

Dear Mr. Larkinson,

On behalf of the London Borough of Hackney I offer the following comments, given our particular interest in three of the four London Overground routes and the inner West Anglia routes.

We have nothing but praise for the transformation brought about on the former Silverlink Metro routes since devolution to a TfL concession in November 2007. Its unprecedented success has however created fresh challenges, not least in accommodating rising demand. This is most recently evidenced in the bi-annual Passenger Focus National Rail Passenger Survey published last month, which now shows declining passenger satisfaction with 'sufficient room for all the passengers to sit/stand by route' especially on the Gospel Oak-Barking and Richmond/Clapham Junction-Stratford routes.

This is just one of several indicators justifying the need for another tranche of investment in the infrastructure to support greater capacity through the operation of longer trains on the Overground network, as proposed by TfL and which we wholeheartedly endorse. On the Gospel Oak-Barking line in particular, this capacity increase can most effectively and efficiently be achieved with the operation of an expanded single Overground fleet of electric trains. In parallel is the strategic case for accommodating increased cross-London freight traffic which has no alternative cross-country route, especially with the growth of London Gateway port, and enabling a greater proportion of existing and that increased freight traffic, as electric-hauled. Not to proceed now with electrification of that orbital route would miss a vital transformational opportunity and we urge all parties to ensure instead that it is seized and realised within the next five-year Control Period.

On the inner West Anglia routes we share a close interest with neighbouring Boroughs in increasing capacity on the Stratford-Lea Valley corridor. The committed re-opening of Lea Bridge station is of specific local interest as it will serve a catchment in Hackney. We fully support the proposed infrastructure investment in the Lea Valley line to provide additional capacity by operating a more frequent service. Our experience at both inner West Anglia and London Overground stations is that increased service frequencies disproportionately increase patronage, and projections for Lea Bridge station are that doubling the existing half-hourly service will well more than double its usage. We are working hand-in-glove with neighbouring Boroughs to ensure that maximum value is extracted from the planned investment in the Lea Valley line and would urge Network Rail to step-up its efforts to bring forward a workable and deliverable scheme in the early part of the next Control Period.

Yours sincerely,

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