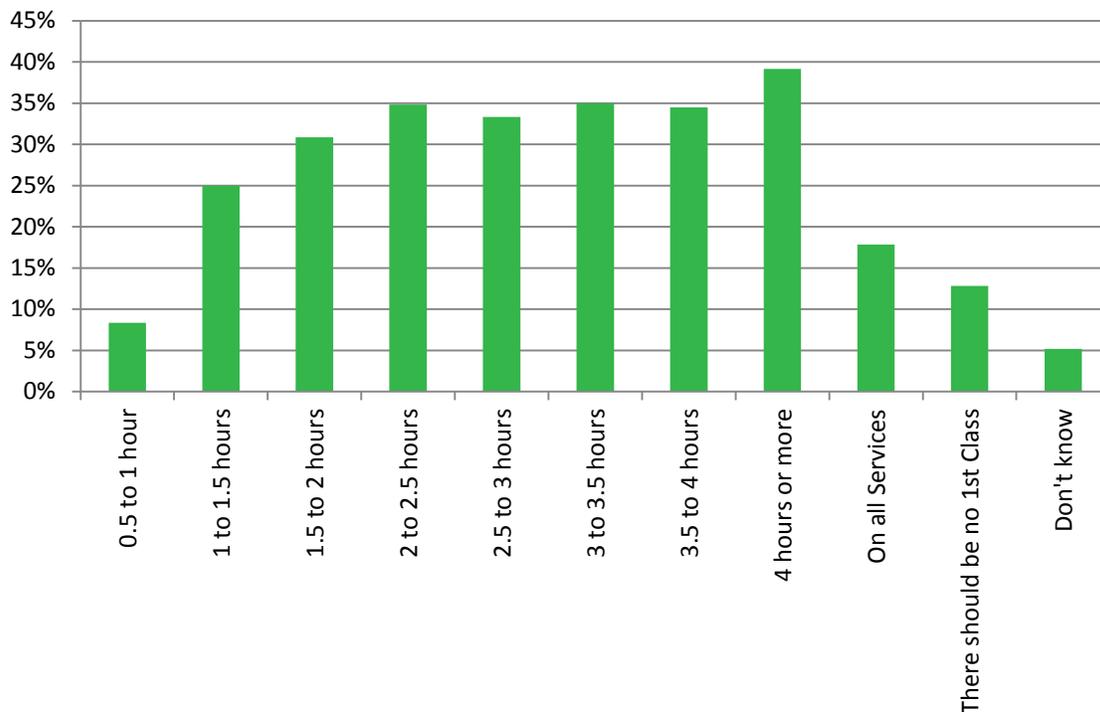
From further afield, the full benefit of the high speed route into St.Pancras International is yet to be realised, because of the difference in fares with conventional services, and the further penalty of not being able to reach Farringdon, City Thameslink and Blackfriars without purchasing additional tickets from this route.

Services during this franchise will be subject to frequent changes associated with the Thameslink Programme, and some services currently operated by the South Eastern franchise could transfer to the Thameslink network. Services should be designed so that the overall journey time to or from London is short enough that performance is reliable, and that First Class provision is unnecessary for all but the longest journeys. The services should be designed with passenger demand as the primary driver, rather than railway traditions or operating practices. A thorough review of what is and is not possible to be provided in the timetable should be undertaken with passenger representatives to determine which services and destinations should be served by the Thameslink franchise, and which should be served by the South Eastern franchise.

We recommend changes to First Class provision and marketing, based on our research conducted in 2010 into passenger attitudes to First Class, which is available from <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4222>.

Because of our findings, we recommend declassification of first class accommodation where the majority of passenger journey times are of less than one-hour duration. For passenger journeys of over one hour, we believe that there is a considerable scope to persuade passengers to upgrade to first class, if information about the benefits and advantages of such an upgrade are available. Where operators such as East Coast, Virgin Trains and Greater Anglia have implemented these recommendations, there has been increased take up of first class on long distance services. London based operators such as Southern and First Capital Connect found that declassification, either selectively or permanently, has resulted in more capacity available to standard class ticket holders. We recommend that the new franchisee consider the declassification of any trains that operate solely within the Metro area.

**Graph 4 - Graph of Responses to the Question, 'on which, if any, of the following lengths of journey do you believe first class rail services should be available?'**



### Providing train services in the evenings and weekends / improving ticket facilities at smaller stations

We would advise that the Office of Rail Regulation station usage statistics suffer from a considerable under-reporting of passenger numbers, especially in the London area where the discrepancy can be up to 400%. This is due to insufficient recording of the use of Travelcards, Freedom Passes and Oyster Pay As You Go trips. This results in considerable difficulty in obtaining funding for schemes such as Access for All, and in demonstrating the value of additional services at lighter used stations.

Passengers see late evening and Sunday services as important, and these should be of the same level as currently provided at other off peak times. In addition, we also believe that passengers wish to see improved ticketing facilities, particularly where no Oyster top up facilities and no means of purchasing a ticket from a vending machine exist.

