

Dear Elly,

Thank you for your letter to the Mayor following the Transport Committee's September meeting on rail in London. I am responding on the Mayor's behalf.

I am pleased that the Committee supports the Mayor's calls for Transport for London (TfL) to be given responsibility for London rail services. TfL has a proven track record of making rail services better. Devolving further responsibilities to TfL would allow us to work towards a fully integrated transport service, with clearer, cheaper fares, transparent management and direct accountability through the Mayor of London.

The Mayor has already had positive engagement with the new Government, including several important discussions around transport delivery in London, while TfL continues to have positive conversations with officials.

I agree there is a need for clear accountability and governance to accompany any further rail devolution to London, and clearer accountability is, of course, one of the reasons the Mayor and I have been making the case for further devolution. I have asked TfL to ensure that it updates the Committee as the Government's rail reforms progress. TfL is also committed to engaging extensively with wider stakeholder groups, including passenger, accessibility and business organisations and local communities, should further services be devolved.

As you note in your letter, TfL rail services are unaffected by the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act 2024. This was confirmed to the Mayor in writing by the then Secretary of State. Similarly, the current consultation on 'a Railway fit for Britain's Future' retains current responsibilities for TfL in devolved services and in responding to the consultation, we will continue to make the case for further devolution.

In terms of appointing a public sector operator for the Elizabeth line and London Overground, TfL currently has the power to provide or secure licensed passenger rail services to or from or within Greater London under the GLA Act 1999 (as amended by the Railways Act 2005). However, London Overground is also the subject of an exemption order that took it out of the then-franchising regime that would otherwise have applied to the contracting out by TfL. The current exemption order would need to be revoked, and most likely a fresh order from the Secretary of State would be required to allow TfL specifically to operate London Overground under the revised regime set out in the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act 2024.

As I noted in my letter of 8 October 2024 in relation to the procurement of new operators for the Elizabeth line and London Overground, the current process needs to continue to ensure that TfL's rail services continue to offer safe, reliable and affordable services to the Committee's constituents. However, we do recognise that the whole rail landscape is changing with the creation of Great British Railways, and we must do what we have always done and evaluate the best way to run our services for Londoners. The procurement process will also ensure we have flexibility if changes are required.

Yours sincerely,

Seb Dance

Deputy Mayor for Transport