

[REDACTED]

Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

[REDACTED]

25 January 2016

cc. Boris Johnson, Mayor of London
Mike Brown, Commissioner of Transport, TfL

Dear Secretary of State,

Challenges of delivering rail devolution in London

[REDACTED], following the announcement last week from the Government and Mayor of London on plans for further devolution of National Rail services in London.

We warmly welcome these proposals, which we believe will significantly benefit rail passengers in London and the South East. [REDACTED] has long advocated devolution, based on the success of the London Overground network to date and our recognition that existing suburban services have consistently failed Londoners. Passengers in London also back this change, with 68 per cent of London rail users [REDACTED] that they would like Transport for London (TfL) to take over control of their train service.

Need for early discussions

We are also acutely aware that this is the start of a new process to arrange the transfer of services to TfL. It is clear that in order to ensure that suburban routes can be effectively devolved to TfL as existing franchises expire, it is imperative that discussions begin as soon as possible between TfL, Department for Transport officials, Network Rail and existing operators.

Separating out suburban routes from the larger South East franchises is a manageable yet complex task. TfL has unparalleled expertise in this field, but the transfer of services can only succeed with full cooperation from all stakeholders.

Any delay in this process risks stalling the delivery of improvements to services, which are badly required. The first priority should be to determine the contractual arrangements for the South Western franchise, which should provide for a transfer to TfL at a suitable point in the near future. The transfer of suburban routes on the South Eastern franchise should also be able to go

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ahead in 2018, although this sizeable task will require dedicated focus within the Department, TfL and Network Rail, beginning now.

Further measures to support devolution

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- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Following the current period of public engagement on your proposals, we would welcome further details of the plans. This includes, specifically, the nature of the partnership between the Department and TfL and its decision-making processes, and your precise timetable for the transfer of suburban routes to TfL control.

Finally, it must also be stressed that significant improvements in these services can only be achieved with investment, for instance in stations, staff, rolling stock and infrastructure. It is therefore vital that TfL has sufficient funds to make necessary investment. We would urge you to discuss funding issues with TfL, the Mayor and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure this can happen.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

■ [REDACTED]