

A New Approach to Rail Passenger Services in London and the South East

Representing the strategic needs of travellers on the South Coast and the trunk routes into London from East Sussex, [REDACTED] is pleased to be invited to respond in this consultation round.

[REDACTED] primary concerns are in two prime sectors. The first is to move the policy makers to plan strategic investment in upgrading the reliability and capacity of the present TOCs to deliver reliable, timetabled capacity on the principal Coast-to-Capital trunk routes and to reduce journey times as far is practical. The second is to press the infrastructure controller to invest a higher level of budget in current infrastructure reliability and capacity, to raise line speeds, to introduce higher capacity with improved control systems, to plan to remove flat junctions with grade separation where it is economic, and to invest in providing more flexibility.

There is a major concern that as Network Rail is already insufficiently accountable and tends to hide behind the train operators, the mechanism must be a priority if and when the proposed new governance proceeds. Major protective measures must be provided for the through traffic originating from outside London.

Consultation Response from the [REDACTED]

Q.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?

[REDACTED] strongly supports the objective of partnership working targeted at better strategic direction of rail services in London and the South East which fully recognises the priorities for growth and improved service of all localities in the area to be served, with however, safeguards to ensure priority, continuity and punctuality

of services originating and returning to destinations (particularly on the South Coast) outside the proposed new management area. Crucial is a clear and unambiguous understanding and co-operation between TfL and Network Rail and understanding of delineation mark between the responsibilities of the two.

Q.2 Do you agree with the principles that the partnership will work to? Are there any specific issues that have not been captured?

██████ welcomes the proposals for higher quality services, but believes that very substantial infrastructure investment will be required if these goals are to be achieved. Passengers, particularly those outside London, currently have very poor daily experiences largely due to bottlenecks at key locations in the network, especially certain junctions on the Brighton Main Line.

██████ recommends that the proposed new organisation should address removal of these bottlenecks as an critical priority in achieving its wider service aims, and should monitor the effectiveness of this work by setting transparent performance standards and measuring actual outcomes.

Q.3 Do you agree with the proposed governance arrangements?

Given that the proposed Partnership will add a tier of management ███████ emphasises the importance of regularly communicating clear and concise objectives together with transparent performance metrics covering both individual lines and peak versus off-peak usage. The provision of effective and convenient engagement with stakeholders outside London, extending as far as the Coast, will be essential when setting the Partnership's objectives.

Q.4 What form do you propose the input from Local Authorities and LEPs could take?

Formal and transparent mechanisms for consultations with Local Authorities and LEPs about future strategies, including regular stakeholder forums, and accountability for outcomes, have been demonstrated to deliver superior results, so long as those stakeholders are prepared to make their own commitments to local responsibilities. ███████ believes, however, that much useful additional input can be provided at a more individual level, and the Partnership should therefore establish similarly robust relationships with other local stakeholders such as Rail User Groups.

Q.5 Do you agree with the safeguards for the transfer of inner suburban services to TfL set out here?

██████ is very concerned that the needs of longer distance travellers, who already experience excessive journey times and frequent disruption, are fully protected by the promised safeguards so far as frequency, journey times, and stopping patterns are concerned.

Indeed, more efficient and faster long distance services with adequate capacity are an opportunity to give more commuters the confidence to move out of London thereby reducing stresses on inner London services. Performance in this regard will be a key test of the Partnership's success.

Q.6 Are there any other outcomes you might expect to be achieved?

Infrastructure constraints, particularly on the Brighton Main Line (BML) and at some London termini during peak hours, currently limit opportunities to improve services to the South Coast (including both East and West Coastways). ██████ therefore urges the new Partnership to support other South Coast stakeholders in championing the extension of high speed 'Javelin' services to London St Pancras from Rye, Hastings and Bexhill via Ashford – and, if viable, from stations further West.

Full exposure and consultation on infrastructure improvement plans is an absolute need. Allocation of higher levels of funding are critical for year on year budgeting to maintain signalling, power supply, concerns to raise line speeds wherever feasible and fuller assessment of risks of potential failure of infrastructure must be prime and continuing policy, to match rising levels of traffic

As a shorter-term measure to improve performance on the Brighton Main Line ██████ recommends the installation of ERTMS on this line, and in addition on both East and West Coastways, MUCH SOONER than is currently planned. This would allow reduced train separation and increased line capacity Longer term, conversion and upgrading of key flat to flying junctions (as occurs on the SW lines from Waterloo) must be the expressed and delivered policy, in a transparent strategic planning process.

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