Providing train services in the evenings and weekends, and improving ticket facilities at smaller stations are extremely important growth areas for the franchise to deliver, and the rolling stock is already available. Providing sufficient

capacity for the growing off-peak and weekend market is important for the new franchise, and evidence from other areas shows a significant demand for improved services outside the peak times.

In this franchise, our research shows that there is a need for improvements to the following services:

- The single most important service improvement in this franchise would be providing an all-day service from Victoria to Bromley South (via the Catford Loop), calling at all stations including Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street. This would also improve the service frequency through this corridor, which will otherwise be under-provided to Victoria. This service would provide a number of benefits, including restoring the link from Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street to Victoria, and improving the service frequency from the Catford Loop line stations to at least four trains per hour to London from the current inadequate two. Additionally, this service has the potential to attract significant traffic and to assist in the effort to rebuild London Bridge station during the period of this franchise as a result of:
  - The close proximity of stations with services to London Bridge, for example:
    - Shortlands - Bromley North;
    - Beckenham Hill - Lower Sydenham;
    - Catford - Catford Bridge;
    - Crofton Park - Honor Oak Park;
    - Brockley – Nunhead;
    - Queens Road Peckham - Peckham Rye;
    - Kent House – Clock House
    - Denmark Hill - East Dulwich; and
    - Clapham High Street - Clapham North
  - The interchange with the East London line extension to Clapham Junction; and
  - The promotion of the Clapham High Street - Clapham North interchange with the Northern line, to attract car users travelling between South East London and South West London via the congested and inadequate South Circular Road or other orbital routes;
- Services to and from London Cannon Street should run throughout the weekend, and late evenings on Monday-Friday. In recent years, the City has developed a significant nighttime and retail economy, which along with changes in employment patterns in the financial sector has resulted in a significant increase in demand for public transport at these times in this

area. However, the pattern of services provided by the franchise reflects historic operations rather than current passenger demand. The result is a suppression of demand or a diversion of passengers to London Bridge who want to access the City directly. The reconstruction of London Bridge will require significant work at evenings and weekends. Reducing the pressure on London Bridge during this period will be crucial, and so the introduction of late evening and weekend services to, and from, Cannon Street will enable passengers to better access their ultimate destinations;

- The current service from Dartford to Victoria via Lewisham does not run in the late evenings or on Sundays, leading to confusion and frustration for passengers. This route should run at all times as it provides an alternative route to central London without using London Bridge, Waterloo East or Charing Cross, and also provides connections at Peckham Rye for passengers who do not wish to interchange within central London for local journeys within South London;
- Services from Chelsfield, Knockholt and Dunton Green are currently restricted to two trains per hour, with only one train per hour on Sundays, despite experiencing significant growth. Chelsfield is one of the busiest stations in the London area to have such a low level of service and additional calls at Chelsfield on existing fast services could provide valuable additional capacity. Dunton Green is currently seeing significant house building adjacent to the station site that will generate demand both locally to Sevenoaks and towards London;
- The Bromley North branch should operate on Sundays as it serves the retail area of Bromley town centre; and
- The operation of the Sevenoaks line services at evenings and weekends to serve Elephant & Castle and Blackfriars is welcome. However, user groups tell us that these services would have much more utility if they were to run through the Thameslink core to serve the nighttime and weekend economies around Farringdon and St. Pancras International stations. This route will transfer to the Thameslink franchise, but provides interchange opportunities for South Eastern franchise passengers.

### **Improving the take up of use of rail by minority and underrepresented groups**

This franchise serves many areas with significant minority group populations. London TravelWatch believes that in some cases, usage is significantly less than for the majority population, and that where rail is used, the take up and access to the complaints process is limited. London TravelWatch recommends that the new franchisee monitor the ethnic and social backgrounds of complainants to ensure that the representation of minority groups is proportionate. In addition, we

recommend the example of the DLR community ambassador scheme, which uses members of local communities to reach out to minority groups, to encourage them to use the DLR but also acts as a conduit for comments and complaints where conventional channels are either not available or inappropriate.

### Improving the passenger experience of stations

In 2011, we undertook a research project to identify best practice at interchanges in the London area. This is available from

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14197>

We found that there were serious shortcomings in wayfinding, signage and information provision, including imperfect information showing access to bus and London Underground interchanges. There are lessons that should be applied from the report, which when introduced will lead to a considerable improvement in onward travel from the London Terminal stations for many passengers.

In London, there is a widely adopted “Continuing your journey” mapping system, based on TfL mapping and Legible London signage. The design of this system meets the needs of pedestrians, instead of the adaption of existing maps for motorists. The maps are at all London Underground stations, bus stations and stops, as well as at an increasing number of National Rail stations.

We would expect franchisees to work with TfL to introduce “Continuing your journey” and Legible London mapping in and around their London stations. Outside London, we wish to see bespoke pedestrian mapping systems introduced, designed specifically for onward pedestrian journeys, including journeys to interchange points such as bus stations.

