



**Elly Baker AM**  
**Chair of the Transport Committee**

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill CBE  
Minister of State (Minister for Rail)  
(Sent by email)

23 October 2024

Dear Lord Hendy,

I am writing on behalf of the Transport Committee to share its findings from its recent meeting on rail in London.

On 26 September 2024 the Committee held a formal meeting on public ownership of rail and how it can work in London. The meeting focused on rail responsibility in London, the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill 2024-25 and transport devolution in London. The Committee heard from Professor Iain Docherty, Dean for the Institute of Advance Studies at the University of Stirling, as well as Seb Dance, Deputy Mayor for Transport and Geoff Hobbs, Director of Public Transport Service Planning at Transport for London (TfL). The Committee has also received correspondence from RMT, Rail Partners and Campaign for Better Transport regarding public ownership of rail.

The Transport Committee has made clear its long-standing support for further devolution of rail in London, following investigations run between 2020 and 2023.<sup>1 2</sup> The Committee heard further evidence on the benefits of further devolution of rail in its meeting on 26 September which has further convinced us of the merits of devolution of suburban rail services in London. Accordingly,

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<sup>1</sup> GLA, [Transport Now and in the Future](#), February 2020

<sup>2</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Williams-Shapps: The Committee's response to the Plan for Rail](#), February 2022, see also London Assembly Transport Committee, [Government urged to provide timetable for rail reforms](#), March 2023. The GLA Conservatives did not agree to the recommendations relating to further devolution of rail in either of these publications.

the Committee urges the Government to consider how devolution of rail services to the Mayor of London can happen alongside its broader reforms of the rail sector. We believe this should start with an amendment to the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill 2024-25. The Committee notes that while the Bill, as it stands, does not specifically refer to London or TfL, it does affect nine franchises currently running key routes into, and services within, London. The Committee recommends that the Bill should be amended to include a clause that allows passenger railway services to be run by public sector companies owned by an elected public body or Mayoral authority to enable the Mayor and TfL to run services operating into, and within, London.

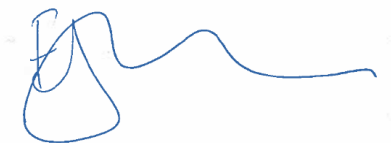
The Committee notes that there are potential complexities around governance and accountability that could arise as a result of further devolution of rail services to London, where services being operated by TfL run beyond London's boundary. The Committee heard from Professor Iain Docherty that there are different possible solutions to this to ensure that people from either side of the metropolitan boundary feel that they are represented and involved in the decision-making process, including a special purpose authority or joint transport board. International models, such as the way regional services around Paris have been organised, could also be drawn upon as examples.<sup>3</sup>

Given these complexities, the Committee recommends that as part of any decisions over rail devolution or as part of negotiations over the end of franchises of rail lines that run through London, the Government conducts early engagement with Londoners. This should include the London Assembly, London boroughs and residents, and local authorities in any regional areas affected regarding the governance and accountability structures that will need to be put in place.

A copy of this letter will be sent to the Mayor and TfL Commissioner.

I would be grateful if you could respond to the Committee in writing by 4 December 2024 copying your response to Eleanor Haigh, the Committee's Senior Policy Adviser ([eleanor.haigh@london.gov.uk](mailto:eleanor.haigh@london.gov.uk)) and Paul Goodchild, the Committee's Clerk ([paul.goodchild@london.gov.uk](mailto:paul.goodchild@london.gov.uk)).

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elly Baker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Elly Baker AM**  
**Chair of the Transport Committee**

Cc:

Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

Andy Lord, TfL Commissioner

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<sup>3</sup> London Assembly Transport Committee, [Agenda Transport Committee – Thursday 26 September 2024 10.00am](#)