

Response to TfL/DfT Consultation On Devolving Control of London Rail Services to the Mayor of London

is a voluntary stakeholder representative body advocating on behalf of public transport users in the Clapham area of South London. Our focus is on Tube, Bus, Dial-A-Ride and Rail services with full examination given to the inter-modal relationships between different forms of transport and the impact of transport with wider issues in Clapham and beyond.

We have a valuable perspective to offer in our response to the consultation in that the suburban stations of Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road were once run by British Rail and later Southern Trains but transferred to TfL as part of the extension of the London Overground East London Line Extension to Clapham Junction. The Clapham Transport Users Group was part of a group of stakeholder bodies invited by TfL in 2006 to consider the development of a pan-London rail network under TfL control which led to the evolution of London Overground.

Context

Transport for London was set up in 2000 to replace London Transport and have steadily increased its control of public transport beyond the established areas of Bus and Tube. In 2006 TfL gained control of some orbital rail services previously operated by Silverlink Metro and re-branded as London Overground: it has steadily expanded to include all orbital rail services, an expansion of the East London Line and some suburban services out of Liverpool Street, including trains to Shenfield which will become Crossrail. In the political climate of greater devolution, the lack of control by TfL of London's suburban rail network has been a significant anomaly, resulting in inconsistency of standards across rail networks not run by TfL. Rising commuter expectations and needs have created a political consensus that suburban rail should transfer to TfL in order to promote integration and synergy between rail and the other major transport modes of bus and Tube.

Overview of Rail in London

There are broadly three types of rail services which enter London:

- 'Metro' or suburban rail – serving wholly or mainly Greater London. Some services terminate just outside the Greater London Area border such as Dartford, Epsom Downs, Caterham, Shenfield.
- 'Regional' rail – these services mainly serve the Home Counties commuter conurbations but also stop at a smaller number of stations in Greater London, catering for both Home Counties and suburban travellers. Such services including C2C to Southend, Waterloo-Windsor, Waterloo-Reading, Victoria-Gilligham, Moorgate to Letchworth Garden City etc.

- ‘Mainline’ – these are services covering more than 30 miles; they may not serve any Greater London stations beyond Central London termini or at most a small number of suburban stations. These include Coastal services such as Victoria/London Bridge to Dover/Brighton, King’s Cross to Cambridge, Paddington to Oxford and Inter City trains operating trunk mainline

The major proposal is to devolve all Metro services to the Mayor of London and TfL. However we also note that TfL has scope to take over some Regional rail services running deep into the Home Counties but which serve a number of key London stations.

Our Headline Proposals

- We strongly support the concept of devolving to TfL all Metro services as the major suburban networks’ franchise expire. We consider that though the London Overground brand could be used, there is a case for creating separate Metro network identities. The London Overground ‘umbrella’ brand could be renamed ‘Greater London Rail’; either way each TfL rail station in Greater London would have the orange TfL logo with the name of the specific network. Stations outside of Greater London served by regional London Country Rail trains would have a green TfL logo and signage.
- We also argue that some Regional services operating out of Victoria/Waterloo/Charing Cross & London Bridge which substantively serve both Home Counties and suburban commuters should also transfer to TfL, but under the brand of London Country Rail. This would have its own Board and Governance structure consisting of elected representatives and officers from Home Counties councils as well as TfL personnel. London Country Rail would have a green roundel and green branding for station signs and in the colour scheme for LCR trains.
- We believe that the TfL Board needs to be widened to become more diverse and include representatives from both statutory stakeholder bodies such as London TravelWatch and London Councils alongside groups from the voluntary sector, including user groups and charities
- Some networks are not amenable to segregation either because they only serve a very small number of London stations or because the suburban and regional elements are too intertwined with longer distance services operationally. Chiltern Railways serve a very limited number of London stations and hence we do not propose transferring to TfL. Likewise we do not recommend transfer of C2C services to TfL at this point.

- All stations with services operated partly or wholly by TfL must be contactless payment and Oyster-compatible
- We also recommend contactless/Oyster be extended out to Shoeburyness, High Wycombe and Aylesbury
- Thameslink services between Wimbledon and Luton would transfer to TfL and be renamed 'Thameslink Metro' – Thameslink services running between Brighton and Bedford will not be devolved to TfL but would be renamed Thameslink Mainline. Thameslink Metro would have the orange TfL colour scheme to denote its essentially suburban/metro function.
- Services from Moorgate would also shift to TfL under the brand of 'GNC' (Great Northern & City). GNC would also have a similar Governance structure to London Country Rail. It would have the London Country Rail style green logo and design
- Great Western Metro services are likely to be significantly integrated into Crossrail: as such we have no proposals here.
- The Liverpool Street/Strafford-Hertford East service should transfer to TfL: this should join the existing TfL Liverpool Street network which runs to Chingford and Cheshunt, Enfield Town and be known as 'London Eastern Railway' (LER). The Upminster-Romford Shuttle should also be part of LER
- Stations within Greater London, with exception of those on the Chiltern Railways network, should transfer to TfL ownership.
- All TfL services, whether Metro/Suburban or London Country Rail/Regional will have Standard Class.
- Existing London Overground services should have dedicated line branding: the East London Line (for services between Highbury & Islington-Crystal Palace/New Cross/West Croydon/Clapham Junction), North London Line (Stratford-Richmond/Clapham Junction), Watford Line (Euston-Watford Junction),
- There should be 'one hour' TfL ticketing or Oyster/contactless payment by which a commuter can at peaks use suburban Rail/Tube/Bus interchangeably as if they were one journey
- There should be a major expansion of stations made accessible under a 'TfL for All' access programme.

