

# **LONDON UNDERGROUND LIMITED**

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**SUBMITTED BY :** Richard Parry, Strategy & Commercial Director  
**SUBJECT :** Kensington Olympia Service  
**DATE :** 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010

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### **1 INTRODUCTION / PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The Kensington Olympia service costs £1m a year to operate, and delivers a net disbenefit of £10m to LU passengers. Although delivering a benefit to the few regular commuters and occasionally to numbers of passengers attending events, it causes substantial congestion and delays to the whole District line because of the working through Earl's Court.
- 1.2 The Executive Committee is asked to consider four potential reduced services to operate to Kensington Olympia. It would be possible to implement these options under Subsurface WTT 12 from December 2011. This would require an immediate decision and would not allow an opportunity for further analytical work or consultation. The next opportunity to make the change would be in December 2012.

### **2 BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STATUS**

- 2.1 Recent timetables have reduced the 4 trains per hour (tph) service to Olympia to utilise scarce rolling stock and paths through Earl's Court to provide more benefit. In WTT 5 a morning peak Olympia service was diverted to Wimbledon for one round trip. Under WTT 8 the Olympia service was reduced from 4 to 3 tph, operated by one train instead of two.
- 2.2 The service provided by London Overground and Southern has increased in recent years and is now more frequent than the LU service. New interchange opportunities available from that service have opened at Shepherd's Bush and West Brompton.
- 2.3 In recent years several high profile events have moved away from Olympia to alternative venues such as ExCel. Events are distributed across the week and at weekends.
- 2.4 The residential catchment area for Olympia is small and well served by adjacent stations Shepherd's Bush, West Kensington, Hammersmith and Barons Court.
- 2.5 During a recent two day suspension of the Olympia service due to a lack of District line rolling stock, 77% of a small sample of regular passengers were able to use London Overground or Southern services, 17% used alternative LU stations and 6% travelled by bus. Although the traffic increases to and from exhibitions, some exhibition users would already be better off using

alternative routes and would do so if they had a greater knowledge of the London transport network. They may use the London Underground service as the brand suggests a frequency that is not actually provided in practice.

- 2.6 The track to Olympia will continue to be used indefinitely as this is one of the entrances to Lillie Bridge depot, a stabling location for 10 SSR trains. As long as some of these trains continue to serve Olympia at least once a week, it is understood that Parliamentary consent for the service reduction is not required.

### **3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 Olympia services represent nearly 10% of the train movements through Earl's Court on the District line, but a mere 0.6% of the passenger movements. The reduction of the Kensington Olympia service to a minimal level will deliver benefit and enhance the service offered to 99.9% of District line users. The resources saved can be used to provide additional benefit to other parts of the line in the longer term.
- 3.2 Legal and cross-modal obligations: LU has a legal obligation to continue operating a service to Olympia. The level of service is not specified, and could be as low as one train a week. London Overground need to be consulted on the change as it will affect their loadings and crowding between West Brompton and Shepherd's Bush.
- 3.3 While immediate operational expenditure has been evaluated, analysis undertaken so far has not considered any alternative uses for trains freed up or any potential savings to capital expenditure that might arise from a reduced District line rolling stock requirement.

### **4 RISKS**

- 4.1 Passengers who travel from Olympia may have slightly longer journeys following this change, although many can use alternative services with only a slight journey time penalty. There is a risk that they and stakeholder groups will object to the proposals. The managers of the Olympia Exhibition Halls have privately lobbied very strongly against service cuts in the past.
- 4.2 An instruction to implement a change through WTT 12 will not be reversible at a later date regardless of stakeholder opinion, without significant disruption to the implementation programme for this timetable as there is not sufficient Timetabling resource to compile the timetable twice.

### **5 OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 Option A: Withdraw the Olympia service during weekday peak periods only. This delivers an annual benefit of £2.7m and an annual cost saving of £348,000.

- 5.2 Option B: Withdraw the Olympia service during weekdays, but retain the service at weekends. This delivers annual benefits of £7.6m and cost savings of £813,000.
- 5.3 Option C: Withdraw the Olympia service through the week (with the exception of at least 1 train a day starting from Lillie Bridge depot into service at Olympia) except during major exhibitions at Olympia. The annual benefits and costs for this option will depend on the future exhibition schedule, but based on the current schedule for 2011 will be £8.1m benefit delivered and an £859,000 cost saving. The service delivered would be spread unpredictably through the week.
- 5.4 Option D: Withdraw the Olympia service through the week (with the exception of at least 1 train a day starting from Lillie Bridge depot into service at Olympia) including during major exhibitions at Olympia. This delivers annual benefits of £10.3m and a cost savings of £1.1m.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

This supplementary paper is included for discussion and the options have not been discussed widely outside Transport Planning.

## **7 RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 The meeting is asked to:
- (a) Consider the options outlined above.
  - (b) Advise Transport Planning whether any of these options should be implemented in WTT 12 on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

## **8 CONTACT**

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