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| London Councils’ Transport & Environment Committee Executive | | | | | | | |
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| DfT & Mayor of London’s Rail Prospectus | | | | | | Item no: | 08 |
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| Report by: | Steve Craddock | | Job title: | | Principal Policy Officer, Transport for London | | |
| Date: | 17 March 2016 | | | | | | |
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| **Summary:** | The DfT and Mayor of London’s Rail Prospectus sets out plans to put TfL in control of more of London’s suburban train services. It proposes a partnership between TfL and the DfT that will agree new franchise specifications for train services. The Prospectus invites comments from stakeholders and TEC is asked to agree London Councils response. The draft response suggests that the proposals in the Prospectus should be broadly welcomed. However, London Councils again makes the point that these should not lead to significant increases in Freedom Pass costs and should ensure that local authorities have the opportunity to have a greater say over the train services operating their area. |
| **Recommendations:** | The Committee is asked to:   * + Note and discuss the report   + Agree the proposed response (appendix 1) to the consultation on the draft Rail Prospectus. |

**Background**

1. The London Overground service has operated in London since 2007 and has been shown to achieve high levels of passenger satisfaction and higher levels of ridership. Unlike most other train services, the London Overground operator is contracted to run services by TfL rather than awarded a franchise by the DfT.
2. There has been a move in recent years to bring more lines under TfL’s control to expand what is seen as a successful model for train services in the Capital. Services from Liverpool Street to Chingford, Enfield and Cheshunt, as well as between Romford and Upminster have recently been integrated into the London Overground network. The DfT and Mayor of London’s Rail Prospectus sets out plans to continue to expand the London Overground Network, whilst providing safeguards to communities outside of London that rely on fast services on the same lines.
3. London Councils has supported control over suburban services being devolved to the Mayor of London, subject to there not being a significant increase in Freedom Pass costs and subject to local authorities having a greater opportunity to influence the train services that operate in their areas.

**Overview of the DfT and TfL Rail Prospectus**

Partnership Approach

1. The Prospectus proposes a partnership between TfL and the DfT that will agree new rail franchise specifications and give local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other local bodies a direct input into how passenger services will be improved. Under the proposals, responsibility for inner suburban services that operate mostly or wholly within Greater London would transfer from the DfT to TfL, as current franchises are due for renewal. The DfT will continue to be responsible for outer suburban services. The precise boundaries are still to be agreed. Extra capacity on peak inner suburban services would only be added if there is no negative impact on longer distance services.
2. It is envisaged that the partnership will be established in time to provide input into the procurement process for the South West franchise in 2017, with the potential for inner London services from that franchise being transferred to TfL in 2020. The partnership will input into the South Eastern franchise, to be let in 2018, and the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise, to be let from 2021.

Key Principles for Success

1. Three key principles for success are set out in the Prospectus:

1. More frequent services, better interchanges and increased capacity – to support growth, carry more people and help address crowding.
2. Greater reliability for all passengers – putting excellent performance at the heart of train operator contracts.
3. High standards of customer service – including more integrated information, fares and ticketing, as well as weekend and night services and a more accessible network.

Rail Infrastructure

1. The Prospectus sets out proposals for a London Suburban Metro to achieve frequencies of at least four trains per hour (and ideally six). It recognises that this will require significant investment and take some years to achieve. However, the Prospectus doesn’t commit to specific infrastructure proposals or changes to accountability for infrastructure because the funding and structure of Network Rail is currently being reviewed and major investments throughout the region are being reviewed by the National Infrastructure Commission.

**London Councils’ Proposed Response**

1. It is proposed that London Councils responds to the consultation on the Rail Prospectus and a draft response is provided in appendix 1. It focuses on the following issues:

Freedom Pass Costs

1. The GLA Act 1999 requires the Freedom Pass to operate on services provided by, or on behalf of, TfL that are within Greater London or within the “vicinity” of Greater London. The consequence is that the boroughs are funding London’s Freedom Pass holders travel to and from destinations outside of London, as a result of devolution of suburban rail to places like Watford Junction, Shenfield and Cheshunt.
2. London Councils has held productive discussions with TfL to try to significantly reduce the impact of further rail devolution and Crossrail services (to be known as the “Elizabeth Line”) on Freedom Pass costs. It is hoped to agree which stations outside the Greater London boundary can legitimately be considered as being within the scope of the intention of the legislation. It is important that these lead to a satisfactory agreement as soon as possible and certainly before Crossrail is fully operational and the London Overground is expanded any further.

Nature of the Rail Partnership

1. The Rail Partnership’s governance structure could usefully include representatives of London’s local government. London Councils could play a role in nominating these representatives on a sub-regional basis. In addition, when significant changes to services are being considered, such as through a new contract, all local authorities whose areas are affected should be offered the opportunity to influence this through the partnership. A further consultation on these arrangements is required.
2. Greater local influence over rail infrastructure planning through the proposed Rail Partnership would help to ensure that investment is coordinated with plans to improve service standards and should be considered once the review is completed. Greater involvement of London’s local authorities would help to ensure that rail infrastructure plans take better account of plans for how the borough, and its transport network, will develop. The DfT and TfL should return to how the Rail Partnership can exert greater influence or control over rail infrastructure investment. Greater oversight over infrastructure could also allow the partnership to have a role in reviewing freight train paths through London to assess whether there are opportunities to reallocate any of these to provide additional passenger capacity during peak periods.

1. The safeguards offered to communities outside of London that their service frequencies, journey times and stopping patterns will be protected should work both ways. Londoners relying on local stopping services should not experience poorer services due to improvements to fast/direct services agreed by the DfT. It also needs to be recognised that the protection of fast services does not only concern commuters from outside of London. Some communities in London are reliant on more direct services that connect London’s economic centres with the Central Activities Zone.

Key Principles for Success

1. London Councils believes that value for money for passengers should be added to the three main outcomes driving the work of the partnership. Competitively priced peak services are important to avoid significant numbers of passengers shifting to other modes, which is likely to result in congestion.
2. Safety and security are not identified as ambitions within the outcomes. Station operators should work with London’s local authorities to ensure that the safety and security of stations are considered alongside the surrounding environment.

**Recommendations**

1. The Committee is asked to:
   * Note and discuss the report
   * Agree the proposed response (appendix 1) to the consultation on the draft Rail Prospectus.

**Financial Implications**

1. There are no financial implications to London Councils arising from this report.

**Legal Implications**

1. There are no legal implications to London Councils arising from this report.

**Equalities Implications**

1. There are no equalities implications to London Councils arising from this report.