

Blowing away the cobwebs

After being shelved by Railtrack because it was "not needed", CrossRail is now so popular that it is being fought over.

Developers in the Docklands area want it to be re-routed to serve Canary Wharf while Newham Council is battling for it to remain on line to serve Stratford.

The £5.5billion project was derailed by the privatisation process but is now even more significant because it will link into the Channel Tunnel rail link at Stratford.

London mayor Ken Livingstone wants it built by 2010 and has specified in his latest transport policy that it must serve Heathrow airport.

City of London business leaders are also keen to see the link implemented quickly and for it to link into Heathrow.

Airport operator BAA is reported to be interested in extending the Heathrow Express to Staines linking into rail lines to Woking, Salisbury and the south west.

BAA says it can implement the Airtrack project with finance from the private sector but it is reported to have abandoned hope of building a link via existing lines into St Pancras.

And improvements to the Tube have been held up by the well-publicised clash between the Government and the mayor.

In his latest transport strategy, the mayor recognises the role the national rail network can play in "enabling movement within and around London, a requirement of a successful city".

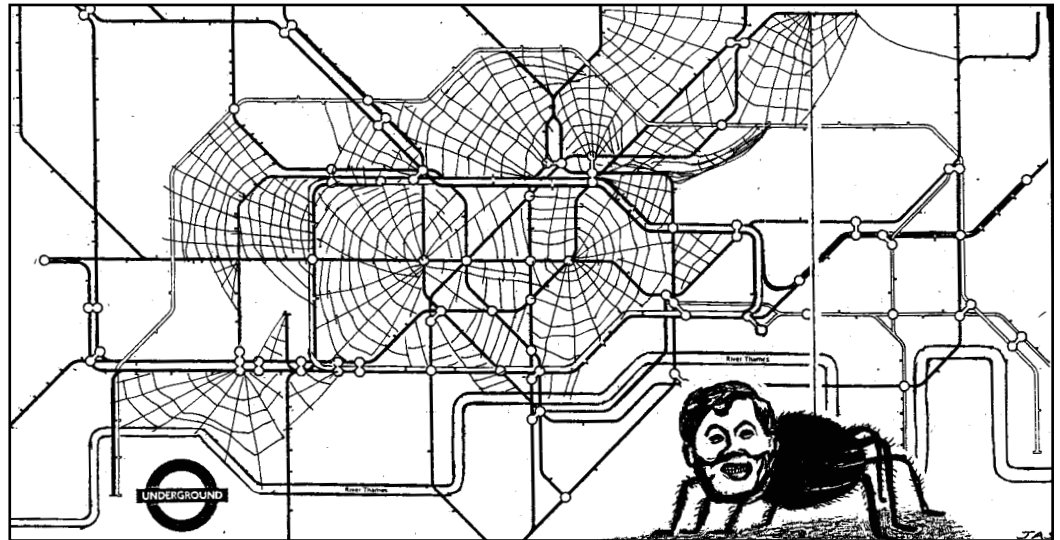
He wants to see improved all-day frequencies, integrated ticketing and better standards.

His strategy says: "These are needed to turn the national rail network into an above-ground metro complementing the Underground and offering attractive turn-up-and-go services to much of London."

The strategy calls for a phased approach to achieving this, "starting with the South London Metro, followed by Orbirail and the development of a full London Metro, including, for example, the north east London group of lines."

Important phases of the London metro could include the Chingford, Enfield and Lee Valley lines.

Although the mayor has power to issue guidance to the Strategic Rail Authority, it will remain to be seen whether the SRA will respond in its own strategy to be published in



Cartoon: James Sullivan

November. His aim is to reduce road traffic by 15% by 2011.

The World Bank, which has promoted some dubious projects in the past, is coming round to recognising the importance of metros.

Lack of access to transport is a fundamental contributor to poverty, said John Flora, the bank's director of transport and urban planning.

Rail heritage

Plans for the redevelopment of former rail land at Newton Abbot, Devon, has prompted a campaign to save the site - now owned by the local council - for a rail heritage site. If you would like further information, contact George Eastley, 23 Chelston Road, Abbotsbury, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 2NN.

Forest memorial

A RoadPeace Wood is to be established as a memorial to victims of road crashes. The aim is also to reforest 100 acres of land in Staffordshire. For more information, contact RoadPeace Wood, PO Box 2579, London NW10 3PW. A leaflet about the scheme was sponsored in memory of Alice Browning who was killed aged five months. This year about 300,000 children will die on the world's roads, according to RoadPeace, with millions seriously injured.

Safety cameras

Police in Norfolk have failed to use the speed cameras that are fitted in the county even though speed is one of the main causes of road crashes. On just one day in Norfolk in August there were 39 road crashes. The media continue to describe road crashes as "accidents".

Battle to save freight depot

Railfuture has warned that rail sidings at Cricklewood, north London, are at risk from unsuitable property development.

It has written to the local authority responsible and has alerted the Rail Freight Group. Railfuture believes the site should be safeguarded so that as rail freight expands, a multi-modal depot can be established at Cricklewood. It is in an ideal position, near the North Circular Road and the M1 motorway for this purpose.

But Railtrack Property and Pillar Property are promoting a scheme for shops, hotels, a health centre and a mix of cheap and exclusive homes.

The Rail Freight Group says the plan would remove the last remaining site in north London which could be developed to meet the Government's 10-year target of an 80% growth in rail freight.

RFG says the development on a strategic freight site would contravene official PPG13 planning guidance.

Cricklewood Redevelopment is planning to build a replacement station for Thameslink and possibly Midland Mainline which could accommodate 12-coach

trains. It would provide additional access to the neighbouring Brent Cross shopping centre. A rapid transit system would link the station to the Tube at Brent Cross.

The Shanks & McEwan waste transfer station - where London domestic waste is loaded on to trains bound for Bedfordshire tips - would be moved from the east to the west side of the main line.

In a letter to Barnet Council, Railfuture has made a formal objection asking for rail freight needs to be properly considered.

There is serious doubt as to whether the land allocated for rail use is sufficient for the rail activity already taking place on the site, let alone proposed expansion.

Rail activity has expanded within the past year and sidings are being brought back into use. Traffic has grown to the extent that EWS have allocated a shunting locomotive to the site.

Most of the activity takes place within the existing ex-EMU maintenance depot, so it is not obvious to the casual observer that the site is in use.

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