

# Subject: National Rail Services in London

Report to: Transport Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 9 June 2015

This report will be considered in public

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides background information to the Transport Committee in relation to its meeting with invited guests on National Rail services, and sets out details of the investigation on this topic.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the scope and terms of reference of its investigation into National Rail services in London, as set out at paragraph 4.1 and in Appendix 1.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee agrees to arrange site visits to London Bridge station and on the new lines added to the London Overground network from the Greater Anglia franchise.**
- 2.3 **That the Committee notes the report, puts questions on National Rail services in London to the invited guests and notes the discussion.**
- 2.4 **That the Committee agrees to recommend to the GLA Oversight Committee that expenditure of up to £5,000 be authorised to commission an external contractor to carry out the external technical advice and support, namely to conduct a survey of London residents on attitudes to National Rail services; and**
- 2.5 **That the Committee notes that the Executive Director of Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, will commission the external contractor to carry out the external technical advice and support, subject to the GLA Oversight Committee approving the recommendation.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Committee agreed on 27 March 2015 that National Rail services were one of its priority topics for investigation in 2015/16, and to delegate authority to the Chair to agree the scope and terms of reference of an investigation in consultation with party Group Lead Members.

## 4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, has agreed the following terms of reference for this investigation, which will have a specific focus on the Mayor's proposals to devolve control of rail services in London. Further detail on the scope of the investigation is provided in **Appendix 1**.

- To consider major problems facing the rail network in London and how these could be addressed.
- To examine the case for devolving more National Rail services to the Mayor and Transport for London, and different models of devolution that may be used.
- To identify steps the Mayor and Transport for London could take to help achieve further devolution of National Rail services.

4.2 The following guests have been invited to attend this meeting to discuss National Rail services in London:

First panel (approximately 10.00 to 11.15am)

- **Paul Harwood**, Principal Network Planner, Network Rail;
- **Phil Hufton**, Managing Director of Network Operations, Network Rail;
- **Tim Shoveller**, Managing Director, South West Trains-Network Rail Alliance;
- **David Statham**, Managing Director, Southeastern Railway; and
- **Stephen Locke**, Chair, London TravelWatch.

Second panel (approximately 11.15am to 12.30pm)

- **Geoff Hobbs**, Head of Planning, London Rail, TfL;
- **Michael Roberts**, Managing Director, Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC);
- **Cllr Mike Goodman**, Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, Surrey County Council;
- **Paul Millin**, Travel and Transport Group Manager, Surrey County Council;
- **Cllr Matthew Balfour**, Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, Kent County Council; and
- **Stephen Gasche**, Principal Rail Transport Planner, Kent County Council.

4.3 It is proposed that the Committee undertake site visits as part of this investigation. Two potential visits have been identified, as listed below:

- To London Bridge station, for an update on the Thameslink programme from Network Rail; and
- To travel on new London Overground services transferred from the former Greater Anglia rail franchise.

4.4 Officers are also making arrangements for a number of informal meetings for the Chair as part of this investigation. It is anticipated that party Group Lead Members will also attend these meetings where possible. Three informal meetings are currently being planned, as listed below, subject to the availability of guests:

- To meet passenger groups in Sevenoaks, Kent, to explore the views of out-of-London passengers;
- To meet a wide range of experts and stakeholders in the rail sector, to hear ideas about reform of the rail network and its governance; and
- To meet Lord Ahmad, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, to explore the government's position on rail devolution.

**Proposal for external survey support for the investigation into National Rail services in London**

- 4.5 It is proposed that the Committee's investigation should include a survey of London residents, to establish current attitudes towards, and experience of, national rail services in London, identify passenger priorities for improving services and their views on proposed devolution options.
- 4.6 It would not be possible to undertake this work in-house due to a lack of expertise and resources. An external contractor would have the relevant expertise and experience to design, conduct and analyse critically a properly weighted survey in order to produce findings for the Committee to pursue in its investigation.
- 4.7 Existing passenger surveys have tended to review passenger satisfaction with existing services, rather than seeking to explicitly identify the key service improvements which passengers would like to see prioritized in franchise discussions. The survey will also provide an indication of the extent to which passengers are supportive in principle of plans to devolve national rail services in London to the Mayor and TfL. This could potentially provide the Committee with evidence to support recommendations to Government in support of these proposals.
- 4.8 The Assembly has recently used external contractors to conduct surveys for its investigation on taxi and private hire, which worked well. This proposal has been developed in light of that experience. In summary, the external contractor would be required to:
- Design and conduct a survey of Londoners' current views on national rail services in London;
  - Set out the findings from the analysis of data in a written report; and
  - Present the findings from the analysis of data to the Committee.
- 4.9 Subject to the Committee's approval, the GLA Oversight Committee would be asked to approve expenditure for the external work at its meeting on 30 June 2015, and the tender process would begin thereafter. The external contractor would be appointed from July 2015, with the survey conducted over the summer so findings could be produced to inform the Committee's output from the investigation in the autumn.
- 4.10 The Assembly's Decision Making Framework includes a requirement that all four of the following criteria be considered by committees in deciding whether external technical assistance is required and appropriate on any given project:
- that the proposed project requiring technical assistance is clearly and tightly defined. This would ordinarily mean that the consultant would be used for a discrete piece of technical analysis or research rather than simply as an adviser for the whole of a scrutiny;
  - that the proposed project cannot be readily undertaken by in-house staff, either because of a lack of necessary expertise or because of a lack of capacity;
  - that the analysis required from consultants is not readily available and cannot be acquired elsewhere; and

- that the information required from consultants would be a significant contribution to the aims of the scrutiny.

4.11 Paragraphs 4.5 – 4.9 of this report are designed to demonstrate that all four of the criteria set out in the previous paragraph have been addressed and that the proposed external support is necessary and appropriate.

## 5. Legal Implications

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

## 6. Financial Implications

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

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

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### List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1: Scope of the investigation.

<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</b>
List of Background Papers: None
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