- Contactless Payment/Oyster Zones should run to a maximum of eight Zones, with a rationalisation of the number of zones to cater for the extended areas.

Our Approach

Instinctively then we strongly support the proposals to steadily transfer the suburban networks currently operated under franchises granted by the DfT to TfL.

Our submission covers the historical anomaly by which suburban rail was not controlled by a London authority despite the creation of London Transport in 1933 to operate all other aspects of the Capital's public transport, and how this led to a lack of identity and brand on the suburban rail network which heralded decades of decline and dilapidated stations and services. We examine the differences between Tube and Rail in the context of London Overground before exploring the limits of what TfL can take over: the political and operational challenges of how to segregate longer distance networks from viable London Suburban rail services. We finally turn our attention to a more radical proposal of how TfL should take over rail services that run far into the Home Counties but have substantive importance to Londoners, via the creation of 'London Country Rail' and the governance arrangements needed to make this viable and representative of Home Counties' communities.

The Differences Between Tube & Rail

In seeking the transfer of all suburban rail services, TfL's aspiration is to raise the standards to those akin to a Tube network. However, it is important to understand that there are major differences

Tube Services

- Are very high frequency (24-30 trains per hour)
- Run through Central London
- Have dedicated line identity (name and colour) on Tube maps
- Have dedicated rolling stock that usually remains with that line for the entirety of its operational life, hence will have internal map displays of the line on which it runs
- Have lines which are largely tunnel-based; some lines will also run above ground but all lines run underground for the near-entirety of Central London
- Tube lines generally have dedicated track and tunnels and operate separately from each other with relatively little overlap
- London Underground own and have full control over the infrastructure of the Tube including tracks and signalling

- High frequency Tube services across all lines means that interchange is relatively seamless; changing Tube lines does not significantly add to overall journey times

Rail Services

- Operate variable frequency with many stations having only 4-6 trains per hour; services are specified by the Department for Transport when franchises are sent out to tender, though operators have some room for minor changes.
- Generally terminate at large Central London termini (the exceptions are Thameslink, Great Northern & City services to Moorage and the impending Crossrail)
- Share rail track and paths with freight and other passenger services
- Rail services will belong to a network but generally do not possess a specific line identity
- Rail services will be operated with a variety of different rolling stock
- Rail operators, including London Overground, do not have control of track and signalling (some will run some stations) which remains with Network Rail.
- Interchanging between Rail services or other modes of transport often adds to overall journey times because of the gaps arising from the overall lower frequency of rail.

The Consequences & Challenges of Rail

The consequences are that Metro, Regional & Long Distance/Inter-City services essentially operate on limited shared railway capacity by which rail paths and 'slots' for services to operate are allocated by the Department for Transport and Office for Rail Regulation. Allowing Long Distance services to run fast through most of London in turn require pathways to be kept clear which consequently means restricting the use of such paths by other services. Conversely increasingly Metro frequencies may mean increasing congestion on a rail path so slowing Long Distance trains meaning far longer journey times. All services are in essence 'competing' for rail paths and platform space at large railway termini.

It is a challenge of balancing all needs where demand outstrips capacity: 'control' of suburban (Metro) rail by TfL is therefore not absolute but relative and will operate within these limits. Ultimately the only way to resolve such conflicts of capacity is 'Crossrail' solutions by which suburban rail runs into dedicated and segregated tunnels and stations through Central London, so freeing up capacity on paths coming into the big London termini.

Suburban Rail Versus Tube A Tale of Two Systems in Clapham

In 1933 London Transport was created to co-ordinate and manage London's public transport; it was the largest urban transport body in the world. Much more than its size, the impact of London Transport was the excellence of design and brand identity; London Transport did not just serve London, but effectively defined it culturally with its iconic designs exemplified by the landmark Tube map and red buses.

The most notable anomaly was that London Transport was not given control of suburban rail services, with the argument made by the major 'Big Four' rail companies that suburban rail services were too embedded to be separated from their longer distance networks.

Segregation of suburban (Metro) services from regional and longer distance networks is challenging because of the different nature of rail as opposed to Tube. Yet there had been major changes between 1920-1947 in North London whereby many suburban networks were converted into extensions of the Central and Northern Lines. Services which once terminated at major rail termini instead run into dedicated Tube stations below ground, linking up with existing Tube lines. Hence these services did not have to share tracks and platforms with other rail services.

In South London expansion of the Tube was frustrated by the clay soil making Tube construction expensive and hard alongside the hostility of the Southern Railway to the Tube growing and taking away passengers. The result is that North London has relatively few suburban rail services and lots of Tube lines whilst South London is the reverse with only a few Tube lines (notably the heavily congested Northern Line) and very dense suburban rail networks which largely terminate at the big rail termini and have to share capacity with longer distance services.

The exclusion of rail services from London Transport was therefore understandable for operational reasons but in hindsight a mistake despite the challenges. It meant suburban rail lacked the cohesive of a London identity. London suburban rail entered a stagnant era of drabness, dirty trains and dilapidated stations. This was seen clearly in Clapham where Clapham North Tube was brightly lit and staffed with a huge number of regular commuters whilst nearby Clapham High Street suburban rail station was unstaffed and even lacked station signs, leading it to be awarded the dubious accolade of 'Britain's grottiest station' by the Daily Telegraph in 1989. The dichotomy of the Clapham High Street and Clapham North stations exemplified the 'Tale of Two Systems' by which the Tube was extremely well-used with high frequency trains and high quality information whilst suburban rail became an anonymous phantom network.

