

18 March 2016

DfT Rail Prospectus Team
By email

Dear Sirs,

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

[REDACTED] has engaged positively with all recent rail consultations affecting operations within [REDACTED] and we welcome the opportunity to comment on the above consultation. We also endorse the [REDACTED] response which was sent to you in February.

As an [REDACTED] with stations that generate approximately 32.4 million passenger journeys each year within [REDACTED] alone, we are keen to ensure that the needs of [REDACTED] and through commuters are met. Our key priorities for rail travel in and through [REDACTED] which have been highlighted in the Crossrail 2 and South West Rail franchise responses, fit well with your proposals for partnership, governance and improved customer service. Our key priorities are:

- Enhancements to network and train capacity
- Improved service level frequency, reliability and passenger experience
- Reductions to level crossing down time through improved signalling
- Better station facilities, accessibility, interchange between modes and cycle parking
- Improved stakeholder liaison and community engagement
- Stronger partnership working to investigate/support longer term plans such as Crossrail 2

[REDACTED] therefore supports the proposals for the new partnership arrangements and associated governance that are set out in the consultation document. However, we have a number of comments in response to the questions posed. Our main concern at this time is the impact of the large number of potential changes to rail services [REDACTED] within the next 10-15 years, and the risk of vital improvements to station accessibility, service frequency and journey reliability being delayed due to the various stages of new operator involvement. Of particular concern are some of the Access for All schemes which are scheduled within the current Network Rail Control Period. Whatever the outcome of this consultation it is important that all parties work to

bring forward schemes to address these long-standing issues as soon as possible, rather than leaving them for the operator of last resort to deal with.

Responses to Consultation Questions

Partnership Approach (Questions 1 and 2)

We agree with the principle of a partnership to improve integration across the rail network. Within [REDACTED] we have [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The responsibilities for each operator and Network Rail across the complex infrastructure network are blurred, and it is often difficult, even at [REDACTED] to get attention to issues such as vandalism, footbridges or graffiti.

It is also hoped that the partnership arrangement might help expedite long-standing demands for increased accessibility [REDACTED] many of which are either not set to be addressed until beyond 2019 or are not currently listed by the operator as a priority. [REDACTED]

Governance and Timing (Questions 3, 4 and 5)

In recent years [REDACTED] have worked hard to build and improve relationships with South West Trains, London Underground, TfL Rail and TfL Buses. However, this has not necessarily resulted in resolution of some of the 'bigger ticket' issues such as Access for All schemes and measures to deal with the community severance and capacity problems arising from the large number of level crossings [REDACTED] together with potential risk to pedestrians and other road users.

The Wessex Route Study published in 2015 recognised that the level crossing constraints in the Richmond, Mortlake and Sheen areas made it impossible to run additional services on this stretch of line, and proposed that any additional capacity should be routed via the Hounslow Loop. With proposals to increase the number of services into London Waterloo by 50% [REDACTED] concerned that this approach is avoiding the need to address the capacity limitations of a key route, and compromising the economic vitality [REDACTED]. We ask that the new governance structure work proactively with Network Rail, the service providers [REDACTED] to develop wider-ranging and more satisfactory solutions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] of past mainline franchise discussions has also brought into question what notice is taken by DfT of local authority views and concerns. [REDACTED] therefore the proposals for greater account to be taken [REDACTED] and those of London Councils and the South London Partnership.

[redacted] welcome the assurances that there will be no detrimental effect on fares, or adverse impact on longer distance services. [redacted]

[redacted] There is an opportunity for joint consideration of fare boundaries to spread the load among lesser-used stations in outer London, and the partnership should take an interest in this issue.

[redacted] We would oppose reductions in the number of fast and semi-fast services, therefore the assurances have been well-received.

Question 6 – other outcomes

[redacted]
[redacted]
In recent years we have seen an increase in community rail groups, seeking to improve the facilities and/or attractiveness of their local stations in order to increase ridership. [redacted]
[redacted]

Conclusion

[redacted] is pleased to be engaged with DfT and TfL, and to support the proposals put forward. We welcome further engagement on the above points as the partnership arrangements are developed, and thank you for the opportunity to respond at this time.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

