

THE MAYOR'S TRANSPORT STRATEGY

by John Hawkins

The Mayor's Transport Strategy is the outcome of a long consultation process, and looks to 2031 when it is forecast there will be around 1.25 million more people and over 750,000 new jobs in London (compared to 2007 (pre-recession) levels). It replaces the 2001 version and later revision. For those interested, this document also covers other areas of TfL responsibility, including cycling, river transport, roads, road freight, buses, taxis, airports and even walking!

Transport schemes are sorted into short term (for TfL effectively by the Olympics, and therefore probably underway), medium term (within ten years), and long term (by 2031). They are also shown as funded or unfunded, the latter probably later than current funding timeframes, and as low cost (under £100m), medium (under £1bn), or high cost.

UNDERGROUND

The well known line upgrades form the majority of 'Tube' schemes. Northern Line Upgrade 2 is funded in the medium term, with the hope of a developer-led extension to Battersea at some time. The Croyley rail link remains unfunded in the medium-to-long term. The Bakerloo Line upgrade will include new energy efficient, high capacity rolling stock and resignalling, with an unfunded potential southern extension in the long term. The station refurbishment/modernisation programme is funded in the medium term, but will continue into the future, along with the "Cooling the Tube" programme, and targeted station congestion relief schemes: Vauxhall, Finsbury Park and Highbury & Islington are mentioned, along with Holborn, Camden Town, Oxford Circus and Edgware Road. Strategic interchange upgrades to meet growing National Rail traffic are foreseen at London Bridge, Euston, Liverpool Street, Paddington, Elephant & Castle and Waterloo.

Energy-saving initiatives are funded into the medium term, but to continue beyond then, commencing with trials on low-energy lighting, smart metering at stations and low-loss conductor rails. A core asset renewal programme is envisaged to commence long term, to lock-in benefits from line upgrades and maintain assets in good repair.

The design life of rolling stock is stated as 35 years. From recollection, it was the same for tube stock 40 years ago, although surface stock was then considered capable of 40 years. Modern materials have not improved life expectancy. The Bakerloo Line can look forward to lighter, more energy efficient and higher capacity trains by 2020, delivery to then continue onto the Central Line. This sounds like a revival of the 'space train' concept originally developed for the Victoria Line, with shorter, wider articulated cars, but abandoned with the PPP scheme.

DLR & TRAMLINK

The DLR has nothing beyond the current network-wide three-car upgrade and Stratford International extension, although along with Tramlink, there are long term potential extensions and/or capacity increases. These include double tracking east of Bow Church, resignalling of the network, and rolling stock renewal and replacement. An extension to Dagenham Dock is a key component of the housing plans for Barking Riverside. There is further scope to extend the DLR in the longer term to provide better links to Stratford, improved orbital links and connectivity in the Thames Gateway, and better integration with the central London transport system, for example, through a westwards extension from Bank to Victoria. Options south of Lewisham, and north of Stratford International will also be considered.

Extensions of Tramlink, with a strong focus on a potential north-south axis, and potentially to improve east-west links to neighbouring Outer London town centres for improved orbital connectivity. Both short extensions to provide better access from key centres to Tramlink, and longer extensions opening up completely new routes are being considered.

RAIL

Network Rail short term schemes are for completion in 2014, and include train lengthening and capacity enhancements on many lines. Further such schemes are envisaged for the medium-to-long term. They include Lea Valley four-tracking and improved access to Stratford in the long term, and electrification of the Great Western line.

On HS1, international services stopping at Stratford is an unfunded medium term scheme, despite DLR opening this summer! Enhanced domestic services are funded medium term, whilst direct services to more European destinations are unfunded medium term aspirations, with HS2 to the West Midlands and beyond a long-term plan.

Crossrail 1 is funded Maidenhead to Shenfield and Abbey Wood, with long term potential extensions beyond Abbey Wood and westerly extensions(s) and/or increased frequency west of Paddington. Chelsea-Hackney (Crossrail 2) remains a long term capacity and connectivity scheme. Thameslink is funded to provide 12-car capacity on most of the main line and 16tph in the core short term, with 24tph through the core to an expanded network medium term.

Overground is funded for the current planned orbital services and longer trains in the short-term, with electrification and train lengthening on the Barking/Gospel Oak line a medium term unfunded plan, and long term further train lengthening on other lines and the diversion of Watford Junction services to Stratford to release capacity for HS2 at Euston. Capacity enhancements on the Felixstowe/Nuneaton route medium term will divert rail freight traffic from London and the Overground route, although long-term a link from the Barking/Gospel Oak line to the West Coast Main Line is envisaged to provide further freight capacity, relieving some of the North London Line.

Airtrack is a part-funded medium term scheme to link south-west London with Heathrow. Capacity enhancement schemes are under development for rail termini in the medium to long term, with a programme of strategic interchange schemes under development long term. Capacity improvements are under consideration for severe congestion at Clapham Junction, Finsbury Park, Bromley South, Wimbledon, Vauxhall and Barking. Moderate congestion is also to be addressed at Willesden Junction, Balham, West Croydon, Putney, Norwood Junction and Surbiton.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

Implementation of all National Rail network schemes is shown to remove all crowding greater than 4 persons per sq.metre by 2031, with the heaviest loadings forecast on the Crossrail approaches to the central area. However with growing demand, the Underground and DLR will remain with such crowding, especially east of King's Cross on the Piccadilly, Victoria and Northern lines. Other crowded lines will remain the Northern Line between Clapham Common and Kennington, and Kentish Town into Camden Town, and the Jubilee Line between Canary Wharf and Canada Water. The DLR will remain crowded from Shadwell into Bank.

This is despite Chelsea-Hackney (Crossrail 2) being included as a 'tube' scheme linking Snaresbrook and Putney Bridge, presumably running Epping/Wimbledon via the safeguarded central area route. This route, dating back to 1974, is actually overdue for review to consider links with Network Rail lines.

The diagram in the Strategy shows the DLR reaching Dagenham Dock and also beyond Lewisham to Beckenham Junction and Hayes (removed from the Network Rail diagram), although these areas are also linked to the Bakerloo Line extension. A link from Stratford to Walthamstow Central via Leytonstone is probably another DLR extension, together with a line beyond Bank to Charing Cross and on to Victoria. The Bakerloo Line again reaches Watford Junction along with Overground, although the Metropolitan Line does not. Most of these system enhancements are not in the committed funding/reference case diagrams.