

Reopening of the Waterloo and Wapping Tunnels
(CX/41/07)

Report of the Chief Executive

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Wapping and Waterloo Tunnels have in the past provided direct rail links between the dock areas and the main line railway at Edge Hill.
- 1.2 The Tunnels while no longer used still exist and could be reopened for operational rail services. This report sets out a synopsis of the current position with respect to the Tunnels and the options they could provide in the future.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 The Wapping and Waterloo Tunnels link the main line railway between Liverpool and Manchester to the South docks and Waterloo docks respectively. The Wapping Tunnel was completed in 1829 and the Waterloo Tunnel twenty years later in 1849. Appendix A indicates the locations of the Tunnels in relation to the Merseyrail network.
- 2.2 While the Tunnels still exist it is many years since they have been used by rail services. The last use being for freight services in the 1970s.
- 2.3 The current state of both Tunnels is that they are in some disrepair. However, with extensive work, they could feasibly be reopened for railway use. While the Tunnels have not been protected in the past and not protected within the current Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (UDP), Merseytravel has had discussions with Liverpool City Council about this. It is likely that the Tunnel alignment to the exit of the Northern Line will be protected in the Local Development Framework which will replace the UDP.

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- 2.4 There are land use issues in both cases at the western end of the Tunnels as the land in these areas has long since been given over to commercial development purposes. However, the Tunnels could still be linked into the Northern Line electric network although some realignment would be required to bring the Tunnels to the same level as the Northern Line. This is less of an issue with the Wapping Tunnel as preparatory work to develop the link was carried out when the Merseyrail "Link Line" was built in 1974.
- 2.5 While both Tunnels are double tracked, it is possible that the size of the Tunnel might not allow modern units to be operated as per the current operational railway and any future units to be used through the Tunnels would need to be route cleared.

3. **Potential Future Development**

- 3.1 The reopening of the Tunnels would provide for a number of potential additional or modified rail services. Both Tunnels link into the current City Line network in the Edge Hill area. With the Waterloo Tunnel linking in to the east of Edge Hill and the Wapping Tunnel at Edge Hill itself.
- 3.2 Some potential options are detailed below but this is not an exhaustive list. It is envisaged that the lines in the Tunnels would be electrified in order to more fully integrate the possible service option into current Northern Line services.
- 3.3 The reopening of the Wapping Tunnel provides the following potential service options:-
 - (a) Direct links from the Southport, Ormskirk and Kirkby Lines via Liverpool Central onto the City Line network.
 - (b) Direct links from the Hunts Cross branch via Liverpool South Parkway (but not Liverpool Central) onto the City Line network.
 - (c) Or as a variation of the "Allerton Arrow" concept with all Northern Line trains terminating at LSP by going via Brunswick or Edge Hill (slow lines).

Both options could provide direct links to St Helens and Manchester.

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- 3.4 The reopening of the Waterloo Tunnel allows similar service options from the north without operating through the City Centre, or from Hunts Cross via Liverpool Central.
 - 3.5 The reopening of the Tunnels has not been considered in the North West Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS), which focused on a wide area of the North West Region rather than just Merseyside. They will, however, be considered within the Merseyside RUS which has recently commenced. One of the key issues within the Merseyside RUS is to ensure that the required level of train capacity is provided for the developing economy within the Merseyside area.
 - 3.6 The Waterloo Tunnel may be particularly important in terms of the developing economy. Merseytravel is in discussions with the Liverpool Land Development Company regarding the potential redevelopment of the North Shore area which the Waterloo Tunnel could provide a direct link to for current City Line services.
4. **Financial Implications**
 - 4.1 There would be significant financial implications if either Tunnel was reopened and developed for passenger services. These have not yet been considered.
5. **Disability Discrimination Act Implications**
 - 5.1 There are no DDA implications.
6. **Environmental Implications**
 - 6.1 There are no environmental implications.
7. **Equal Opportunities Implications**
 7. There are no equal opportunities implications.
8. **Conclusions**
 - 8.1 With the consequent rise in popularity of rail services nationwide and the ever-increasing congestion on roads, there will be continuing pressure to provide public transport options which allow modal shift from the private car to the railway. The reopening of either the Waterloo or Wapping Tunnels for

passenger services could well provide a solution to potential transport problems in the future.

- 8.2 Furthermore, the potential of the Tunnels in supporting the expanding Merseyside economy needs to be given serious consideration. Merseytravel will ensure this is the case by investigating the potential reopening for both of the Tunnels through the Merseyside RUS.

9. **Recommendations**

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Rail Services Committee note this report.

Background Papers

None.

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