

Caroline Pidgeon AM, Chair of the Transport Committee

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

19 April 2013

Dear Secretary of State

**Devolving suburban rail services to the Mayor of London and TfL**

I am writing, on behalf of the London Assembly's Transport Committee, to urge the Government to devolve control of the inner suburban rail routes currently operated by Southeastern and West Anglia to the Mayor of London and TfL.

We have frequently expressed support for greater control for the Mayor and TfL over suburban rail services. This includes in our response to the Government's consultation on changes to franchise arrangements in October 2010<sup>1</sup> and in our response to the Government's consultation on devolution in rail franchising in June 2012.<sup>2</sup>

In our work we have stressed that TfL's successful operation of London Overground demonstrates the potential value in awarding it control over the Southeastern and West Anglia inner suburban services. London Overground has the highest passenger satisfaction rating of any rail service at 93 per cent. It is so successful that demand has quadrupled from 600,000 passengers a week in 2007 to 2.7 million. Passengers using London Overground benefit from high service frequency and reliability, a consistent fares and ticketing policy, lower levels of crime, cleaner stations and modern rolling-stock. Users of other suburban rail routes in London should be able to experience such benefits too.

We are aware that this proposal would extend control of rail services to some, limited areas over which the Mayor has no direct democratic mandate, but we do not consider this issue insurmountable. TfL and its predecessors have controlled services outside of London without controversy since 1933, e.g. the north-west end of the Metropolitan line to Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, which may provide a model for future devolution. TfL has also proposed that future franchise agreements could give local authorities outside London a role in governing the franchises so they have a say on any changes.

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<sup>1</sup> Response to consultation on rail franchising, 15 October 2010

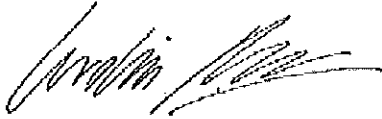
<sup>2</sup> Response to consultation on devolution in rail franchising, 28 June 2012

# LONDON ASSEMBLY

Devolving control of more suburban rail franchises to the Mayor and TfL would be a major improvement to rail management and delivery in the capital. London Overground provides an excellent example for how successful franchise devolution can be managed. We urge the Government to build on this success by providing for the Mayor and TfL to control the Southeastern and West Anglia inner suburban rail services.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**Caroline Pidgeon AM**

Chair of the Transport Committee

Cc: Isabel Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport; and Sir Peter Hendy, Commissioner, TfL