

Rt.Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
LONDON
SW1P 4DR

COPY

13 October 2016

Dear Secretary of State,

Improving the rail passenger experience in London through greater devolution of rail services.

I am writing to express our strong support for further devolution of rail services in the London area to the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). We are aware that this issue is at the top of many agendas at the present time, given the imminent Invitation to Tender for Southeastern trains. We think a big opportunity was lost to devolve the inner London Southeastern services when this issue last arose in 2013. If your Department shares our concern to see a radical improvement in services for passengers, starting with the Sevenoaks and Dartford lines, the opportunity must not be missed again.

Our support for devolution of inner London services to the London Mayor and TfL is based entirely on the benefits to passengers, both users of local and long distance services alike. We are an independent body concerned solely with passenger priorities and we hold no particular brief for any existing operator or other interested party.

We think the benefits can be summarised as follows:-

- Improved operational performance for local services and also for longer distance services where these run over common sections of routes
- The ability to plan and implement long term improvements that respond sensitively to the changing requirements of London's travelling public, and to the urgent need to make full use of limited line capacity in a timely and cost efficient way.
- The ability to run the TfL concession model in a way that encourages smaller scale tenders from operators that may not be in the market for conventional rail franchises, so encouraging competition and innovation in the passenger interest
- Greater and much more transparent accountability for operational performance
- Greater ability to integrate effectively fares, ticketing and operations with other modes of transport in the Greater London area

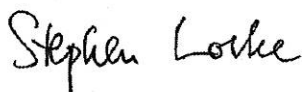
These are not theoretical propositions. There is now a strong body of evidence to support them. The general success of the London Overground network in growing the market and radically improving performance since 2007 has been widely documented. But more specifically, we would like to highlight:

- The significantly improved operational performance of the West Anglia and Liverpool Street – Shenfield routes since devolution to TfL in May 2015. This improvement has been secured without, in any way prejudicing the performance of longer distance services on the Great Northern and Abellio Greater Anglia franchises
- On both the West Anglia and Liverpool Street-Shenfield lines, there has been substantial growth in usage and revenue from the introduction of TfL fares and ticketing arrangements since devolution, with no changes to the train service or the rolling stock that would otherwise account for this.
- The marked improvement in passenger satisfaction levels, as measured in the National Rail Passenger Survey following devolution on TfL rail concessions – passenger satisfaction on London Overground rose from 73% to 87% in the first three years of its operation while satisfaction with devolved West Anglia services rose by 3% in the first year
- The ability of TfL to swiftly address operational problems that have occurred on their concession operations, and to set incentives that improve the ability of concessionaires to manage effectively their own suppliers, notably Network Rail

We think these recent developments significantly increase what was already a very strong case for devolution back in 2013. We recognise that there have in the past been concerns about the possible impact of devolved services on the availability of train paths for longer distance services. These have largely abated given experience of joint running of TfL services and franchised services on many common tracks around the capital. But to help underpin this reassurance, London TravelWatch together with Transport Focus developed a protocol (attached) for devolved services. This ensures that the interests of both short and long distance passengers are equally met and respected. TfL signed up to this protocol and we think it would be helpful to incorporate this in any arrangements that you may make in respect of devolved services, building on the framework agreement between your Department and TfL in January 2016.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you when we next meet.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Locke
Chair, London TravelWatch

Enc.

Essential passenger safeguards to ensure successful and fair devolution of rail services

CC: Paul Maynard MP; Lord Ahmad, Parliamentary Undersecretaries of State for Transport

Essential passenger safeguards to ensure successful and fair devolution of rail services

London TravelWatch is seeking these to make sure that the interests of all passengers, regardless of where they are travelling to or from, are taken account of in any agreement to devolve more responsibility for train services to the Mayor of London through TfL.

1. **Guaranteed even handedness in track access** between continuing Department for Transport franchises and any devolved concession operations so as to ensure that the needs of all passengers are catered for equitably.
2. **Guaranteed interavailability of ordinary tickets over common routes within the London travel area** irrespective of operator.
3. **A commitment to work together with other operators in providing seamless information to passengers**, especially during times of disruption and at interchanges between services provided by franchisees and the concessionaire.
4. **A commitment to an operational agreement to work together in the best interests of all passengers**, sharing resources at times of disruption, and where separate provision is not justified, to maximise efficiency.
5. **Separation of the formulae for setting fares** between franchises and concessions, to ensure that political or commercial decisions in either do not have unintended negative or anomalous consequences for the other.
6. **A commitment to regular and meaningful consultation** by all parties with London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus on all issues affecting passengers. This should be inclusive from the tender design stage by TfL through to day to day operation by the concessionaire, and should at a minimum be comparable to that currently required of train operating companies under the existing franchise arrangements and licensing regime.
7. **A commitment to regular and meaningful dialogue with passengers and user groups on issues affecting them.**
8. **A commitment to work with local authorities**, both inside and outside London, to ensure a better whole journey experience, by means of improved interchanges and through ticketing schemes with local public transport operators.
9. **A commitment to transparency of data**, on items such as delay attribution and service performance.