

Weekly Parliamentary Monitoring

week ending 7 December 2007

1. Written Answers

Timetable

In response to Simon Hughes MP's question on the projected timetable to deliver Government commitments on Thameslink 2000 and Crossrail, Tom Harris MP stated:

"The Thameslink Programme has already started on site and is scheduled to deliver substantial benefits to rail passengers by the end of 2015. In addition, some services will benefit from longer trains from the end of 2011. Assuming Royal Assent to the Crossrail Bill in summer 2008, enabling works for Crossrail are scheduled to commence in 2009, with main construction works commencing in 2010. Operational trials will begin towards the end of 2016, in time for services to commence in 2017."

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm071204/text/71204w0001.htm#07120410800021>

Rail Passengers

Tom Harris MP also replied to Andrew Slaughter MP's question on the implications of Crossrail for London's rail passengers. He stated:

"Crossrail will carry nearly 200 million passengers a year, increasing peak east-west capacity by 40 per cent. The project will relieve overcrowding and congestion on the existing National Rail and London Underground lines, helping to meet expected growth in demand for public transport and improving accessibility. Many east-west journey times will be significantly improved"

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm071204/text/71204w0001.htm#07120410800011>

Barnett Formula

In response to Graham Stringer MP's question on the estimate of the Barnett consequential, Andy Burnham MP stated:

"[holding answer 26 November 2007]: These projects are being funded from a variety of sources including the Department for Transport. Details of the Department for Transport's funding for the years to 2010-11 are set out in Annex D3 of the 2007 pre-Budget report and comprehensive spending review document (Cm 7227). The Barnett formula is applied to changes in the overall Department for Transport's departmental expenditure limit. Full details of the Barnett formula are available in the Treasury publication 'Funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and Northern Ireland Assembly: Statement of Funding Policy'."

Business Contributions

In reply to Boris Johnson MP's questions on business contribution meanwhile, Tom Harris MP stated:

"I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made by the Secretary of State on 26 November 2007, Official Report, columns 4-5WS. Contributions raised from any Crossrail-related supplementary business rate are a matter for the Mayor of London."

Responding to Mr Johnson's second question on the financial contribution of BAA, Tom Harris MP said:

"I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made by the Secretary of State on 26 November 2007, Official Report, columns 4-5WS. Discussions with BAA on the size of its contribution to Crossrail are ongoing."

http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm071205/text/71205w0006.htm#qn_58

Project Costs

Lord Bassam replied to Lord Berkeley's question on what percentage of optimism bias uplift is included in the current estimate of the total cost of the Crossrail project; and what is the contribution of the funding partners. He stated:

"I refer the noble Lord to the Written Statement on Crossrail made by the Secretary of State for Transport on Monday 26 November (Official Report, cols. WS 133-34)."

2. Treasury Select Committee

The Treasury Select Committee published its report on the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. There is one mention of Crossrail in reference to the Barnett formula and devolved assemblies:

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer also indicated that, in accordance with established practice under the Barnett formula, spending allocations to the Department of Transport in relation to the Crossrail project were reflected in the total amounts available to Scottish Executive, which was a consequence of the Government's policy to apply the Barnett formula consistently."

The full document is available at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmtreasy/55/55.pdf>

3. Channel Tunnel Rail Link (Supplementary Provisions) Bill

During debate on Public Bill Committee on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (Supplementary Provisions) Bill, Stephen Hammond MP drew on comparisons to Crossrail when making a technical point on the operation of construction. He said:

“I want to draw the analogy and test the Minister because in our parallel discussions about Crossrail we were talking about interim phases that would be extended only until services are fully operational. The Bill appears, however, to extend those powers well beyond that moment of being fully operational. In other words, if we apply the same rationale, the effects of clauses 3 and 5 would represent a serious inconsistency. The purpose of section 21 of the 1996 Act, like clause 23 of the Crossrail Bill, was to give the ORR power to give CTRL priority treatment during its construction phase in order to facilitate the project. Clause 3, when taken together with clause 5, extends that obligation well beyond the construction phase.”

The Channel Tunnel Rail Link (Supplementary Provisions) Bill webpage is available at:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/200708/channeltunnelraillinksupplementaryprovisions.html>