

LONDON ASSEMBLY

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM, Chair of the Transport Committee

London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

28 October 2016

Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ

Dear Chancellor,

Devolving rail services in London

The London Assembly advocates the devolution of suburban National Rail services to TfL as a key part of efforts to improve the quality, reliability and affordability of services for Londoners. We have set out the case for this change in our report, *Devolving rail services to London: Towards a South London Metro*, and in correspondence with the Secretary of State for Transport.

Now that the Mayor of London has formally presented a business case for further devolution to the Government, I am writing to express our continuing support for this proposal. With decisions needed imminently about the renewal of the South Eastern franchise in 2018, I urge you to focus on this as a priority ahead of the Autumn Statement.

The arguments in favour of devolution are strong. There is cross-party consensus on the London Assembly behind this reform, and in a survey conducted by the Transport Committee, devolution to TfL was supported by 68 per cent of London rail passengers. The benefits that could be delivered by devolution include:

- Higher capacity: TfL has invested in longer and more frequent trains on the London Overground, reducing crowding significantly.
- Better reliability: TfL has increased the proportion of trains running on time on the London Overground, enabled by strong performance management and incentives for the operator.
- Integrated fares: By integrating rail services with the fares regime for TfL services, passengers can expect simpler and cheaper fares.
- Better accessibility: TfL would improve station design and increase the number of station staff to allow a turn-up-and-go service for disabled passengers.

- Economic development: As part of the Greater London Authority Group, TfL can coordinate its investment in the rail network with wider strategies for the development of London's economy.
- Stronger accountability: Passengers will know they can hold the Mayor of London directly to account for their rail service.

We have also found support for devolution outside Greater London. In the Committee's work on this issue, we held discussions with elected councillors and passenger representatives from Kent and Surrey. These discussions demonstrated a strong level of support for devolution from those just outside London, who also experience poor standards from current services. Governance arrangements can be put in place to ensure all partners are involved in decision-making.

Although TfL is now operating with greater financial constraints than previously, we remain confident in its ability to invest in services for the benefit of passengers. As set out in its business case, TfL can invest more efficiently in rail projects than franchisees have. Furthermore, TfL's strategic role means it can plan upgrades with the goal of integrating different transport modes.

I look forward to future discussions on this topic, and to hearing further details of the Government's plans in the Autumn Statement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM
Chair, Transport Committee