## Responses to the individual consultation questions put by the Department

### Question 1

#### **What improvements do stakeholders believe could be made on the combined franchise through partnership working between Network Rail and the new operator?**

London TravelWatch is watching the development of the “Deep Alliance” between Network Rail and South West Trains with interest. If a similar scheme begins in the South Eastern franchise area, we would support it if the alliance benefits passengers, through improved information provision, recovery from poor operational performance and improved communications. If alliancing develops into a primarily financial arrangement then we would not have any comments regarding alliancing in franchises and would look for other partnership working opportunities to improve the journey experience for the travelling public.

We are also aware that the implementation of different alliances around London could potentially lead to a situation where each alliance focuses on a narrow area of responsibility and misses elements of London-wide co-ordination.

Closer working on issues such as the management of core stations, the united implementation of litter and graffiti clearance and information to passengers at times of disruption are all important, regardless of whether there is an official alliance or not.

### Question 2

#### **What, if any, changes to South Eastern services need to be made given the likely changes in demand that could result from Crossrail?**

We have no specific proposals at this time. We would like to reiterate the need to keep passenger demand as the basis of any timetable change, and that there is meaningful consultation regarding timetable changes between the operator, Network Rail, and passenger representatives before implementing any changes.

### Question 3

#### **Are consultees aware of any other rail or non-rail development schemes that might affect the new franchise?**

Much of South-East London will experience considerable growth over the life of this franchise, which combined with the current significant under reporting of passenger numbers in and around London will lead to considerable pressure for improved services.

There are specific schemes focused on the town centres of Brixton, Bromley, Catford, Lewisham and Peckham, as well as smaller developments near to stations such as Dunton Green, Eden Park and Lower Sydenham that will have an impact on demand for services during the life of this franchise. In particular, the growing population and density of development in inner London will require a greater focus on the quality and quantity of services provided to and from this area.

The Brixton Masterplan envisages a Brixton High Level station serving as an interchange between the new East London Line services, the proposed Victoria to Bromley South (via Catford Loop) service as well as the existing Victoria Line underground and mainline services from Victoria to Orpington. Along with local buses, Brixton perfectly fits all objectives for a Strategic Interchange, and the new franchise should consider passive provision for this station as a minimum.

Bromley will see significant redevelopment around both South and North stations, with an increasing proportion of high-density residential developments that will favour public transport usage.

Catford has a number of large vacant sites (adjacent to Catford and Catford Bridge stations) that when redeveloped will add significant demand at this location, and would ideally incorporate major improvements at both stations.

Lewisham will also see major redevelopment around the station. This should allow the major deficiencies in access to this station addressed. Currently, access to the north and west is poor and involves a convoluted and long walking route to the entrance on the south side of the station. There is an opportunity to provide an entrance at the base of the current platform 4, with entrances to the DLR directly and the adjacent Tesco car park. This would allow a more direct walking route from the North to the station and allow the closure of the ungated Silk Mills Path entrance. Similarly, there are opportunities on the west side of the station using the platform 1 lift tower. Opening exits at these locations would considerably extend the walking catchment area of the station, and reduce separate car journeys to supermarkets in the area by allowing travellers to use the Tesco store as part of their rail journey.

Peckham Rye station will be the centre of community led redevelopment of the town centre, and will be a significant generator of new travel on this franchise. This will support the introduction of enhanced services such as Victoria – Bromley South via the Catford Loop and later evening and Sunday Victoria – Dartford via Lewisham services.

A High Level station at Brockley would also be very useful, and would provide an interchange between the line from Lewisham to Victoria and the Southern and East London Lines between Croydon and London Bridge or East London. This

would provide, amongst other links, the quickest route by any mode between Lewisham and Croydon.

The existing interchange between Kent House and Clock House would benefit from improvement. In particular, the walking route between these two stations is poor because of the need to use unmade roads outside of Kent House station. This is the only station in London not accessible by a tarmac road and is particularly difficult for elderly and disabled travellers. The franchisee should work with Bromley Council and local residents to implement a solution.

#### **Question 4**

**What increments or decrements to the specification would stakeholders wish to see and how would these be funded?**

Please see our response to Question 5.

#### **Question 5**

**Which aspects of the specification, in addition to those services operating on the HS1 network, would stakeholders wish to see mandated and which aspects of the specification could be left to the discretion of the operator?**

London TravelWatch is increasingly concerned with the decline in service when allowing operators to act without mandated service requirements. An example of this is the current Chiltern December 2012 timetable proposals, which see a reduction in service to a minimum at nearly all of their London area stations as these stations provide a lower “yield per passenger” than the more lucrative long distance services. Due to the inherent nature of private operators to regard profit as more important than providing services for social reasons, we feel that a strongly mandated service specification is the only way to ensure that passengers can have confidence that their service levels will be reasonable. We would wish to see all of the aspects that build up the specification be mandated as the only way to maintain service levels for passengers, such as first and last trains, peak and off-peak frequencies and destinations.

