

[REDACTED]

March 2016

Introduction

[REDACTED] welcomes the opportunity to comment on the policy document 'A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South East', published jointly by the Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport for London (TfL). [REDACTED] responses to the questions posed in the policy document are informed by [REDACTED] in respect of the proposed transfer of the south-east London Metro services from the DfT's SouthEastern franchise to a management concession overseen by TfL's London Overground Rail Operations Ltd (LOROL).

[REDACTED] has also been proactive in preparing for the formal DfT public consultation on the new SouthEastern franchise specification, expected to run between June and October 2016. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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?

Yes, [REDACTED] agrees with the principle of partnership working to improve the quality and reliability of rail services across London and the South East. However, in developing this new partnership approach, it will be essential for both DfT and TfL to ensure appropriate representation from the county and unitary transport authorities outside Greater London which have an interest in the provision of rail services.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] is addressed below in response to question 5.

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

It follows that greater reliability can be delivered with such infrastructure improvements, but this will also be dependent on close partnership working with Network Rail and with the relevant train operating companies (TOCs) and LOROL. This would need to include further investment in reliable rolling-stock and additional crews, as well as an increase in the number of station staff, to ensure a presence at stations during operating hours.

One important issue which is not explored in the policy document but which does need to be addressed is the role and authority of county and unitary councils' representation on any Board which would oversee the proposed partnership. Specifically, the document needs to explain how the Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) outside Greater London would be represented, and what level of authority their representatives would have in any decision-making process.

Do you agree with the proposed governance arrangements?

However, given the tight financial settlements by which all local authorities are currently constrained, the more likely use of this provision would be in the specification of service levels within the overall funding available for the franchise award.

The document also states that “the partnership will have a responsibility *to take into account* the views of local authorities...” [my italics]. As stated above in response to question 2, the key issue here is the mechanism by which such views are taken into account by the partnership. [REDACTED] regards representation of local authorities at Board level (or at whatever instrument of governance is adopted) as essential to ensuring that the interests of our county’s rail passengers, and similarly those of other non-London authorities, are properly represented.

Question 4

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

The inclusion of representatives on the Board from the non-London authorities and LEPs could ensure a balanced approach to delivering a better railway for all rail passengers in the London and South East region. Each part of this region has very different needs, but they are overwhelmingly mutually interdependent. For example, an increasing part of the London employment market needs good, reliable, affordable rail services to transport much of its workforce from the Home Counties to their destinations across the West End, City and Docklands areas.

The input from local authorities and LEPs therefore needs to be twofold: first, to ensure appropriate protection for long distance rail services through the suburbs to their London termini; second, to contribute positively to the total rail provision across the region by supporting both DfT and TfL in their plans for enhancing the rail network and improving the travelling experience of passengers.

Question 5

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

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] which will apply to the proposed transfer of the SouthEastern Metro services from the DfT franchise to TfL when, or shortly after, the new SouthEastern franchise commences in June 2018.

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