

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

COPY

8 August 2018

Dear Secretary of State,

### **Improving the rail passenger experience in London using TfL's concession model**

In June London TravelWatch had a very productive meeting with the Rail Minister. We discussed the benefits of a Transport for London (TfL) concession-style model for rail services in and around London and he suggested that we write to you to outline some of key points we discussed on this subject.

As an independent body concerned solely with passenger interests, we want to see passengers benefiting from the best possible rail service. As you will know, many commuters, particularly those using Great Northern services, have had to put up with a poor service for several years now and there is already strong evidence that the concession model could offer improvements for passengers in the London area.

There are clear benefits in terms of performance from the concession model as TfL takes the revenue risk and provides incentives for the operator, based on performance and customer service. This means that the concessionaire focuses on performance as the main variable to their income and encourages the operator to proactively manage the relationship with Network Rail.

Since 2007, London Overground has gone from being one of the worst performing franchises (under the previous Silverlink franchise) to one of the best, with high passenger satisfaction. Passengers using TfL Rail services since 2015 have experienced similarly high performance. They have benefitted from more frequent services, improved customer service, better standards for stations, enhanced ticketing facilities, additional staffing, improved information and turn up and go for passengers needing assistance.

There are many other benefits from a TfL-style concession model including a knock-on boost to other operators' performance, better integration of transport services in the metro area and more joined up station management. And the series of safeguards for passengers we drew up several years ago with Transport Focus that TfL signed up to, would help to ensure successful and fair devolution of rail services.

In the case of the GTR franchise, we believe there is a strong argument for transferring the Great Northern, Moorgate to Stevenage service and local Southern Metro services and stations in the Travelcard area to a TfL concession along with logical operational routes such as those to and through Dorking and Guildford. These services are self-contained, with the majority of passengers and stations within the Greater London area. Their rolling stock and staff used on the services are separate from other parts of the franchise. Of the stations served, three are managed by London Underground; six are also served by London Underground; 10 are managed by London Overground; three are also served by London Overground and six are also served by London Trams. There would also be a case for transferring the ownership of the Finsbury Park-Moorgate line to TfL from Network Rail, as this is a line built at 'tube' depths, and uses London Underground equipment and electricity supply, that is different to other parts of the East Coast Main Line. This would allow the Network Rail route to concentrate on its primary task of operating and maintaining the East Coast Main Line.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you or your colleagues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Leathley'.

**Arthur Leathley**  
Chair, London TravelWatch

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

CC: Jo Johnson MP, Minister 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 into account in any agreement to devolve more responsibility for train services to the Mayor of London through Transport for London (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.