



Department for
Transport

From the Secretary of State

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Joanne,

Thank you for your letter of 21 July regarding the greater provision of cycle parking especially at or near railway stations. As you know I am keen to see the level of cycling provision at stations improved, alongside improvements to other station facilities, and have recently visited both Holland and Switzerland to look at station facilities abroad. I also receive regular reports from the Cycle Rail Task Force (CRIT) who advise me on better integration for bike and rail journeys. TfL are represented on CRIT.

I have also recently asked Chris Green and Sir Peter Hall to act as 'Station Champions' and provide advice to me on the appropriate level of facilities at various station types and this will include facilities associated with cycling. I expect to receive their report later this year.

At the Transport Times conference on 24 June 2009 I announced that I would make available £5 million over the next two years for transformation projects to improve cycling storage facilities at up to ten major railway stations nationwide, including in London. I have asked the Station Champions to recommend, before the end of the summer, which stations would benefit most from this funding and the sorts of services that would be of most value.

You will also be aware that the recently let South Central franchise includes a requirement for at least 1,500 additional secure cycle spaces across the franchise area. Whilst these are not limited to Greater London, I expect a significant proportion of these to be provided in the capital.

The provision of these spaces will also be informed by the station travel plan programme that will be extended to 30 stations across the South Central area. These plans attempt to highlight ways in which access to stations – be it by foot, cycle, bus or car – can be improved, thus encouraging further use of the rail network. At least 10 station travel plans must be developed at South Central stations in the London area.

I would expect to be able to roll out similar initiatives in future franchise competitions, and officials within the Department will assess the case for such initiatives as part of the next franchise process – Essex Thameside (C2C). This franchise is expected to start in mid 2011.

You will also be aware that the Cycle Rail Task Force recently launched a £4m Cycle Challenge Fund to encourage train operating companies (TOCs) to improve cycle facilities across their network. 12 bids were received from which winners are being selected to receive up to £1m each over the next two years. They have good plans to extend cycle hire around London and extend cycle parking provision at a large number of the commuter stations taking passengers into London which will compliment the £5m fund.

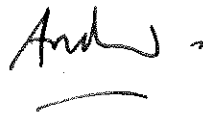
TfL and London local authorities also have a significant role to play here. Train operators often require the help and co-operation of these bodies to implement additional cycle parking, given the space constraints that exist at many stations, especially in urban areas. I would expect to see the Greater London Authority encourage TfL and local authorities to work collaboratively with train operators to improve access to stations, especially by bike. Once the formal announcement of the winning TOCs is made I am sure SW Trains will want to provide TfL with details of their plans at the stations chosen to receive improved cycle facilities. Officials here will be looking to assist the winning TOCs with gaining any necessary approvals from local authorities and Network Rail they may require.

I note your comments regarding giving TfL first refusal on vacant premises available at Greater London stations and exempting Network Rail from the requirement to maximise income.

Network Rail is a private sector, not for dividend company, that is required to improve the income received from its assets. As Secretary of State I am not able, and would not be willing, to instruct a private sector company in this manner. However, at most stations in London, the station buildings are leased by the train operator from Network Rail. Thus it is important that TfL engages with the train operator where it believes that space exists for new or enhanced cycle facilities.

Vacant premises can have a number of roles, not just for cycling, many of which are beneficial to passengers. However, where premises have been vacant for some time and no other commercial venture has been attracted to it, it would be in the interests of the train operator to make that vacant space available for other uses - including cycle facilities at a low rent - and improve the overall attractiveness of the station concerned. However, the case for doing this will differ from station to station, and whilst I would encourage vacant properties to be used, I cannot offer the blanket assurances that you seek.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew', with a horizontal line underneath.

ANDREW ADONIS