

THAMESLINK 2000 (T2000)

- 1 British Rail first proposed T2000 in late 1989 and by the early 90's estimated its cost at some £300m. At the time of Railtrack's flotation it had risen to £566m, at the Inquiry to over £1bn, whilst at the end of 2001 it had reached £2bn. (Some recent media reports consider that it has now reached £3bn) .To spend even £2bn on an outdated, flawed scheme which provides no genuine increase in passenger-capacity into Central London, would be an appalling misuse of scarce public resources. It is essential to rethink Thameslink.
- 2 After privatisation BR/RT, and perhaps even more so OPRAF/ sSRA, vigorously extolled the virtues of T2000 as being:-
 - i) additional capacity would be created into Central London by extra trains and through many of the trains being lengthened to 12 cars
 - ii) additional capacity would be created **within** Central London by extra trains and through many of the trains being lengthened to 12 cars
 - iii) 'Regional' services as distant from London as Peterborough, Kings Lynn and Bedford would be linked through Central London with Ashford, Eastbourne, Brighton and Littlehampton etc.
 - iv) south of the Thames, 18tph would be routed through London Bridge- thus improving greatly interchange possibilities.

Large numbers of people believed all this to be true

- 3 Evidence presented at the Public Inquiry revealed that T2000 would provide no true increase in passenger capacity into Central London. Indeed, in the case of the Bedford Branch, the 144 cars maximum provided under T2000 will almost certainly represent a reduction in the number being provided by then. (Thameslink Rail (the TOC) currently 'aspire' to increase their Bedford Branch services to 18 8-car tph ie. a total of 144 cars; with passenger growth likely to continue, it is probable that the frequency will need increasing beyond the 18tph, well before 2008) .In the case of the ECML Branch, the 10 tph to be diverted from King's Cross into the new St Pancras (Midland Road) , of which eight are to be of 12 cars, could all become 12-car, merely by providing the necessary stock and power supplies and using the existing eight Main Line platforms at King's Cross (which many already do in the peak hours) .
- 4 Evidence at the Inquiry showed that the rolling-stock suitable for the proposed 'regional services' would be unsuitable for the mass-transit in-town distribution function which will be required for Thameslink's Centre Core and that as a result, a frequency of only 20tph, at best, would be possible. Inevitably, growth in passenger demand in the central area will necessitate higher-capacity stock with

limited seating -the latter being unsuitable for journeys of 20 miles or more from Central London unless some fast running is possible.

- 5 At the Inquiry/ a senior RT witness under cross- examination admitted that it would be possible in the peak hour to extend through to Farringdon and beyond to the Bedford branch/ all 14 trains which currently arrive at Blackfriars from the south -as compared with the mere five allowed through at present.
- 6 In January 2001, Barbara Follett MP (Labour, Stevenage) put down an Early Day Motion welcoming the T2000 proposals; a further 28 MPs added their signatures including Kerry Pollard. On the 19 September 01, at a meeting requested by Barbara Follett, she informed the (Southwark) Cathedral Area Residents' Association that she had subsequently realised that she 'had been conned' as regards the benefits of T2000 and had therefore withdrawn her EDM.
- 7 Peter Lilley criticised T2000 in a Press Statement dated 15.1.02.
- 8 At a Cabinet Meeting held on 12.6.02 at St Albans DC, concern was expressed at the inadequate capacity being provided by T2000
- 9 At a meeting of the APTU with Officers from Thameslink Rail, held on 11.4.02 at St Albans, reference was made at least twice to the fact that the 18 8-car tph 'aspired to' by Thameslink gave the same total of cars as will be provided by T2000. (See copy of the Minutes attached) .The APTU represents rail users from Harlington to London inclusive -the needs of St. Albans and Harpenden commuters are however different to those for commuters from, say, Cricklewood.

10 SUGGESTION

a) Even though T2000's Inquiry Inspector has probably approved the Application (doubtless subject to some qualifications), it must be unlikely, and a tragedy, if the Government were to give the go-ahead to spending £2bn or more on infra-structure that provides no genuine increase in capacity into Central London and, in the case of Hertfordshire, could result in a reduction. Accordingly, the aim should be to suggest to the Government an alternative way of increasing capacity at only a fraction of T2000's estimated cost - with Hertfordshire gaining significant benefits.

b) Thameslink should remain as an S-car operation and thereby obviate the need for hugely expensive platform- lengthening at Farringdon and the rebuilding of Blackfriars

c) Because of the 'metro' type service that will be required in the Central London area, the rolling stock will inevitably have to be 'metro' type -with ample sliding doors and standing areas such stock will restrict services to about 20

miles from Central London except where some fast running is possible, such as to Luton and Gatwick.

d) In peak periods, a frequency of 24tph would be possible between SPMR and Farringdon with 12tph originating from the Luton and 12tph from Welwyn Garden City.

e) The Moorgate Branch should remain open until additional alternative capacity is provided on the Farringdon/ Moorgate rail corridor

f) In the peak hours, all the 16tph operating south of Farringdon should continue through Blackfriars to the Elephant & Castle/ Herne Hill corridor, with the additional Thameslink services subsuming those Connex SE services which currently start at Blackfriars. This will avoid for the present the huge cost of rebuilding London Bridge and its approaches to accommodate Thameslink services.

g) Once the Kentish Town/ King's Cross Thameslink 'closure' is lifted, some shuttles should continue to operate between Bedford and St Pancras, operating non-stop between St Pancras and St Albans; they should be of 12-cars once the platforms on the St.Albans/ Bedford sector have been lengthened. A peak period frequency of 4tph initially, with a potential of 8 tph should be the aim. With only 4 platforms being allocated in the rebuilt St Pancras to trains to/from the Midland Main Line, and with Midland Mainline (the TOC) wanting up to perhaps 6tph, additional platform may be required; the 3 platforms allocated for possible high-speed domestic services might serve in the medium term.

h) WAGN services should continue to operate into King's Cross but with trains lengthened to 12 cars as soon as possible and using the Main Line platforms at King's Cross (as is already the case with many peak period WAGN services) . The proposed additional long platform on the eastern side of King's Cross (the SRA's Platform 0) should be built, together with the proposed additional long platform on the western side. The provision of these two platforms will offset the closure of the suburban platforms 9/11, the removal of the latter's approach lines being essential for a very beneficial lengthening of many of the main line platforms.

i) Upgrading of power supplies and signalling and the provision of suitable rolling stock to achieve these frequencies should be a high priority; a flyover south of St Albans to ease transfers between the 'fast' and 'slow' lines will also be required.

j) If (g) is not possible, then **ALL** 24 S-car 'Thameslink' services should serve the Bedford Branch, providing a mix of 'fast' and 'stopping' trains. No Thameslink trains would be able to serve the ECML, making it essential that the Finsbury Park/ WGC sector is served by a branch of the TfL/ SRA proposed Hackney/ SW Metro.

k) In the short term, the SRA must be more active in brokering further Class 319 stock to Thameslink Rail to enable them to operate a peak frequency of 18 tph -all of 8-cars; they must also correct the failure, in their recent renegotiation of the Midland Mainline franchise, to ensure that adequate extra paths are available for Thameslink services in either direction south of Bedford.