

Public Ownership of Rail

Key information

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Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Investigation aims and objectives \(Terms of Reference\)](#)

[Key issues](#)

[Key questions \[Max of 5\]](#)

[Related documents](#)

Introduction

The London Assembly **Transport Committee** is investigating what public ownership of rail would mean for London and plans for the further devolution of rail services.

Investigation aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

The Government introduced the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill 2024-25 on 18 July 2024 to bring franchised passenger rail services into public ownership. In this one-off meeting, the Committee will examine what public ownership of rail would mean for London and scrutinise plans for the further devolution of rail services.

Key issues

- The Labour Government's manifesto committed to renationalising Britain's railways. Following the King's Speech, the Government introduced the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill 2024-25 to fulfil that commitment. The Bill would make provision to bring franchised passenger rail services into public ownership by allowing public sector train operating companies to provide railway services when existing contracts end.

- The Labour Party published *Getting Britain Moving: Labours Plan to Fix Britain's Railways* in April 2024. This sets out details of how it plans to bring train operators under public ownership and establish a new arm's length body: Great British Railways. This Plan also identifies an important role for devolved leaders in “governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network.”
- Successive London Mayors have called for devolution of rail services in London. A key pledge in Sadiq Khan's 2024 Mayoral manifesto was to “work with a Labour government to explore greater devolution of rail and end the misery of non-TfL rail lines letting Londoners down.” In July 2024 the BBC reported that the Mayor has reiterated his support for devolution of suburban rail services to TfL and stated that he will be lobbying for TfL to take control of commuter train services that come into London once the current franchises end.
- The Transport Committee has scrutinised plans for rail reform previously. In February 2022, it published a report *Williams-Shapps: The Committee's response to the Plan for Rail*, which set out two recommendations in relation to further rail devolution to TfL:
 - Recommendation 1: The Committee reiterates its long-standing recommendation that suburban rail services in London should be devolved to TfL as part of the move to Great British Railways. This is to provide a truly integrated, reliable and affordable rail network for Londoners.
 - Recommendation 2: The Committee recommends that, as part of the move to Great British Railways, existing devolved responsibilities, including London Overground, should remain devolved. TfL should retain control over the specification for the rail concessions in London.

Key questions [Max of 5]

1. What is the Mayor doing to make the case for further devolution of rail services in London as the Government brings forward its plans for public ownership of rail?
2. What role should the Mayor of London have in governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network under further devolution?
3. What would public ownership of rail services in London look like in practice and implementation? How could it improve the experience of passengers?
4. What would TfL need from central government to support the devolution of suburban rail services in London?

Related documents

The London Assembly has called on the government to further devolve the running of rail services in London, to ensure Londoners get the most benefit possible from proposals to bring rail back into public ownership.

[Read the Committee's letter to the Minister for Rail in full](#)

[Read the Committee's letter to the Mayor in full](#)

[Read the Minister for Rail's response to the Transport Committee in full](#)

[Read the Deputy Mayor for Transport's response to the Committee](#)

[Back to table of contents](#)