Under British Rail poor quality station care and train upkeep was accompanied by equally poor information, with grudging attempts made to co-ordinate with London Transport on combining Rail and Tube services into one map, which happened intermittently in the 1970s but not regularly until the advent of the London Connections map in 1982. Station neglect made

suburban rail a crime spot with a hostile atmosphere that discourage women passengers from using the network.

Mounting concerns over the unsafe state of suburban rail stations (where in the 2004/2005 period crime soared) was met by rail companies arguing that they had “limited resources” and that low usage of such stations did not ‘justify’ station staffing or regular cleaning: this of course led to a spiral of decline with passengers put off using suburban stations where ticket machines were faulty, there was no station staff or reassurance. The Evening Standard launched its Safer Stations Campaign which highlighted the problem, including Clapham High Street.

Rising attention on the neglect of suburban rail in the Capital came from the Mayor of London and London Assembly. If rail companies did not consider suburban services a sufficient priority for providing decent station care or security, then should not TfL then take over such networks?

London Overground: A New Era

From the outset TfL sought to instil a sense of pride and identity which married the London Transport heritage with suburban rail, buttressed by dramatically higher standards of station care, station staffing and information. The results were that dilapidated services such as the North London Line (formerly Silverlink Metro) has seen demand soar since the takeover by London Overground. London Overground stations are staffed, clean and well-lit. This has tapped into a massive commuter market previously artificially excluded from using the service because of safety fears: in Clapham more women passengers use Overground trains late at night as well in peaks. The London Overground has created both conventional and ‘leisure’ peak commuting so that the system is well-used even late at night. Customer satisfaction levels for the London Overground regularly top all surveys. Indeed demand is surging faster than the Overground can keep up with whilst engagement with local communities via meetings with voluntary stakeholder groups as well as statutory bodies has provided a critical link between TfL and local people. The days of graffiti saturated, litter strewn, unstaffed dark and dank stations have vanished from the London Overground network.

The advent of London Overground and its success has also been the spur for wider improvements such as expanding Oyster and contactless payments, at a stroke cutting huge swathes of time for commuters. Improved stations have also led to major regeneration in the surrounding immediate areas with shops and cafes opening in previously empty railway arches. Though London Overground is a franchise operation in essence the model is akin to that used by TfL for London Buses whereby the TfL brand and control is dominant.

Suburban rail in London is on the whole far better than 12 years ago and all railway companies now operate cleaner trains and provide higher standards of station care. The influx of new rolling stock – notably the Siemens Desiro

and Bombardier Electrostar fleets to replace older British Rail from the 1960s and 1970s – have improved perceptions of suburban rail.

Other Comparisons

The lack of control over suburban rail by TfL puts London at a major anomaly compared with other comparable cities in Europe and in the UK.

In Paris (including Greater Paris – known as Ile de France), all transport is overseen by 'STIF'. STIF oversees the two major rail/Tube operators – RATP (Paris Transport) and 'Transilien' (Paris suburban rail) operated by SNCF (National French Railways). TfL therefore would be the London equivalent of STIF, yet with a crucial difference: STIF is a rather anonymous body whereas TfL is a transport operator with a strong brand. German cities likewise have control over their Tube and Rail services under umbrella bodies co-ordinating the various operators.

With the UK London is most comparable to Glasgow, where the Strathclyde Passenger Transport body (SPT) co-ordinates suburban rail and the Glasgow Underground (alongside boat services). Glasgow has the second biggest suburban rail network after London. The trend in policy is towards devolution; with bodies such as Transport for the North (TfN) being set up, completing the jigsaw of giving TfL control of suburban rail is a logical next step.

Disadvantages of TfL Not Controlling London Rail Services

Though improvements to suburban rail have taken place in London, arguably this has happened since London Overground and it is TfL that has generated the impetus for change and integration. Some of the major disadvantages include:

Lack of Clear Accountability

When major problems occur with suburban rail services there is confusion in the public eye over responsibility – with blurred lines between the rail operators, the Department for Transport and Network Rail.

Lack of Consistency & Information

Whilst some rail operators enjoy high reputations and customer service satisfaction (notably Chiltern Trains and London Overground) others – others. Some suburban rail operators have been perceived to perform poorly, being weak at providing information to passengers when issues arise and having a poor reputation for customer engagement. Many suburban stations continue to be unstaffed, encouraging fare evasion and discouraging some passengers from using trains late at night.

Conflict of Priorities

A central issue over suburban rail, whether operated by private rail firms or British Rail has been the focus given to longer distance trains over London-orientated services. Longer distance trains will carry passengers paying higher fares and include those who use First Class. Though 70% of all passengers arriving in Central London rail termini are originating within London, much of the revenue railway companies accrue comes from higher yield passengers travelling from further afield and in First Class. As a result rail companies and British Rail have prioritised the needs of Mainline/Long Distance commuters ahead of the suburban 'Metro' networks when it comes to station care or service frequency planning. This has made Metro suburban rail historically London's poor relation compared to the London Underground.

Lack of Identity

Much of London Overground's reputational success amongst passengers in part stems from its London identity, building upon the embedded recognition of the London Transport/TfL brand. 'Cosmetic' qualities are not necessarily superficial because a strong iconic identity often cascades other benefits such as clear information, station and train care and customer service. This provides the foundation for building passenger confidence; passengers are much more likely to value a rail service if they feel it serves them and that they are the priority. Of course, an iconic London brand doesn't prevent complaints or disillusionment; dissatisfaction with Tube overcrowding for example is not vitiated by the recognition factor of TfL's logos.

