

Mr Philip Willcox
Office of Rail Regulation
1 Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4AN

Monday 5 August 2013

Dear Mr Willcox,

A vital component in supporting a growing, balanced national economic recovery is the ability to provide fast, competitive and modern transport links around the UK. Rail use is soaring having doubled over the last twenty years, and is expected to double again by 2030. More people are now travelling by train than at any time since 1929 on a rail network almost half the size. As such, the need to provide more services and open new locations with a competitive fare structure is crucial.

Growing evidence suggests that new long distance high speed open access rail services, which operate alongside franchised rail operators, receive no taxpayer money and deliver more routes, more passengers, lower fares and high satisfaction ratings. They already operate successfully on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) and there are proposals for new services on the ECML as well as the West Coast Main Line (WCML) to serve the Midlands and the North West.

We welcome the Office for Rail Regulation's (ORR) view that "existing processes for OAOs [Open Access Operators] to run passenger services could be improved to create more opportunities."

The ORR's consultation into open access is an important opportunity to secure more open access services in the interests of the passenger, the railway network and the regions; it can help generate more passengers, higher franchise premiums, greater social mobility, regional inward investment and deliver vital new direct and fast rail services with London.

We look forward to the ORR supporting more open access services, alongside franchises, in its consultation conclusions.

Signed:

**Rt Hon John Redwood MP - Chairman of the Economic Affairs Committee (1922 Committee),
Conservative MP for Wokingham**

**Mr Steve Baker MP - Chairman, Policy Group on Transport, Health and Education (1922
Committee), Conservative MP for Wycombe**

**Mr Martin Vickers MP - Conservative MP for Cleethorpes and Member of Commons Transport
Select Committee**

Mr Nigel Adams MP - Conservative MP for Selby

Mr Andrew Rosindell MP - Conservative MP for Romford

Sir Tony Cunningham MP - Labour MP for Workington

Mr Marcus Jones MP - Conservative MP for Nuneaton

Mr Philip Davies MP - Conservative MP for Shipley

Mr Eric Ollerenshaw MP - Conservative MP for Lancaster and Fleetwood