London TravelWatch research concludes that passengers primarily want services that are frequent and reliable, with good interchange and affordable fares. However, the current South Eastern timetable does not fully reflect the needs of passengers, particularly in Greater London. The specification for this franchise therefore needs to reflect current and future passenger needs rather than current and historic service patterns.

London TravelWatch would like to see improvements to late evening and Sunday services so that they operate at the same frequency and stopping pattern as the off-peak Monday to Saturday timetable. Research shows that passengers who

travel at off-peak times place greater value on regular interval services with consistent stopping patterns and journey times. In the London area over the past 10-15 years, late evenings and Sundays have seen large increases in activity so these times are often as busy if not busier than Monday to Saturday daytimes. London Underground traffic volumes and bus usage at these times have also increased dramatically, showing the demand within London for this service level. This is relevant throughout the London area, but especially the Bromley North branch, which currently has no Sunday service at all.

We wish to see the Sunday timetable for the network enhanced to the level operating off-peak on Saturdays, and believe that the weekday evening service between 2100 and 2400 should be the same pattern as that operating between 1900 and 2100, with four trains per hour on all routes as the minimum, in line with the changes above.

London TravelWatch would also like mandated in all franchises that public holidays, including Boxing Day, operate an understandable service pattern, rather than the current situation where one operator has a Monday-Friday service without peak trains, one a Saturday service and yet another a Sunday service. There should be more combined working between operators to ensure that a single timetable is in operation that passengers can instinctively understand, and connections between operators work as they are using the same timetable.

Similarly, for the period between Christmas and New Year when reduced services for commuters might operate, we would like more co-operation on adjacent routes, and for operators to cease using the description of Saturday services as this creates a significant expectation amongst passengers that ticket restrictions, prices and cycle policies should also conform to Saturday practice. Each year London TravelWatch receives a regular series of complaints from passengers on this subject – and in most cases, these are not resolved, as the passenger does not understand how a Saturday service can have Monday-Friday restrictions.

We would like the enhancement of all aspects of the train service in accordance with the London TravelWatch paper 'Requirements for Trains Services', which is available from <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/10314/get>.

London TravelWatch wishes to see specific improvements for the following routes:

- A new service from Victoria to Bromley South (via the Catford Loop), calling at all stations including Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street, to operate through both peak and off-peak times on all days of the week. This would both restore the service from Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street to Victoria, but also provide a service level of four

trains per hour from stations such as Catford and Crofton Park that currently do not receive this level of service;

- An increase in off-peak frequency of train services to four trains per hour, including Saturday and Sunday on all routes where this is not the case, such as the service to Sevenoaks via Grove Park;
- An increase in service at Chelsfield station, which currently only receives two trains per hour (one train per hour on Sunday);
- The Dartford to Victoria service should run at all times, including later in the evening and at weekends;
- Operation of services to and from London Cannon Street, which operate until close of service on Monday to Friday evenings, and all day on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Additional calls of existing services at Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye, to provide direct links between parts of Kent and Outer London to Kings College Hospital. These areas are part of the hospital catchment area but have very long journey times because of the need to interchange at Bromley South or Central London. Later evening and Sunday Victoria – Dartford via Lewisham services would satisfy part of this need. However, providing additional calls in services that currently run fast between Bromley South and Victoria would provide significant benefit and as TfL's studies have concluded, would be financially positive for the franchise; and
- Later train services to stations, to be in line with the last journey times of the London Underground of around 00:30, including at weekends, as these services are frequently very full.

London TravelWatch wishes the improved off-peak and weekend services to be mandated within the new franchise.

London TravelWatch suggests that the introduction of a performance regime mechanism that can provide incentives for improving the service to passengers is beneficial. For example, financial penalties for delays used specifically for railway network investment would ensure that poor performance leads to investment. On this basis, the Office of Rail Regulation can oversee both Network Rail and train operators, with any compensation from delay minutes invested in schemes that benefit passengers.

As well as the National Passenger Survey, a minimum standards regime must be in place to back up the passenger perception based targets. This ensures the achievement of an absolute level of service and facilities. The independent

auditing for such a scheme also needs to be external to the train operator to ensure that it is impartially enforced. London TravelWatch suggests the application of a Service Quality Incentive Regime (SQUIRE) to this contract. SQUIRE monitors and measures the quality of customer services provided by the franchise operator. To do this, independent inspectors regularly check the service quality of the franchise's train and station facilities.

SQUIRE inspectors audit the majority of stations and many trains every four weeks. Service areas inspected range from graffiti, toilets and timetables to train cleanliness, staff service and the public address system. There are 36 service quality areas inspected under this regime.

The publication of SQUIRE performance results should be at a minimum of quarterly, and shown by station, train or line of route.

The franchise should be financially incentivised to exceed the targets set and receive financial penalties for areas which fail to reach these targets.