But the lack of a strong identity amongst Rail operators and British Rail has cultivated an impression of London suburban rail as a rather anonymous network and sense that many areas/stations on such networks are remote or awkward to get to by not being on the Tube Map – a key definition of an area's London identity.

Lack of Integration

TfL has been the driving force behind changes such as contactless payment/touch in/touch out and Oyster across London and beyond. Yet many of these changes were resisted by some rail operators because of fears over revenue loss. An integrated suburban rail network would allow faster moves to rolling out innovations and integrated thinking, so far example allowing TfL to manage frequencies to enable better or faster connections between rail services or indeed with bus or Tube operations.

The Clapham Example

TfL had aspirations to extend the London Overground East London Line to Clapham Junction, a branch which had stations served by the South London Line, a Victoria-London Bridge service via Clapham High Street. TfL used its power to 'decrement' services within Greater London to obtain permission from the DfT to axe the SLL in order to fund the East London Line Extension to Clapham Junction. This created some furore for Clapham commuters who

whilst welcoming the East London Line services east, did not wish to lose direct Victoria services. The media then extensively reported on the 'blame game' as to who was responsible for scrapping the SLL. Had TfL had full control of the entire South London rail network, it would have been able to apply mitigation measures and conversely accountability for decisions over South London rail services in Clapham would have been clearer.

Benefits of TfL Taking Over Suburban Rail

These are comprehensive and include:

A Dedicated London Identity for Rail

A dedicated rail operation for London, aligned with the iconic identity of the TfL/London Transport roundel will be immediately recognisable to Londoners and help turn round perceptions of suburban rail as being anonymous.

Improved Customer Service/Station Care & Information

TfL's London Overground has met dramatically improved station care with staffing. This has removed the perception of Overground stations as unsafe to attracting many more passengers, including women, into the evening so boosting usage & revenue. Excellence in station care has been matched by TfL's historic strength in information design, from improved signage and map enamel displays

Improved Service Frequency

TfL's goal of taking over suburban rail is that it can provide complete focus on the London metro network and hence boost frequencies within existing timetables or by advocating London's needs more strongly with the DfT and ORR when lobbying for more rail paths and slots at railway termini. TfL has a goal of establishing a minimum frequency of 4 trains per hour for all Greater London stations.

Greater Integration with Other Transport Modes

Consequently, improved frequency on suburban rail could obviate the necessity, particularly in South London, for many commuters to take the bus and then crowd onto congested Tube lines like the Northern Line.

Clearer Line of Accountability: The Mayor is Responsible

Concerns around the performance of some rail operators have led to confusion over who is responsible with operators, Network Rail and the Department for Transport having to crisis manage situations. With a TfL takeover, there is a clearer line of accountability operationally and politically with a Mayor of London. To some degree this benefits future DfT Ministers because the political risks etc are transferred to the Mayor of London.

What Clapham Needs From a TfL-run Rail Network

TfL gaining control of the Southeastern Metro network provides it with the opportunity to pool resources to improve matters in Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road Stations. This is crucial as Clapham High Street Station is near Clapham North Tube, which has dangerous levels of overcrowding on its curved narrow island platform where commuters have to wait for 3 or 4 Northern Line trains to pass before trying to cram on (not for nothing is the morning peak known as 'crush hour'). Developing the suburban rail network at Clapham High Street in terms of new routes and higher overall frequency is key to attracting passengers away from Clapham North.

Though the current London Overground East London Line at Clapham High Street did provide an alternative for those passengers heading to Docklands and parts of the City, its disadvantage is that it does not serve Victoria but the far less useful Clapham Junction which is not a practical interchange for Central London journeys because it means backtracking and extended platform changes. Further the East London Line has also meant more people travelling to Clapham High Street from other South London stations in order to then take the Northern Line from Clapham North.

Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road badly need direct Victoria services. Ironically a slew of Victoria Southeastern trains pass through both stations. Both once had four platforms which were reduced because of the competition from the Tram network which itself no longer exists.

With TfL control of Southeastern, we would want to see the following:

1. A rebuild of the outer platforms at both Clapham High Street/Wandsworth Road stations: this would allow some Victoria-Gillingham services to stop at Clapham High Street/Wandsworth Road at peak-times.
2. The operation of the Victoria-Dartford service (which passes inside Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road) to be operated by trains with Selective Door Opening (SDO) so allowing this service to stop at Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street. In combination with the Victoria-Gillingham service listed above, this would allow Clapham High Street/Wandsworth Road to have a 4 trains per hour peak service to Victoria.
3. New West London services direct from Clapham High Street by-passing Clapham Junction to West London up to Willesden Junction. This would create a genuine pan-South London orbital line.
4. Clapham High Street and Wandsworth Road Stations to be made accessible.

TfL Control of Suburban Rail: Risks, Issues & Factors

Reputational/Weight of Expectations

Within London a political campaign across parties has operated to lobby for TfL to gain control of London rail services, citing the perceived inadequacies of other rail operators and conversely the success of London Overground.

However, there is a risk of expectations being raised that simply by passing control to TfL, rail services in London will be revolutionised dramatically and that inherent problems of delays and congestion will disappear.

