

[REDACTED] to
**Department for Transport /
Transport for London policy document
'A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South
East'**

[REDACTED] is not a transport authority but brings the perspective of a [REDACTED] with a keen interest in public transport provision. The need for modal shift is a key part of supporting the delivery of delivery of the spatial strategy. Part of the western side of the Borough falls within the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation boundary, for which they are the development control authority, and where substantial development is expected to occur. The scales of development across Kent Thameside require enhancements to rail services, as well as at a more local level, as exemplified by Fastrack. The Borough Council has taken a proactive role in transport issues, including HS1 and the creation of the transport interchange at Gravesend Station.

In preparing this response [REDACTED] is building on the comments made by Kent County Council and providing a more geographically focussed response in the context of the North Kent line.

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?

There is a clear case for better integration in the specification of rail services in the wider South East. It is important that this is done in such a way that it represents the interests of the wider area, not just one part of it. Given the fundamental constraints that exist in terms of capacity there will inevitably have to be difficult decisions on allocation of capacity. The needs of outer areas need to be balanced those of inner areas, a local example would be the Gillingham semi-fasts on the North Kent line which if turned into all station stoppers would produce unacceptably long journey times.

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 broad objectives as set out are fine – but there does have to be a dose of reality. Southeastern Metro services are already operating in a highly constrained environment in terms of track capacity at peak times and the overall constraints of the system, for example the numerous flat junctions. Getting the best available service out of what exists is an essential first step, coupled with additional rolling stock and adequate information when disruption occurs. It is important that governance issues are adequately addressed.

Question 3

Do you agree with the proposed governance arrangements?

It is important that the views of transport authorities and planning authorities outside London are taken into account. This implies that the process has to have checks and balances and that it is not just, for example, a mayoral decision. The balance to be achieved here will depend on the geographical extent round London, but services out to Medway for example are not 'Metro' in the narrow sense because of the length of journey involved. There is a disparity in the TfL does have financial involvement, whereas Kent CC or Medway have had very limited or no financial involvement (the Deal HS services being a rare example).

Question 4

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

As noted above it is important that the representation take account of the needs to the area actually being directly affected, but also the needs and requirements of the areas not directly affected but whose services frequently use the same tracks. Structures may need to shift with time, perhaps towards a Transport for South East rather than for London, on the rail side of the equation. Local Planning Authorities are a vital input to the process because of the impact of the development plan on future demand.

Question 5

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

██████████ would agree with Kent County Council red lines, viz:

- (1) that there would be no detrimental effect on Kent's rail fares as a result of devolution;
- (2) that the existing paths for Kent's mainline services would be protected, and that there would be no reduction or diminution of services from Kent by guaranteeing their existing paths;
- (3) that extra capacity on peak Metro services would only be delivered through the lengthening of existing trains, or through the allocation of additional paths where there is spare capacity and there would be no negative impact on longer distance Kent services.

In this cognisance must be taken of the development needs to areas like North Kent, which are not just focussed on trips into central London. As development proceeds services will need to be expanded to meet the expanding demand. There may need to be significant investment to expand capacity, for example extending Crossrail 1 as originally intended. The system also needs to be able to react to developments like

London Paramount, which if it occurs, will need significant revisions to rail services (NKL and HS1) on timescales that may not fit neatly with franchise periods.

Question 6

Are there other outcomes you might expect to see achieved?

Gravesham would welcome the extension to Oystercard to Gravesend, but would note that it is important the ticketing systems become multi-modal and apply to all operators, and do not introduce any obstacles between metro and mainline services.

March 2016