## **Question 6**

### **Are there other approaches to train service specification which you would prefer?**

London TravelWatch's research, with feedback from passengers, has clearly demonstrated that passengers want reliable, frequent and affordable train services. It is clear that private operators, whenever left with commercial freedom, will seek to concentrate wholly on "higher yield" services, and cutting services or station staff and facilities to raise profits. We do not agree that giving more commercial freedom is a sensible policy to pursue when providing a public service that provides a huge economic benefit to society as a whole. We wish to see an approach where timetable consultations are more relevant, with earlier and more significant discussion between the operator and passenger representatives. This allows the design of the timetable around where passengers wish to travel rather than purely operational reasons.

The devolution of decision making to a local level is one that may provide benefits, as seen by London Overground, and the improvements to the Southern network funded by Transport for London. We would wish to see a greater level of involvement from Transport for London in the service specification of the South Eastern network regardless of any further devolution.

## Question 7

### **Do respondents feel that there are other destinations that domestic high speed services could serve that would support regional and national economic growth?**

London TravelWatch suggests leaving which destinations are suitable for the high-speed services to the operators' commercial discretion, subject to the timetable development for these services being in conjunction with meaningful discussion with passenger representatives, such as Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch.

However, a service via the Marshlink route to Hastings could have significant other benefits for the London area and other parts of the franchise. Question 8 covers this in more depth.

## Question 8

### **How might better use be made of the capacity currently available?**

Please also see our response to Question 5, which would allow far greater utilisation of the rolling stock to provide additional services outside of peak hours, rather than sitting redundant for the majority of the week.

Please also see our response to Question 9, which outlines our research into first class travel and our views on demand management.

We also note the views of MPs and others from the Hastings area that an electrified Ashford – Ore line would allow direct Hastings to London services via HS1, with considerable potential reductions in journey time over existing services. This could have a number of advantages for the London area – particularly by freeing up capacity on Southeastern services from Sevenoaks, Chelsfield and Orpington into central London.

## Question 9

### **What steps might bidders be expected to take to meet passenger demand and what might be the most appropriate mechanism for managing demand?**

Passengers on the South Eastern network currently experience high levels of crowding particularly in the peak hours, so we would expect to see measures to help alleviate this situation. Measures to encourage more flexible journey times must be made, but by incentivising off-peak and shoulder-peak travel rather than pricing passengers without alternatives off the peak services.

We recommend changes to First Class provision and marketing, based on our research conducted in 2010 into passenger attitudes to First Class, which is available from <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4222>.

Because of our findings, we recommend declassification of first class accommodation where the majority of passenger journey times are of less than one-hour duration. For passenger journeys of over one hour, we believe that there is a considerable scope to persuade passengers to upgrade to first class if information about the benefits and advantages of such an upgrade are available. Where operators such as East Coast, Virgin Trains and Greater Anglia have implemented these recommendations, there has been increased take up of first class on long distance services. London based operators such as Southern and First Capital Connect found that declassification, either selectively or permanently, has resulted in more capacity available to standard class ticket holders. We recommend that the new franchisee consider the declassification of any trains that operate solely within the Metro area.

### **Question 10**

#### **What destinations on the current South Eastern network do respondents think should be served by Thameslink core services and what is the rationale for such proposals?**

London TravelWatch would prefer to see the current Southeastern Metro network (plus the proposed Victoria – Bromley South via Catford loop service, which is essential to replace the links between Victoria and Wandsworth Road/Clapham High Street) being operated as a London Overground concession. This would provide a much higher level of service, focused on the needs of the majority of passengers, and more local accountability. Retaining the Sevenoaks service through the Thameslink core, as per the original Thameslink pattern is also essential, but with London Overground levels of quality for stations and staffing.

It may be appropriate for longer distances services, such as those from Maidstone/Ashford to run through the Thameslink core, but only in addition to their established services to their current London Terminals.

The current service levels from Kent to London Bridge (and Charing Cross/Cannon Street) should be the minimum that run to these destinations. Any services from Kent that run via the Thameslink core route should therefore be in addition to the current services, and in no case as a substitute for the established and well-used routes into the current London Terminals.

## Question 11

### **What improvements would respondents like to see made to other South Eastern services, what is the rationale for them and would these provide economic benefit?**

Please see our response to question 5 for details of our proposals for the London Metro services. London TravelWatch would also wish to see additional calls in longer distance services at Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye and Chelsfield. The proposed additional calls at Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye have a positive business case, as clearly demonstrated by TfL, which would also increase net revenue to the franchise.

The growth of the nighttime and weekend economies in the City of London and the regeneration of East London also point to the need to provide late evening and weekend services to London Cannon Street.

## Question 12

### **Do respondents feel that Folkestone Harbour branch line and station should be kept open and maintained or would the funding currently devoted to supporting this line and station be better used for other rail schemes?**

This question relates to an area outside London TravelWatch's remit.

## Question 13

### **How would you like to see performance information published?**

London TravelWatch would like to see the information published electronically, in graph and table formats. This format is easier to understand, easier to calculate and to reproduce information to suit our stakeholders.