The London Overground is indeed a success: however it is worth remembering that, for the most part, the London Overground is composed of largely self-contained orbital routes which had been badly neglected; hence they were ripe for dramatic cosmetic and operational improvements. Taking over dense radial networks is far more challenging: TfL will not have 'complete' control because rail paths and platform access at the big termini will still lie with Network Rail, the DfT and ORR; invariably a TfL suburban rail network is going to operate within these limits, requiring trade-offs and compromises: TfL will not be able to provide a Tube-style frequency for suburban rail nor would TfL services become immune from the generic problems that afflict all trains such as signalling issues, engineering overruns, station reconstruction etc. It is notable for example that TfL's takeover of Liverpool Street metro services has been more challenging.

Mitigation:

Whatever rail services TfL take over, they will still remain part of the National Rail network; physical separation can only happen if such services are converted into Tube or Crossrail operations serving Central London in dedicated tunnels and stations hence not conflicting with other services. We strongly believe that, in time, TfL's takeover will significantly benefit passengers, but it is critical to manage expectations, that change will be evolutionary rather than a brave new world of utopia on rails.

Viable Separation

TfL takeover of services depends on having adequate depots & sidings to position fleets. For this reason it is critical that a TfL network is viable and does not over-stretch.

Political Risk

Though TfL is a transport operator, it is controlled by the Mayor of London, with the attendant risk that operational decisions become politicised in terms of perception.

As argued, a TfL rail network would still face the challenges of trying to obtain slots and pathways which are decided centrally. The risk is that an operational issue between TfL and say the DfT or ORR or Network Rail over frequency access to Waterloo could become a proxy political conflict of 'Mayor vs The Government'. An element of this happened over the South London Line/East London Line Extension issue in Clapham High Street.

Mitigation:

London's transport history has never been immune from political conflicts (this was the case with the battles between the GLC and Central Government in the 1980s). What however can mitigate against transport becoming too diverted into politicisation will be the extent to which TfL increases its stakeholder engagement and representation, particularly of voluntary groups.

Stakeholder Engagement

At present rail operators hold 'Meet the Manager' sessions and other stakeholder engagement events, whether with voluntary groups or local government and passenger watchdogs. The risk is that with TfL control there is less incentive to reach out. In the past TfL's stakeholder engagement has come in for criticism as being too weighted towards corporatist relationships with statutory bodies, rather than reaching out.

We feel that this has changed substantially and that TfL does engage very directly with voluntary groups: TfL has attended for example 3 public meetings run by CTUG in Clapham over the past 18 months and has mounted several public stakeholder events: the Access for All showcase in 2014 and the numerous public events for Crossrail 2. Allied to this has been the steady development of on-line consultations.

London Overground via its franchisee LOROL holds periodic stakeholder events with the voluntary advocate grouping which are informative and allow a frank but constructive exchange of views.

But this move towards greater localism in stakeholder engagement must be maintained, whether directly by TfL or whoever it franchises to operate the network. The Rail Community Partnerships with local authorities and voluntary groups which seeks to improve the atmosphere of stations seems an excellent template to build upon. Links between TfL and local Business Improvement Districts (BID) may help fund increased security patrols at night.

Need for Flexible Thinking/ About Strategy And Direction of Travel

One of TfL's approaches to suburban rail is the concept of streamlined regularity of frequency with an ambition all stations have at least 4 trains per hour service, flanked by a view that all services should be 4 trains per hour in peaks.

This is admirable but we feel that at times TfL's focus on frequency has been at the expense of where a service needs to run to. For the majority of rail travellers, radial services direct to Central London Rail termini are key, either because such termini often lie within key employment zones. Our concern is that TfL may be more minded to increase frequencies to interchange stations outside of Central London, like Clapham Junction rather than launch more services to eg Victoria/Waterloo. We feel at times TfL, in an admirable attempt to make suburban rail 'as good as the Tube' does not fully appreciate that, for various reasons, rail is not like a Tube and that conversely, interchanges between suburban rail services do not work for passengers in the same way that changing between Tube lines does. A good example of this is Clapham High Street: when the South London Line service to Victoria was withdrawn, TfL advised taking new East London Line service to Clapham Junction and change onto Southern Trains for Victoria.

In reality such an proposition is unworkable: the East London Line trains terminate at the far side of Clapham Junction, requiring a lengthy walk to the other end of Clapham Junction in order to wait for a Southern Trains service. Overall journey times between Clapham High Street and Victoria are far too long, over three times longer than the old direct South London Line service, hence forcing previous Victoria-bound passengers who used the SLL to take the Northern Line from Clapham North. TfL was reluctant to split the East London Line into a Victoria and Clapham Junction branch because of undermining the four trains per hour frequency, yet the far greater convenience such a move would have created would have attracted more passengers even on a lower frequency. Likewise we feel TfL is reluctant to introduce new links between Clapham High Street and West London which by-pass changing at Clapham Junction precisely because these new services would not be quarter-hourly.

In taking over rail networks TfL will need to be less rigid and consider destination of services to be as important to commuters as frequency per se. There needs to be room in TfL's thinking for innovation and experimentation: rail timetables and the shape of services do not have the fixed permanence of a Tube so it is important TfL adapt to a 'rail' mindset rather than 'rail-as-Tube' myopic approach.

Costs & Fares

TfL will face a large cost for taking over the rail franchises, arising from expanding Oyster/contactless payment (as we argue), providing station staffing at all times and crucially the large replacement of 1980s rolling stock after 2020.

How Far Should TfL's Control of Rail Services Extend?

This one of the most contentious issues encountered whenever devolution of rail services is debated.

