

[REDACTED]

Transport for London/Department for Transport

By email: railprospectus@tfl.gov.uk

[REDACTED]

17 March 2016

Dear Sir or Madam

'A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South East'

This letter sets out our response, [REDACTED] to the engagement exercise currently being undertaken by Transport for London and the Department for Transport. This relates of course to plans for 'a new approach' to rail services in London and the South East and a new 'partnership' arrangement with Transport for London in terms of commissioning and management of London's suburban rail services. We have set out below our responses to the six questions posed in the rail prospectus issued by the Mayor of London and Secretary of State for Transport in January 2016.

The Hayes line, which, as part of the Southeastern franchise operation could be among the first services to transfer to the new arrangements, [REDACTED] as Catford Bridge station sits at the [REDACTED] and Lower Sydenham station at the [REDACTED]. We believe the new proposals will be of benefit to [REDACTED] and would like to see the new arrangements implemented without delay.

Question 1

Do you agree with the principles of a partnership to better integrate the specification of rail passenger services across London and the South East.

Yes, and we expect greater transparency and accountability for the management of London's rail services as a result. We would like work to implement the new partnership arrangements to be expedited and the new arrangements to be in place as soon as possible and certainly in time for the retender of the Southeastern franchise in 2018.

Question 2

Do you agree with the principles the partnership will work to? Are there any specific issues that have not been captured?

Yes. It would be remiss of us not to highlight here the poor 2tph service on the Catford Loop line (currently TSGN franchise due for retender for 2021) through Crofton Park, Catford, Bellingham and Beckenham Hill. We would urge that

[REDACTED]

thorough exploration be given to improving this situation in the next franchise. We agree with standardised fare structures with the caveat that fare increases be kept to a minimum.

Question 3

Do you agree with the proposed governance arrangements?

Yes. We would like to see this put in place as soon as possible.

Question 4

What form do you propose the input from local authorities and LEP's could take?

In terms of local authorities, more proactive deployment of the TfL Borough Liaison teams is required. Local Authorities, including their elected members have an acute awareness of their 'on the ground' transport needs, but hitherto the consultation process around franchise tenders/Route Utilisation Strategies etc. is obscure and only easily accessible by those already in the industry. The very long cycle of planning to delivery with rail infrastructure and service changes is also an issue – on the occasion where a member of the public or community transport group does make a submission, the changes will not be seen for several years, leading to issues with expectation management. TfL's involvement offers an opportunity for this to be much better publicised and much improved public engagement through local boroughs. More weight needs to be attributed to the knowledge of ward councillors in these discussions – they are 'on the ground' and are very aware of the aspirations of local communities in terms of their transport provision and can also assist with explaining the process and managing expectations.

When engaging with LA's as part of the re-tender process, TfL should not re-invent the wheel and utilise each borough's already established engagement structures – in [REDACTED] – and Transport Liaison forums where applicable. The council's scrutiny mechanisms could also be usefully employed through engagement with relevant select committees – [REDACTED] the Sustainable Development committee. TfL should also look beyond simply the council and consider including other organisations such as housing associations (Phoenix Community Housing, London & Quadrant and Lewisham Homes being key in our area) and local charities/voluntary organisations in this work. Such organisations often have their own engagement mechanisms with residents which can be used to gather views on transport provision.

There also needs to be an awareness, that, as with many public organisations in London, including TfL itself, boroughs are operating with increasingly limited numbers of officers and creative ways may need to be found to ensure full engagement without placing undue burdens on council staff.

Question 5

Do you agree with the safeguards for transfer of inner suburban rail services to TfL as set out here?

Yes and we add the need to maintain staffing levels at stations, with adequate and visible staff available from first to last train. We support the continued operation of staffed ticket offices.

Question 6

Are there any other outcomes you might expect to see achieved?

We would like to see accessibility schemes for stations transferring to the new arrangements reviewed, as we believe step-free access is paramount (specifically we are thinking of [REDACTED] although as aforementioned, this station is part of the TSGN franchise and thus not one of the first to be retendered). We would also like to see consistent and high quality audio/visual real time information to assist passengers with sensory impairments and a high standard of interchange information for those wishing to transfer to other nearby transport modes - i.e. bus services – to complete their journeys.

We would also encourage TfL and its partners to become more involved generally with supporting communities their services serve and encourage on-the-ground staff to do the same, for example making contact and establishing relationships with local organisations, attending local meetings and events where appropriate, and so on.

Finally, on a separate but related matter, we wish to reiterate our support for the Bakerloo line extension to Lewisham and our views that extending beyond Lewisham would be hugely beneficial to the communities we represent.

We hope our comments will be considered favourably when the extension is further considered in due course.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]