We would like to see both the current Public Performance Measure information as well as "right-time" data published, and we would like to see innovative ways to encourage passengers to use alternative services, such as a colour coded element of timetables printed at stations showing which peak services are most heavily loaded.

Possession disruption index for passengers – the disruption to passengers by possessions can be very significant, particularly at the weekends. Publication by route would allow passengers to see the availability of the network at a level, which is meaningful to their usage of the railways. London TravelWatch wishes to see publication of the statistics for bus replacements as a percentage of

scheduled services for each route broken down by weekday, Saturdays and Sundays.

#### **Question 14**

##### **How frequent should its publication be?**

London TravelWatch would like to see performance data published quarterly, in addition to the usual industry four week periods and Moving Annual Average statistics. With this period of publication, it is easier to analyse performance as it better shows trends.

#### **Question 15**

##### **What level of disaggregation of performance do you believe is reasonable?**

London TravelWatch thinks the level of disaggregation should be on a route-by-route basis. Data should be available on demand for a variety of disaggregation, including line-by-line and train-by-train, but it is not required to publish this every period.

#### **Question 16**

##### **What are the priorities that respondents consider should be taken into account to improve the passenger experience of using these services?**

London TravelWatch published “10 policies to keep Londoners moving: Transport users’ priorities for the 2012-16 Mayoral term” in advance of the Mayoral elections earlier this year, available at:

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14109>

Of particular relevance to this franchise are the following priorities:

- Frequent and comprehensive public transport;
- A fair deal for passengers;
- Easy interchange;
- Reliable and timely information;
- Travelling with confidence;
- A transport network open to all; and
- Enforcing the rules.

Along with the National Passenger Survey, a minimum standards regime must be in place to back up the passenger perception based targets. This ensures the achievement of an absolute level of service and facilities. The independent auditing for such a scheme also needs to be external to the train operator to ensure that it is impartially enforced. London TravelWatch suggests the

application of a Service Quality Incentive Regime (SQUIRE) to this contract. SQUIRE monitors and measures the quality of customer services provided by the franchise operator. To do this, independent inspectors regularly check the service quality of the franchise's train and station facilities.

SQUIRE inspectors audit the majority of stations and many trains every four weeks. Service areas inspected range from graffiti, toilets and timetables to train cleanliness, staff service and the public address system. There are 36 service quality areas inspected under this regime.

SQUIRE performance results should be published at least quarterly and shown by station, train or line of route and the franchise should be financially incentivised to better the targets set, and receive financial penalties for areas which fail to reach these targets.

In the National Passenger Survey, the South Eastern franchise receives low Value for Money ratings, and considerably lower ratings than other modes such as Tramlink and the Docklands Light Railway. Prioritisation of measures to improve the Value for Money scores should be highly important for the franchise.

Performance on the route has been generally improving, and this is welcome. With thorough planning of engineering works associated with the Thameslink Programme, performance should not suffer. The designing of the service pattern should contain all reasonable measures to prevent performance from dropping markedly without performance dropping markedly.

During times of poor performance, the important thing for passengers is the information given to them regarding their delay. The new franchisee must embrace both 'old and new' media to communicate with the range of passengers that use the franchise. We also suggest the adoption of the good practice from London Overground, who shows alternative routes/means of travelling from each station to other stations.

Learning from the recent incident at Kentish Town, and the associated Rail Accident Investigation Board report will improve passenger experience of the railway. Significant shortcomings regarding the information provided to passengers as well as management decision making and on-train equipment must all be resolved and should be a requirement of the franchise.

London TravelWatch wants to see far greater industry emphasis on reducing the impact of planned disruption on rail passengers. Over the past 10 years, there has been a considerable effort put into addressing unplanned disruption and despite further work to go, passengers have seen the benefits. The next hurdle is therefore planned disruption with the industry needing to be able to find a way of keeping the railway 'open-for-business' throughout the week. This means that the wholesale replacement of services at the weekends by buses is not acceptable.

Network Rail and the franchisee must share information with other transport providers such as London Underground and the Tramlink network, where applicable, with regard to the alternative options available to passengers at times of disruption.

### **Question 17**

#### **What do stakeholders see as the most important factors in improving security (actual or perceived) and addressing any gap between the two?**

We would urge the new franchisee and Network Rail to prioritise the tackling of the significant amounts of trackside graffiti and rubbish that occur particularly in the London area. This not only creates the impression of an uncared for and unattended railway, but also causes disruption in cases of trespass. Trains can ingest rubbish/litter/overgrown vegetation in their mechanical and electrical parts. This should include measures to monitor this, along with incentives to comply, and an independent body should be able to provide some degree of enforcement power if the situation worsens.

The use of current staffing levels on the Southern Metro network should be the model for the South Eastern network. Staffing from first to last train significantly increases passengers' feelings of security as well as reducing anti-social behaviour and crime levels.

The implementation of gating at all stations where it is reasonable will see a drop in ticketless travel as well as fall in crime and anti-social behaviour.