On a primary level all Metro 'suburban' services which either run entirely within Greater London, or which substantively run within Greater London and terminate just outside the Greater London border. Examples of the latter include Victoria-Dartford, Victoria-Tattenham Corner, Euston-Watford Junction, Waterloo-Shepperton.

The Issues of Running Rail Services Beyond London: the 'Democratic Deficit'

Hostility to TfL takeover of rail services that extend beyond the Greater London border has been voiced in the past by Kent County Council. The argument coalesces around the 'democratic deficit' by which control of some rail services within a Home Counties area would pass to the Mayor of London for whom Home Counties commuters cannot vote. Whilst this is an anomaly we do not consider this a substantive impediment. Currently rail services in the Home Counties and beyond are decided by Central Government which would include Ministers who are not necessarily directly elected by those areas in any case.

Arguably then, if rail services which mainly serve London were left outside of TfL/Mayor of London control purely because a small element went into the Home Counties, that would create a greater democratic deficit.

TfL and London Transport before it have in any case operated services beyond London: London Underground's Metropolitan and Central Lines operate into Buckinghamshire and Essex respectively, whilst the District Line at one point ran to Windsor and Southend. Until the creation of Greater London in 1965 much of the Tube ran into Surrey and Hertfordshire, the Tube effectively suburbanizing many previous villages that subsequently became part of the conurbation of Greater London. In considering devolution then, we must ask whether we regard London in a very orthodox way of 'Greater London' or whether policy makers perceive London in the prism of the London Economic Zone within the M25. Identity is of course a matter of perception rather than an organic entity but it is tangible nonetheless.

Considering TfL control of rail services within a 'zone' encompassing London and the M25 'ripple' is operationally more logical. There is no reason why TfL should not operate and control services that are substantively suburban even if they run just outside of Greater London.

Beyond The Fringe: The Case for London Country Rail

This leaves the question of 'Regional' services which are neither suburban Metro nor long haul/Mainline but which serve a number of London stations as well as extending deep into the Home Counties. Some examples include Victoria-Gillingham, Waterloo-Reading, Waterloo-Windsor. Waterloo-Reading/Windsor are services heavily used by London commuters as they serve key suburban rail stations such as Richmond, Twickenham, Feltham

and Putney. Yet Reading and Windsor are over 20 miles away from Central London and not conceivably suburban

The creation of Greater London in 1965 generated a more entrenched separation of 'suburban' from 'Home Counties' areas, heralding a greater effort made in suburbs left out of Greater London to be more distinctive with greater facilities underpinning a Surrey/Kent/Sussex/Berkshire identity. Areas like Epsom do not perceive themselves as de facto 'Greater Greater London'. There is a different feel to Ewell compared to North Cheam or Sutton.

We therefore believe that the way to reconcile the need for TfL to have broad control over such services which providing accountability to the Home Counties commuters for whom such services are crucial is to brand them separately. Our proposal is that such services are transferred to a new rail umbrella body 'London Country Rail'. We exclude Regional services which are medium distance but which only serve a very limited number of Greater London stations. Therefore services such as Victoria-Tonbridge, Victoria Sittingbourne, Cannon Street/Charing Cross-Tunbridge Wells, Victoria-East Grinstead, Waterloo-Basingstoke/Farnham/Ascot are excluded.

London Country Rail: Governance & Form

London Country Rail would have a representative on the TfL Board but also have its own Governance structure. It would have representatives from the relevant Country Councils as well as Borough Council bodies: such representatives could be elected councillors or delegate council officers. In addition there could be representatives from the relevant line user groups. This would flank TfL officers who would provide operational input. LCR would be Chaired and Headed by the same TfL Senior Officer with oversight of all TfL Rail operations. Its Governance body would therefore decide on what services and frequencies it would wish to operate when seeking slots and rail paths from the DfT and ORR. Because of the need to harmonize an approach with the TfL Rail planning for each franchise, we recommend that at least one LCR representative from each 'network' would sit on the TfL Rail Board when a common position is being reached on timetable planning. The TfL Rail Board would also have officers overseeing the main Metro networks.

London Country Rail trains would have a separate livery, with a green roundel, green doors and green-styled seating. Such trains would carry the LCR line diagrams whilst also carrying the relevant TfL suburban rail networks maps showing the other services operated by TfL.

Funding for LCR-specific services should be provided by the DfT separately from the block grant to TfL.

Stations outside of Greater London, whether served by TfL/London suburban trains or London Country Rail, would not transfer to TfL control unless the local councils wished for this to happen. Furthermore such stations would continue to be served by longer distance/Mainline services which would not be run by TfL.

Putting It Together: London Suburban Rail and London Country Rail

We now want to set out how our proposals would operate as the key major rail franchises in South London come up for renewal and transfer to TfL.

Whilst London Overground is acceptable as an 'umbrella' brand for the suburban networks, we also argue it is possible to consider more dedicated branding rather than a pan-London Rail brand. TfL operate Liverpool Street-Shenfield services as 'TfL Rail' rather than London Overground. All such suburban Metro services will have a unifying colour scheme of orange roundel and the existing Overground moquette.

In essence when each franchise currently in operation ends, we propose the transfer of all suburban (Metro) networks plus **some** Regional services which fit the criteria of serving a number of London stations. We will now set out how our plans would operate for each major South London rail franchise.

All services run by TfL would be Standard Class-based: First Class is really intended for longer distance/Mainline trains.

