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Mr Richard Eccles
Head of Route Planning
Network Rail
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Our Ref: 5011_06_CPT_23.2.06
Your Ref: N/A

23rd February 2006

Dear Mr Eccles

Re: Cross London Route Utilisation Strategy - Consultation Document

Thank you for your letter dated 28th November 2005 accompanied by the above document. SWELTRAC welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Consultation Document.

SWELTRAC represents 10 boroughs in the South West part of London. Of these the following boroughs, Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, Hounslow, Richmond and Wandsworth are the most directly affected by the Cross London Lines. I understand that most if not all of these boroughs will be sending individual responses to you.

The SWELTRAC transport partnership addresses the growing problems of traffic congestion, especially in town centres, inadequate access to Heathrow Airport by public transport and inadequate orbital movement capacity in general. A SWELTRAC objective is to promote orbital travel and reduce the reliance on the motorcar. Therefore any improvements to the Cross London Lines are central to SWELTRAC aims.

SWELTRAC has attended the North Orbital Rail Partnership (NORP) meetings and been a participant on discussion on the NORP response to the draft RUS.

General Comments

The document made no mention that the North London Line is shared with the London Underground's District line between Gunnersbury Junction and Richmond. The District Line currently has up to seven trains an hour in each direction during peak times and clearly there could be capacity implications on the capability of this section of line coping with more frequent North London Line trains.

It is disappointing that it was not possible to provide passenger figures for the numbers boarding at those stations shared with other lines, that is Richmond, Kew Gardens and Gunnersbury on the North London Line and on the West London Line, Clapham Junction and West Brompton.

SWELTRAC believes that electrification should be extended where possible to provide environmental benefits and to provide flexibility in running freight trains around the network.

SWELTRAC believes that the existing railway lines should be improved from the East of England to the Midlands so that freight trains do not have to be routed via London, which currently results in longer distances travelled, more environmental disturbance to local residents and restrictions to the capacity of the London railways to carry passenger trains.

There is mention of Clapham Junction in the document and the inadequacies of the platforms there. This also was covered in the South West Main Line RUS. SWELTRAC believes that Clapham Junction is an extremely important interchange that merits radical improvements to allow passengers to board and alight from trains easily and to get between those platforms and the station entrances without the current difficulties.

Forecasts of demand

With regard to forecasts of future demand, looking forward to 2016 and beyond, we appreciate that there has been much debate on the matter and Transport for London have their own view. SWELTRAC feel that there is currently much suppressed demand for the North London Line because:

- Trains are often overcrowded now at peak times and therefore unattractive to use.
- Trains are uncomfortable and old fashioned.
- The service has been unreliable in the past and is still considered to be so.
- Many people are not aware of the line.
- Many stations are currently not considered safe or attractive but will be improved.
- The boroughs will be carrying out station access schemes to make journeys to stations easier and safer
- Stratford is a major regeneration site, which will attract many more journeys in the future
- The East London Line will connect at Dalston, which will promote more trips
- The creation of two new stations on the West London Line will generate additional demand

Bearing all these factors in mind, and TfL's aspirations to provide a better railway it is considered that the growth in demand for the railway is being underestimated and therefore measures should be put in hand at an early stage to cope with a large growth in demand

Consultation Response- Options

Option 1: Reconfigure Rolling Stock Layouts

SWELTRAC would support the reconfiguration of the internal layout to carry more people, but would much prefer to see increased capacity through the provision of longer trains. The proposed reconfiguration of the units will also mean that more passengers will need to stand during the shoulders to the peak period than they do now and therefore these people will be disadvantaged.

The Cross London Lines within the SWELTRAC area have stations with further distances

between them than for the remainder of the network and therefore people are on the trains for longer periods. SWELTRAC's aspirations to provide an alternative to the car will not be met if the alternative choice is standing in a crowded train. In summary, it is recognized that this option may need to be pursued, but should only be considered as a very short-term option.

Option 2: PIXC Buster

SWELTRAC supports the principle of additional trains and welcomes the recent initiative to run trains from Clapham Junction to Stratford. This provides a useful link around London. SWELTRAC would like to see this concept introduced throughout the working day on a "Clockface" basis.

Option 3: Longer Trains

SWELTRAC strongly supports the introduction of longer trains on the North London Line. As outlined above, it is felt that the forecasts of future demand have been seriously underestimated.

It is appreciated that the alternative method to longer trains of providing additional capacity is by providing more frequent trains and this is an attractive option as it results in less passenger waiting time. However, SWELTRAC feels this may not be possible on the section between Richmond and Willesden Junction because:

- The need to share with the District Line trains already mentioned above.
- A higher frequency on this section may not be compatible with aspirations to run 8 trains per hour between Willesden Junction and Stratford. These would be formed of four from Richmond and four from Clapham Junction.
- Possible opposition to more frequent trains due to more frequent closing of the level crossings along this section of line.
- The probable need to route an increasing number of freight trains along the line will make it difficult to reliably run more frequent passenger trains.

Therefore it is felt that longer trains should be pursued on the North and West London Lines. It is noted that resignalling is to take place and this must be carried out to allow the subsequent introduction of the longer trains to at least 6 cars.

The problems associated with platform lengthening are appreciated. On the North London Line between Richmond and Stratford, it is understood that at ten of the stations the platforms are already long enough, and of the remainder, only four pose significant problems.

In conclusion, it is felt that the trains should be lengthened to 4 cars as soon as possible, which will provide an additional capacity of over 33%, and that they should then be extended to 6 cars as growth continues.

A statement is made in the conclusion under Option 3 where it is said that there appears to be a case for extending the North London Line to 4-car operation, if the necessary funding is agreed. Then in italics the conclusion states, '*Not recommended for development in the longer term unless required in conjunction with the Olympics*'. This statement is not understood.

Option 4: Run additional trains on the North London Line

SWELTRAC concurs with the comments made by NORP on this option. It would not support the principle of running diesel trains along electrified railways for more than a limited period

and feels that the Gospel Oak to Barking line should be electrified.

Option 5: Introduce additional 4tph Stratford – Queens Park

SWELTRAC concurs with the comments made by NORP on this option

Option 6

SWELTRAC concurs with the comments made by NORP on this option

Option 7. Divert London Bridge – Victoria services to Clapham Junction

This option would seem to fulfill SWELTRAC's aims to promote orbital travel around London. However, it is important, as outlined above to ensure that easy interchange is made at Clapham Junction so that passengers can easily make that orbital movement.

Option 8 to Option 16.

The options made seem sensible and are welcomed. SWELTRAC concurs with the detailed comments made by NORP on these options.

In conclusion, SWELTRAC hopes that these comments are useful and should you require any further clarification I will be pleased to help you. Should you require further discussion with the boroughs SWELTRAC would be pleased to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely

Colin Tether
SWELTRAC Manager