In addition to the levels of staff available at stations, we would like to see more a visible staff presence on-board trains.

### **Question 18**

#### **What is important to stakeholders in the future use and improvements in stations?**

London TravelWatch has published its own research and requirements for stations in the London area. This is available from <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839>

Attention is drawn to our 2006 report 'Getting to the station', which explores standards for improving cycle and pedestrian access to stations as well as car parking and public transport access.

The adoption of travel plans for individual stations is also a good way to ensure optimisation in the use of car parking spaces and reduces the impact of the

railway on surrounding streets. The franchise operator should also have its own company travel plan.

In London, there is a widely adopted “Continuing your journey” mapping system, based on TfL mapping and Legible London signage. The design of this system meets the needs of pedestrians, instead of the adaption of existing maps for motorists. The maps are at all London Underground stations, bus stations and stops, as well as at an increasing number of National Rail stations.

We would expect franchisees to work with TfL to introduce “Continuing your journey” and Legible London mapping in and around their London stations. Outside London, we wish to see bespoke pedestrian mapping systems introduced, designed specifically for onward pedestrian journeys, including journeys to interchange points such as bus stations.

### **Question 19**

#### **What priorities would respondents give to car parking and cycling facilities at locations where these are fully used?**

This franchise should specify the adoption of secure car and cycle parking standards at stations.

We support improved car parking at stations where this can reduce overall car trip length. In particular, smaller stations outside of Greater London have the potential for the installation of additional car and cycle parking.

Secure cycle storage could also be improved at stations particularly in the inner London area and at larger towns outside London.

Charging periods for car parks should also be consistent with the train service operational day and validity of train tickets.

### **Question 20**

#### **What sort of ticketing products and services would you expect to see delivered through ‘smart’ technology on this franchise?**

The fares and ticketing system can be easier to understand for passengers by:

- Harmonising TfL’s Conditions of Carriage with those of the National Rail network. Currently, usage of Oyster Pay As You Go on the National Rail network falls between both TfL and National Rail Conditions of Carriage. This situation is not just confusing for passengers, but can also lead to financial detriment;

- Extension of a multimodal zonal fares structure for wider areas than the current London Travelcard boundary. The simplification is particularly important in connection with ticket vending machines where confusion of ticket type can lead to passengers not getting the best value for money;
- Inclusion of the Stratford to St Pancras International section of High Speed 1 within the Travelcard and Oyster Pay As You Go networks would lead to a simpler ticketing system with better value for money for passengers;
- We would like to see all stations on the South Eastern network allowing Smartcard technology to provide seamless ticketing throughout the network, including beyond the current Oyster boundary. At minimum, an extension of the boundary where the terminating point is only a short distance beyond Zone 6, as has happened at Dartford and Swanley, is urgent, and Sevenoaks (and all stations on the route via Otford) would be a good example where this should also apply. Where required this can be provided along with gating, but where gates are not suitable, it should still be possible to use smartcard technology through standalone smartcard validators; and
- Correctly selling and clarifying the use of London Terminals tickets. We wish to see a single, unified London Terminals ticket applicable to all London stations in the South Eastern franchise area from either direction from St Pancras International to Blackfriars inclusive, priced at the lowest comparable existing fare. Given that the current online ticket booking system, and many ticket clerks, incorrectly sell London Terminals tickets to passengers who correctly specify Farringdon or City Thameslink as their destination, it is extremely important that passengers have these tickets honoured. Currently passengers find themselves either penalty fared or obliged to purchase additional tickets, when they have done everything correctly in attempting to buy the right ticket.

Measures to tackle peak overcrowding by incentivising shoulder or off-peak travel, not by increasing fares during the peak, should be made more deliverable with smart technology, as should options such as season tickets for one or two days per week for those who do not travel regularly.

## Question 21

### What local accessibility and mobility issues do stakeholders see and how they might be addressed?

All bidders should be required to adopt, as a minimum, the standards proposed in the 'Better Rail Stations' report. London TravelWatch believes that it is essential that monitoring of station quality be by a minimum standards regime and not solely a passenger perception approach. This is because perceptions

can vary substantially over time and by area for reasons that are unconnected with the standard of service. There are also absolute requirements in terms of facilities, which passenger perception does not always reflect. London TravelWatch therefore strongly favours the minimum standards approach taken by TfL in the London Rail Concession such as on the London Overground network.

We would wish to see a pragmatic approach taken to accessibility, with step free access possible at stations that can have simple and easy to maintain ramps at a small cost. The alteration of funding streams to allow 'easy to do' and 'small cost' schemes to be brought forward should happen, even if current passenger numbers make the case for improvement marginal. This is especially relevant with the under-reporting of passenger numbers making business cases harder to achieve. Example stations in this franchise would include Bellingham, Clock House, Maze Hill and Ravensbourne.

We would like consideration of the use of "Harrington Humps" which allow level access onto trains from the platforms and would provide a cost-effective method to improve accessibility which have been shown to be effective on the London Underground network.