Line Identity:

There is potential for suburban services within each network to have some kind of line identity. This cannot follow the same principal of the Tube: many suburban lines overlap and will have several branches, so any 'line' identity will really be a name for clusters of lines. These could be represented at stations on platform maps and in announcements: eg 'This is a Dartford Line service to Cannon Street via Plumstead'

TfL SOUTHEASTERN NETWORK

The Southeastern Network is a complex array of suburban and regional services, running out of several Central London termini. At present the network operates two kinds of rolling stock in South London: the BREL Class 465 Networkers for most outer-suburban and regional services, Class 376 'Suburban' Electrostars which are designed specifically for intensive passenger boarding/alighting. In the event of a TfL takeover, consideration should be given to replacing the Networkers with a newer purpose designed fleet for suburban services. The Regional/Home Counties services taken over by TfL could be served a variant of whatever replacement stock is acquired.

Southeastern Trains

Proposal: to be renamed 'LSE Rail' (LSE denoting London & South Eastern) with the orange London Overground roundel. There would be in addition a London Country Rail (Kent) network for some Regional services. LCR trains would share the same depot and sidings facilities as LSE trains.

‘LSE’ would operate:

All suburban rail (Metro) services in South East London originating out of Victoria/Charing Cross/Cannon Street/Blackfriars but excluding Thameslink. .

These would include Metro services terminating at Dartford and Sevenoaks. Services which run between London Blackfriars and Sevenoaks currently operated by Thameslink would transfer to ‘LSE’.

‘LCR (Kent)’

LCR (Kent) would be operating the following services:

Victoria-Gravesend/Gillingham, Charing Cross-Gravesend/Gillingham.

No services running beyond Gillingham or Sevenoaks would come under LCR or LSE control. Southeastern High Speed HS1 services running to/from St. Pancras would not pass to TfL either.

ALL stations served by LSE and LCR (Kent) services should be Oyster-compatible or allow for contactless payment.

All trains on the TfL Southeastern Network, whether LSE or LCR trains would have maps containing both the LSE and LCR lines.

Line Identities:

‘Orpington Line’ – Bromley South branch - suburban rail services from Victoria to Orpington inclusive via Brixton, West Dulwich, Bromley South

‘Orpington Line’ – Hither Green branch – suburban rail services from Cannon Street/Charing Cross to Orpington via Hither Green. Some of these services continue to Sevenoaks.

“Dartford Line” Victoria branch running to Dartford via Denmark Hill
 Plumstead branch to Dartford from Cannon Street
 Eltham branch running to Dartford from Charing Cross

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‘South London Circle’ – Clockwise/Anti-Clockwise to/from Cannon Street via Sidcup and Plumstead
 Clockwise/Anti-Clockwise to/from Cannon Street via Sidcup and Eltham

Hayes Line – Services from Charing Cross and Cannon Street to Hayes.

Grove Park Shuttle – Grove Park-Bromley North via Sundridge Park

North Medway Line

Woolwich branch: Charing Cross and/or Cannon Street - Gillingham via Charlton, Woolwich Arsenal, Dartford & Gravesend

Denmark Hill branch: Victoria - Gillingham via Denmark Hill and Bromley South

Sidcup branch: Charing Cross-Gillingham via Lee & Dartford

The North Medway Line would be operated by LCR (Kent)

THAMESLINK NETWORK

In many respects Thameslink is the original 'Crossrail' in that it took suburban lines and run them through Central London via tunnels and viaducts rather than terminating. It has both a Mainline, Regional and Metro function, running from Bedford to Brighton and a Metro section running mainly between Sevenoaks to St Albans, the Wimbledon Loop to Luton. The Thameslink 'Metro' service could be separated to TfL control (as it is mainly a suburban orientated operation).

There would be the following lines:

Wimbledon Line: Wimbledon-Luton via Sutton

Sevenoaks Line: Sevenoaks/Orpington to Luton.

Thameslink Metro could have a similar governance structure to London Country Rail

TfL SOUTH CENTRAL NETWORK

This network is currently operated by Southern Trains: it covers services from Victoria and London Bridge to South London, Surrey, Sussex and Kent: in addition Southern also operate trains from Milton Keynes to East Croydon via West London.

We propose that this network is renamed 'London Central Trains' (LCT), with an ancillary LCR (Surrey & Sussex) division.

The network has a mixed fleet for South London Metro and Home Counties services, split between 1980s BREL Class 455 units and newer Bombardier Electrostars, configured differently for longer distance, regional and suburban services.

Post-TfL takeover, there will be a need after 2020 to consider replacement of the BREL Class 455 stock, which is ageing and not suited to fast alighting and boarding required of suburban services. The replacement stock will therefore provide the majority of 'LCT' services, whilst some Bombardier Electrostar trains would be retained to operate 'LCR' services.

LCT would operate:

All suburban rail (Metro) services from Victoria and London Bridge that mainly or entirely serve Greater London.

This would include services running just outside Greater London: Victoria-Epsom Downs, Victoria-Tattenham Corner, Victoria-Caterham, London Bridge-Caterham, London Bridge-Tattenham Corner, London Bridge-Epsom

London Country Rail – LCR (Surrey & Sussex)

LCR (Surrey & Sussex) would operate:

Victoria-Horsham, London Bridge-Guildford, London Bridge-Horsham, Victoria-Epsom/Dorking,

The reason we argue that Victoria-Epsom services become part of LCR rather than LCT is that often such services are operated as part of a network heading on to Dorking and Horsham.

