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Network Rail Strategic Business Plan for England & Wales - January 2013

I am writing to you on behalf of the North London Lead Members' Group which, as part of the North London Strategic Alliance, is the sub-regional transport partnership for North London. The Group includes representatives from the 'core' boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest, as well as Brent, Camden, Hackney, Harrow, Islington and Redbridge who are engaged across 'fuzzy boundaries'.

The challenges of growth in North London are substantial. With 1.9 million people and 1.6 million jobs in 2008, forecasts are for an additional 305,000 people – equivalent to a city the size of Belfast - and 288,000 more jobs in our sub-region by 2026. Transport is a vital dimension in meeting this growth agenda and promoting social and economic inclusion. Much of this growth is highly focused in a number of key sites and corridors, such as the North West London to Luton Corridor (e.g. Brent Cross Cricklewood) and the Upper Lee Valley (e.g. Central Leaside).

However local rail services on the Great Northern and West Anglia routes are some of the worst in the country with low customer satisfaction and poor punctuality. This is in stark contrast to the London Overground network which, with substantial investment under Transport for London's management, is punctual and popular with passengers. For all the lines in the sub region crowding is an ongoing issue which is only getting worse as rail passenger numbers are expected to growth by 36% in London by 2031.

In light of this the Network Rail Strategic Business Plan for England & Wales, which covers the period from 2014 to 2019, is welcome since it recognises that demand on the rail network keeps increasing and that substantial investment is needed to meet this and other demands.

For the West Anglia Routes it is particularly welcome that the wider enhancement programme includes £44m in funding for West Anglia main line capacity increases and £26m for Stevenage and Gordon Hill turnbacks. It is imperative that both of these schemes receive at least this level of funding because they both address existing gaps in the network and allow increases in capacity.

It is also positive that, despite being funded by third party contributions, the reopening of Lea Bridge station is recognised as a significant enhancement.

West Anglia Main Line Capacity Increase (SE022)

This scheme will address the core capacity outputs required by Government by relieving overcrowding and absorbing additional forecast growth on the West Anglia main line by delivering the infrastructure required to increase the frequency of Lea Valley line services to Stratford to four trains per hour.

This capacity is urgently required so that demand for access to / from the Stratford area from along the corridor (which runs through the Upper Lee Valley out to Hertford, Stansted Airport and Cambridge) can be met. For this reason the Group strongly supports at least £44m of Network Rail funding (as outlined in the SBP) being allocated to the West Anglia Main Line Capacity Increase enhancement.

But this investment is just part of the story and partners are working together to secure the remaining funding of around £28m to deliver a scheme which will lock in the benefits of improved capacity and connectivity to Stratford.

A regular four trains per hour train service from the Upper Lee Valley (Angel Road and Northumberland Park stations), via the strategic

