

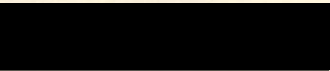


Rail Partnership Engagement
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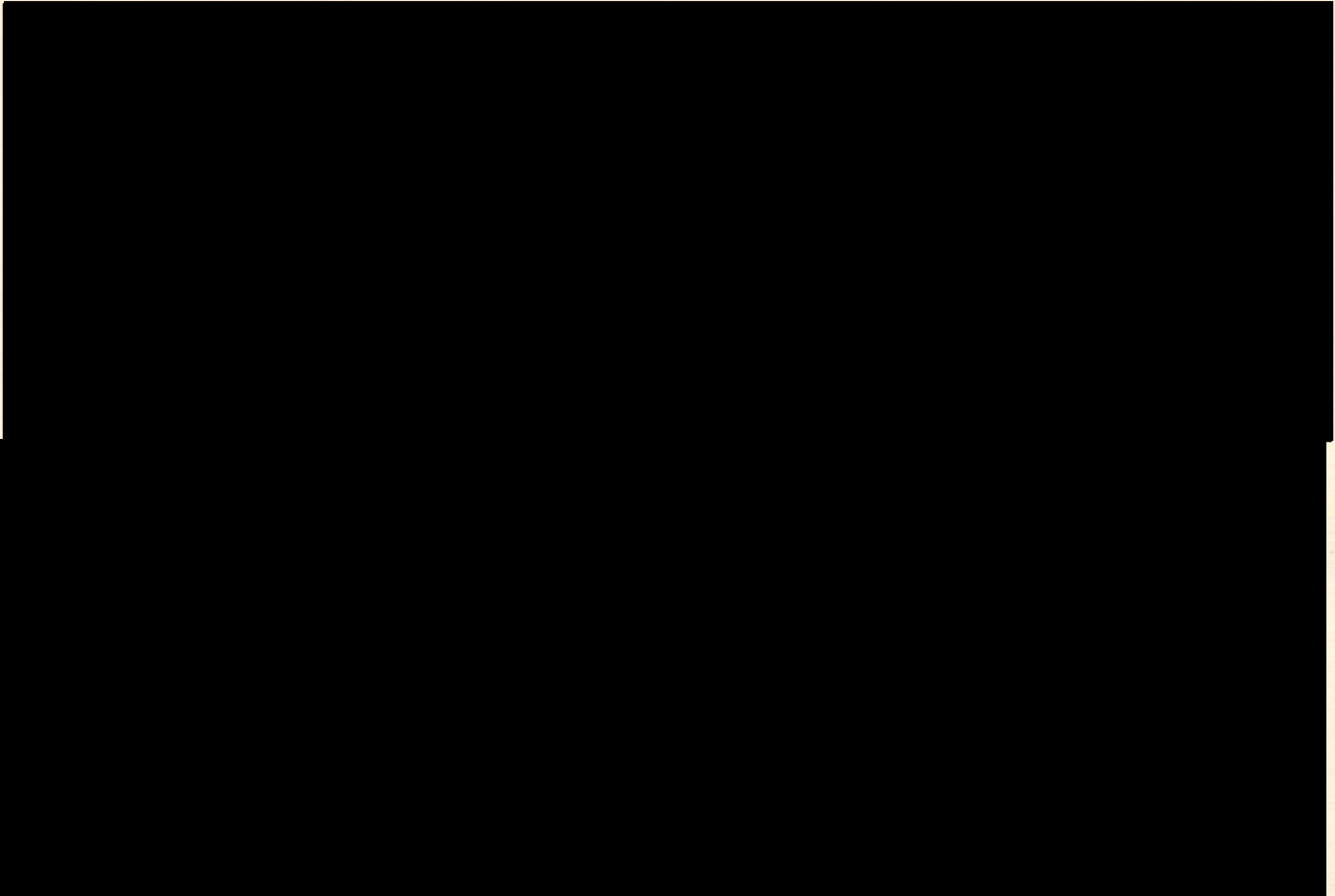
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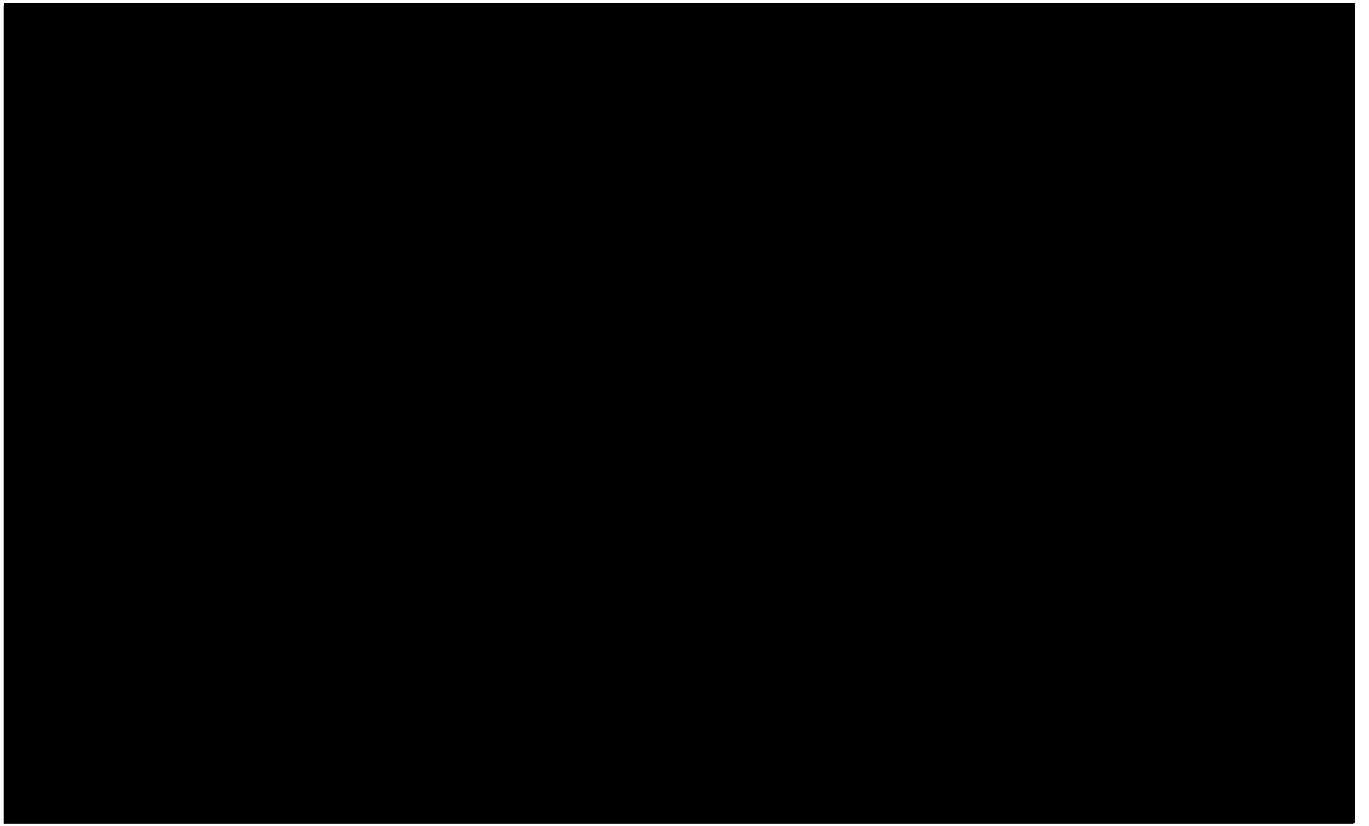
16 March 2016