The Milton Keynes-East Croydon service would be rebranded as 'West London Line' and transfer to London Overground rather than 'LCT'

Gatwick Express

We do not propose transferring this to TfL as this service often extends to Brighton.

ALL stations served by LCT and LCR trains should be Oyster-compatible or allow for contactless payment.

All LCT and LCR trains would have maps with the whole TfL South Central network as well as maps showing their respective lines.

Line Identities

Sutton Line: Victoria-Epsom via Cheam
Victoria-Sutton via Gipsy Hill
Victoria-Epsom via Mitcham Junction
Victoria-Epsom Downs via Wallington, West Croydon
London Bridge-Epsom Downs
London Bridge-Epsom

Derby Line: Victoria Branch: Victoria-Caterham/Tattenham Corner
via Streatham Common and Purley

London Bridge Branch: London Bridge to Caterham/Tattenham
Corner via Norwood Junction

South London Line: London Bridge-West Croydon via Peckham Rye
& Crystal Palace
London Bridge-Beckenham Junction

Dorking Line: Victoria-Epsom/Dorking & Horsham

The Dorking Line would be operated by LCR (Surrey) trains.

SOUTH WESTERN NETWORK

This network is operated by South West Trains. Unlike the other major South London rail networks, it serves only one Central London rail terminus – London Waterloo. However, this in no way abstracts from the importance and scale of the services: Waterloo is Britain's busiest railway station.

Indeed, Crossrail 2 is being built in part to take pressure off the Waterloo 'Metro' networks and free up paths. At the time of writing this submission however, timetabling post-Crossrail 2 has not been undertaken so we are working on the basis of existing services.

The South Western network is also distinguished by the fact that it has some key services which have both a 'Metro' and 'Regional' commuter market.

The current fleet within South London is operated by the BREL Class 455 workhorse from the 1980s (with some newer 1990s BREL Class 456 units), newer Siemens Desiro trains and Alstom Class 458 Junipers. The Desiro units are configured for suburban and regional services and hence can be taken into TfL operations quite easily. The BREL units will after 2020 be reaching the end of their economic life and hence will require replacement by trains better designed for the intense boarding/alighting

We propose that the South Western Network is renamed 'London Waterloo Rail' – this can be abbreviated to LWR but we think Waterloo Rail would become the unofficial nick name.

Ancillary to this of course would be the London Country Rail (Waterloo) adjunct.

LWR/Waterloo Rail would operate all suburban metro services running both within Greater London and which extend just outside the Greater London border.

This would include Waterloo-Shepperton and Waterloo-Dorking.

LCR (Waterloo)

This would be the largest London Country Rail network as the South Western lines have many services which are both Metro and Regional in scope. The services that would have the green LCR branding and Governance would be:

Waterloo-Guildford, Waterloo-Weybridge, Waterloo-Windsor & Eton
Riverside, Waterloo-Reading, Waterloo-Woking

All LWR and LCR trains would have maps with the whole TfL South Western network as well as maps showing their respective lines.

Line Identity:

Kingston Loop: Waterloo to Waterloo Clockwise/Anti-Clockwise via Kingston, Twickenham and Richmond.

Hounslow Loop: Waterloo to Waterloo Clockwise/Anti-Clockwise via Brentford, Hounslow, Whitton, Twickenham and Richmond.

Cardinal Line: Waterloo-Hampton Court

Tolworth Line: Waterloo-Chessington South

Shepperton Line: Waterloo-Shepperton

Reading Line: Waterloo-Reading

Windsor Line: Waterloo-Windsor

Surbiton Line: Waterloo-Woking and Waterloo-Guildford

The Reading, Windsor and Surbiton Lines would be operated by London Country Rail (Waterloo) division.

GREAT NORTHERN & CITY NETWORK

The GNC has had a varied history, being at one time part of the Northern Line before redesign in 1976 as part of Moorgate-orientated services to Hertford North

We propose TfL take over all Moorgate GNC services under the brand of 'GNC' with a green TfL roundel. It would have a similar governance structure to London Country Rail as it serves both Home Counties and suburban communities.

The Great Northern and City Line works as whole network line identity

EASTERN NETWORK

TfL has taken over some Liverpool Street suburban rail networks. We propose that these are transferred to 'London Eastern Rail' (LER) run by TfL.

In addition the Liverpool Street/Stratford-Hertford East should transfer to LER.

Line Identity:

Lea Valley Line: Liverpool Street/Stratford-Hertford East

Edmonton Line: Liverpool Street-Cheshunt/Enfield Town

Chingford Line: Liverpool Street-Chingford

Romford Shuttle: Romford-Upminster via Emerson Park

GREAT WESTERN NETWORK

Much of what TfL would have taken over as a 'Great Western Metro' and Heathrow Connect potentially will be largely subsumed by Crossrail.Elizabeth Line

This leaves Paddington-Greenford, which could be operated as a self-contained Elizabeth Line 'Greenford' branch.

CONCLUSION

London's rail network is a kaleidoscope of webbed complexities, reflecting the variety of areas and commuting. Indeed in writing this paper, we have been made aware of how complex it is to try and bring a relatively standardized concept to the rail network.

It is clear that whatever system evolves, there will be anomalies: no 'one size fits all'.

But there is an opportunity for a genuine Greater London Railway network to complete the vision of a Transport for all Londoners. This will be a 10 year project as franchises slowly come up for renewal whilst services themselves may alter and networks change. Time will tell: but whatever happens – the success of this venture can only be founded on the needs of the most important single stakeholder – the passenger.

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