

DfT and TfL: Vision for rail travel across London and the South East

March 2016

The Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport for London (TfL) are working together with the aim to: create a more joined-up London rail network with more frequent services and increased capacity; move towards better customer service, joined up travel information, more integrated fares and a more accessible network; and, for greater local input into train services by the south east's towns and cities.

It is proposed to transfer rail services that operate mostly or wholly within the Greater London boundary to TfL when the current franchises are due for renewal. This could include inner suburban rail services from London Bridge, Cannon Street, Charing Cross, Moorgate, Victoria and Waterloo. The transfer of inner suburban rail services to TfL, which is accountable to the Mayor, will be introduced and proposals state that they will ensure there are service improvements for all and no detrimental effect on fares or longer distance services.

It is intended that local authorities inside and outside London will have a direct say in the way services are planned and operated, with greater collaboration between TfL and the DfT.

Proposed improvements include:

- More frequent services, more reliable trains, better interchanges and increased capacity
- the creation of a London Suburban Metro service
- new rail lines to connect poorly serviced areas and to support new homes /jobs
- creating a better travel environment, improving accessibility and staffing
- delivering a seamless and integrated service with joined up travel information

Question 1

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

Whilst we are not averse to the introduction of a partnership approach to integrate rail passenger services across London and the South East, we have concerns that the needs and aspirations of those commuting from the South East will be outweighed by decisions to invest in strategic improvements on the inner suburban services because of control of the partnership by London authorities.

There is concern that decisions will be focused on inner suburban services and that the important strategic routes from East Sussex and other South East regions will be secondary when considering improvements to infrastructure and service improvements.

Formal decision making by many local authorities, [REDACTED], on rail services and infrastructure is currently non-existent, with lobbying and suggestions for improvements - either in response to consultations or as a proactive or reactive action - being the current way by which we seek to influence changes to the rail network. There is an absence of technical rail expertise within the local authority to

be able to accurately identify what improvements could actually be made, and there are concerns that should decision making powers be devolved to the DfT and TfL then this would result in a disadvantage to [REDACTED] and other Counties in the South East when delivery and investment decisions are made.

A collaborative approach with LEPs and other local authorities would be considered appropriate because of the cross boundary nature of rail services, and closer involvement of local authorities and LEPs in the specification and the management of franchises would also allow rail service delivery and investment decision making to be more closely aligned with existing and emerging plans.

Question 2.

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

The principles that the partnership are proposing to work to focus on the passenger rail travel experience, and are supported: more frequent services, better interchanges and increased capacity; greater reliability for all passengers; and, high standards of customer service are key issues for the delivery of rail services,.

Commuting times between East Sussex to London are long, and there is a desire to reduce journey times to/from the capital. Improving journey times and therefore connectivity would support economic growth. Principle 1 of the partnership approach does include the need to improve fast longer distance services, and this is supported.

Whilst we support reduced journey times, the need to serve smaller stations along the route is also a key consideration, and we would not wish for there to be a reduction in services.

We acknowledge that having more stopping services increases journey time and that a balance that needs to be struck, however, reducing journey times, especially at peak times, are a priority in terms of connecting people to jobs, and a limited stopping service helps to achieve this.

Question 3

Do you agree with the proposed governance arrangements?

As previously raised in response to Question 1, our main concerns are regarding decisions potentially being focused on inner suburban services, with the important strategic routes from East Sussex and other South East regions being secondary when considering improvements to infrastructure and service improvements.

We acknowledge that the proposals suggest that all services will have the benefit of greater input from local authorities, including the ability to specify service enhancements depending on local priorities and funding arrangements. However, what weighting is attributed to this is of concern, as is whether decisions will be made without prejudice towards the more suburban London services.

Question 4

What form do you propose the input from local authorities and LEPs could take?

██████████ and its 3SC (Three Southern Counties) partners - ██████████ - are in discussions with Government about devolution proposals for the region. This includes:

- the development of a clearer strategy for rail services in the area for meeting future growth and the need for enhancements and capacity to mitigate overcrowding
- greater influence over franchise commissioning and operation so that the needs and interests of the area are properly reflected in the specification and then the management of franchises, and
- a co-operation agreement with Network Rail and the Department for Transport on the planning of investment.

Not only should there be discussions with local authorities and LEPs, but also with the 3SC partners. A working group comprising key relevant stakeholders to enable all parties to influence any new approach and future management of rail investment and operations could be set up.

Question 5

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

There is insufficient information to comment on whether we agree with the safeguards for the transfer of inner suburban services; i.e. no clarification on which specific services would be transferred, and the 'safeguards' are not clearly listed.

We agree with the references in the prospectus that the partnership will work to ensure that any transfer of services ensures there are no adverse impacts on the frequency, journey times or stopping patterns of longer distance services to and from London. Also, that extra capacity on peak local London services would only be added if there is no negative impact on longer distance services. However, we would wish for there to be better assurances and a stronger commitment that there would be no negative impacts on longer distance services to and from London.

There also needs to be assurances that longer distance services will receive fair consideration when planning for investment on capacity, and for services and other enhancements.

Question 6

Are there other outcomes you might expect to see achieved?

██████████ has long lobbied for later evening services to enable those travelling from ██████████ to be able to attend shows, events, dinner etc in London and not to have to rush to get the last train back. This request has generally been met with a rail industry response that engineering works take place during the evening which means later services are not possible to implement. However, if

engineering works can be managed more effectively, then we would wish for later evening services to be a consideration should a new franchise approach come to fruition.

In addition, some services would benefit from having an earlier morning service which would also help to accommodate the rising number of passengers using the rail network; it is anticipated that the additional carriages soon to be introduced on parts of the network (e.g. the Uckfield line), for which there are platform lengthening works taking place to accommodate these, will also help to alleviate overcrowding.

It is disappointing that the new carriages being rolled out do not have integrated wifi; this should have been part of the original specification. We would encourage wifi to be retrospectively fitted on all trains to enable rail passengers to make best use of their journey for business or leisure purposes.