

Response to Rail Prospectus by [REDACTED]

18th March 2016

[REDACTED], which covers the parliamentary constituencies of Old Bexley and Sidcup, Bexleyheath and Crayford, and Erith and Thamesmead. [REDACTED] fully support the proposal that TfL and DfT form a partnership to provide train services as franchises expire. We feel that with the system as it currently stands provides poor value for money for commuters in Bexley, who experience an unreliable service, with overcrowding and high prices.

Our responses to the 6 questions posed in the consultation document are as follows:

(Q1) Do you agree with the principle of a partnership to better integrate the specification of rail passenger services across London and the South East?

Response

We agree wholeheartedly. The proposals will receive a welcome throughout the Borough, for rail users in the Bexley Borough who are currently experiencing appalling service provided by Southeastern.

(Q2) Do you agree with the principles that the partnership will work to? Are there any specific issues that have not been captured?

Response

We agree with the principles outlined in the consultation document, although feel that more clarity will be required as the consultation proceeds particularly with regard to accountability to all rail users throughout the region affected not just those in the London Assembly area. In particular we would like more information about the accountability to and consultation process with the Borough Councils and User Groups.

(Q3) Do you agree with the proposed governance arrangements?

Response

In general yes, but feel it is essential that the governance arrangements take account of all rail users, not just those in the metro region. The users of the longer distance services need to be heard.

(Q4) What form do you propose the input from local authorities could take?

Response

It is important to ensure that there is a channel for effective input by rail users outside the central area. TfL has proved itself to be a competent organization and has general public support for the services they provide and their ongoing improvements to the system and infrastructure. However, DfT receives less confidence from the public, not least because passengers from our area have had to suffer for the poor decisions made by DfT every day.

(Q5) Do you agree with the safeguards for transfer of inner suburban services to TfL, as set out here?

Response

We agree with the safeguards as a minimum standard. We would like to see a joint commitment to the future planning and improvement of all services, including both inner and outer London routes.

(Q6) Are there other outcomes you might expect to see achieved?

Response

We expect a huge growth in passenger demand as the service improves. Bexley Borough Council also expects an increase in population over the next decade and are actively encouraging movement into the area. We would hope that increased partnership between TfL and DfT will allow for a more ambitious and joined up approach for infrastructure development in Bexley and the possibility of DLR extensions to serve the north of the borough and would also welcome further proposals to increase connectivity within the borough and with central London, in addition to Crossrail serving Abbey Wood station. We feel plans for additional capacity at the main London hubs should be incorporated in the plan, and we believe that current proposals to sell off London termini should be reviewed so there are no obstacles to future expansion.