Dear Sir/ Madam,



consultation response





ANNEX 1: RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

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?

We agree with the principle of a partnership which has the potential to better integrate the specification of rail passenger services in London and across the South East. There is merit in providing more strategic direction to London and South East's rail passenger services.

There would be significant value in more closely aligning the infrastructure network with the passenger services which operate on it. In that respect the prospectus could go further in outlining specific infrastructure proposals.

We are also keen that the voice of the wider South East region in commissioning and in the operation of the rail network is not lost in partnership arrangements skewed towards the needs of the London commuter market. In Surrey we need to ensure that long distance services and orbital rail services are balanced against 'metro-style' suburban services.

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

More frequent services, better interchanges and increases in capacity are needed to meet current capacity constraints as well as the future demands of a burgeoning economy. We also believe that there should be greater reliability for rail passengers and high quality customer service.

It is important to ensure that there is close working with the train operating companies in other franchises and that there is integration between specifications. In Surrey there are multiple franchises and the needs of different routes need to be reconciled.

3. Do you agree with the proposed governance arrangements?

It is important that the wider geographic area that might be impacted upon by these arrangements has a democratically accountable voice. This is broadly speaking what our own devolution proposals are directed to achieving (see below). This would ensure good governance and hold service providers to account.

As noted above we are keen that the needs of the wider South East are balanced against the needs of London. These proposals are an opportunity to strengthen the voice of local authorities in the wider region.

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

Local government has significant roles and responsibilities beyond transport that are relevant to these proposals, for example, in the areas of strategic planning, economy, skills, housing and infrastructure provision. This is particularly relevant to the London Plan and delivery of forecast growth, noting that the forecast population increase may of course not all be delivered within the London boundary.

[REDACTED] we would expect to have a strong role in any governance arrangements.

Recognising how collaborative arrangements on rail franchising should lead to better outcomes for our residents the devolution prospectus for the 3SC (Three Southern Counties) area includes the following proposals:

- the development by local partners of a clearer strategy for rail services in the area for meeting future growth and the need for enhancements and capacity to mitigate overcrowding (building on work that has already been undertaken by the County Councils and the LEPs);
- greater influence over franchise commissioning and operation so that the needs and interests of the area are properly reflected in the specification and then the management of franchises; and
- a co-operation agreement with Network Rail and the Department for Transport on the planning of investment.

Discussions on these points with Government will have a direct impact the proposals in this prospectus.

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

We strongly agree that there should be no detrimental impact on fares and that there should be no adverse impacts on the frequency, journey times or stopping patterns of longer distance services to and from London.

We are keen to protect and enhance the connectivity of the key economic centres in Surrey such as Guildford and Woking. Improved inner suburban connectivity should not be at the expense of long distance services.

We must also understand any commercial impact on the overall operational costs and income of any franchises that might see a reduction in their scope if certain services are 'extracted'. We need to ensure that economies of scale are understood and future investment programmes maintained for the benefit of the wider franchise area.

In a similar vein, we are concerned that proposals to create a separate business unit will add to complexity in franchising and operational arrangements. Safeguards need to be put in place to ensure that key issues such as the management of disruption are seamlessly managed for the benefit of passengers.

6. Are there other outcomes you might expect to see achieved?

We would expect any changes to lead to significant improvements in services and we support ambitious proposals to increase frequency, such as metro-style services on inner suburban lines.

We fully support Crossrail 2 which offers a long term solution to capacity constraints on the South West Main Line. It offers Surrey residents and businesses improved capacity and better connectivity to Central London from inner suburban areas. We expect that the operation of Crossrail 2 would be facilitated by the proposals in the prospectus.