## **Question 22**

### **What environmental targets would stakeholders like to see within the franchise specification?**

Also outlined in question 17, we believe that there should be a concerted effort by the new franchisee and Network Rail to reduce the amount of trackside graffiti, litter and rubbish. Targets should be set for the removal of this, and the total volumes left uncleared.

Attention to vegetation management is important, as shown by the recent incident of a failed train at Kentish Town, the original cause of which was foliage becoming entangled in the pantograph of the train.

## Recommendations

London TravelWatch has reviewed the proposals for the South Eastern franchise in the light of passenger expectations and appeals received. Our key priorities for the new franchise are as follows:

- The addition of a new service, operating from Monday-Sunday all day, from Bromley South to Victoria via the Catford Loop, calling at all stations including Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street;
- The new franchisee must work with passenger needs as the focus to develop the new timetable to deliver maximum benefits rather than the easiest operational solution;
- Expansion of service provision, particularly in the evenings and at weekends;
- Improvements to service frequency so that all London area stations receive a four trains per hour service level in each direction at all times;
- The improvement to station facilities and customer service standards that have been completed on the Southern network to be applied on the South Eastern network;
- Oyster acceptance across the Metro network rather than ending arbitrarily at the Travelcard boundary and extension of smartcard ticketing throughout the South Eastern network; and
- The franchisee should ensure excellent information provision throughout the infrastructure development programme, including regular liaison with London TravelWatch.

## References

### London TravelWatch

- Requirements for Train Services – Principles (2003)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/10314/get>
- Good riddance to bad rubbish – A guide to getting litter cleared from railway land (2002)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/10476/get>
- Report on initial findings of research into the transport needs of Minority Faith Communities  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/3747/get>
- Getting to the station – Report on access to Rail and Underground Stations (2006)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/12087/get>
- Incomplete Oyster Pay As You Go journeys research (2010)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13964/get>
- Walking and Interchange in London (2010)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14197/get>
- Station Standards Report (2010)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839/get>
- 10 policies to keep Londoners moving: Transport users' priorities for the 2012-16 Mayoral term (2012)  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/14109/get>

### Independent

- Better Rail Stations Report 2006:  
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/better-rail-stations/report.pdf>

## Annex 1: Incomplete Oyster card journey excess charges in 2010

Incomplete journey charges in 2010	
	£1,000
Abbey Wood	48
Albany Park	9
Barnehurst	10
Beckenham Hill	6
Beckenham Junction	30
Bellingham	10
Belvedere	13
Bexley	11
Bexleyheath	26
Bickley	10
Blackfriars	45
Blackheath	56
Brixton	23
Bromley North	5
Bromley South	132
Cannon Street	225
Catford	16
Catford Bridge	29
Charing Cross	861
Charlton	30
Chelsfield	3
Chislehurst	13
City Thameslink	113
Clock House	14
Crayford	11
Crofton Park	16
Denmark Hill	62
Deptford	22
Eden Park	9
Elephant & Castle	323
Elmers End	39
Elmstead Woods	9
Eltham	30
Erith	14
Falconwood	11
Farringdon	306
Greenwich	96

Grove Park	26
Hayes (Kent)	11
Herne Hill	50
Hither Green	34
Kent House	11
Kidbrooke	12
Knockholt	1
Ladywell	19
Lee	19
Lewisham	172
London Bridge	2,300
Loughborough Junction	15
Lower Sydenham	8
Maze Hill	24
Mottingham	14
New Beckenham	12
New Cross	49
New Eltham	19
Nunhead	18
Orpington	48
Peckham Rye	123
Penge East	21
Petts Wood	20
Plumstead	32
Ravensbourne	3
Shortlands	17
Sidcup	31
Slade Green	8
St.Johns	10
St.Mary Cray	12
St.Pancras International	265
Sundridge Park	4
Sydenham Hill	9
Victoria	1,562
Waterloo	2,452
Welling	21
West Dulwich	18
West Wickham	9
Westcombe Park	25
Woolwich Arsenal	118
Woolwich Dockyard	10

**Annex 2 - stations served by South Eastern that should have ticket gates installed due to the volume of usage, and the need to reduce ticketless travel and associated crime and disorder**

**Southeastern**

Barnehurst, Beckenham Junction, Blackheath, Catford Bridge, Charlton, Chislehurst, Clock House, Denmark Hill, Deptford, Elephant & Castle, Elmstead Woods, Greenwich, Grove Park, Hayes (Kent), Herne Hill, Hither Green, Lee, Loughborough Junction, Mottingham, Nunhead, Penge East, Petts Wood, Plumstead, Shortlands, St. Mary Cray and Swanley all have volumes of over 1 million passengers per year.

Additionally, Brixton, Bromley North, Catford, Elmers End, Erith and Ladywell have smaller volumes, but their lack of gates creates a 'hole' in an otherwise locally gated network meaning that they can attract ticketless travel and anti-social behaviour.