

LONDON ASSEMBLY

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Elly Baker AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
(Sent by email)

25 November 2025

Dear Heidi,

TfL's rail devolution plans

TfL has informed the Committee it plans to improve rail services in London by seeking the devolution of Great Northern inner services from Moorgate to Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage.¹ We understand that TfL has submitted a business case to the Department for Transport (DfT) and is seeking your agreement in principle. I am writing on behalf of the London Assembly Transport Committee to lend our support to this proposal.

The Committee has made clear its long-standing support for further devolution of rail in London, having looked at this issue several times in the last five years.^{2 3 4} In April 2025, the Committee wrote to Lord Hendy with our response to the DfT's consultation on a railway fit for Britain's future, in

¹ TfL, [Board meeting agenda papers](#), 11 June 2025, p.227

² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport Now and in the Future](#), 14 February 2020

³ 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](#), 31 March 2023. The City Hall Conservatives did not agree to the recommendations relating to further devolution of rail in either of these publications.

⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [London Assembly calls on the government to further devolve the running of rail services in London](#), 23 October 2024

which we recommended the Government should enable the devolution of suburban services in London to TfL as part of the wider rail reforms.⁵ As the Railways Bill progresses through Parliament, following its introduction in the House of Commons on 5 November,⁶ the Committee believes now is the time for further devolution of rail in London.

National Rail lines play an important role in London's transport mix, but these services are currently under-performing and, as a result, are under-delivering for Londoners. Improving the reliability of stations and services, fare integration and customer information could all deliver for London – and Londoners. Like the devolution of services that has come before, we believe devolution of Great Northern inner services to TfL could enable TfL to make those improvements to these services. We also understand TfL plans to increase the frequency of services on these lines, which could unlock housing delivery and support economic activity in both London and Hertfordshire.⁷

The benefits of devolution of these services to London – and Londoners themselves – are clear.

TfL has proven itself capable under previous rounds of devolution. The London Overground has been a massive success.⁸ Given this record of success, we believe TfL should be given the opportunity to run these services.

I am therefore writing to you to express the Committee's full support for TfL's proposal for the devolution of Great Northern inner services from Moorgate to Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. We hope you can provide TfL with your agreement in principle for its business case by the end of this year.

In the Committee's response to the DfT's consultation on a railway fit for Britain's future we recommended that as part of any decisions over rail devolution of rail lines that run through London, the Government should conduct early engagement with Londoners. As part of the Government's review of this proposal, and of TfL bringing forward detailed plans, there must be early, meaningful and continuous engagement with a broad and diverse range of stakeholders, including the London Assembly, London boroughs and residents.

I would be grateful if you could keep the Committee updated on DfT's decision on the devolution of Great Northern inner services to TfL, including an initial response to this letter by 13 January 2026. Please send your response to Hannah Barlow, Principal Committee Manager and Eleanor Haigh, Senior Policy Adviser at assemblytransport@london.gov.uk.

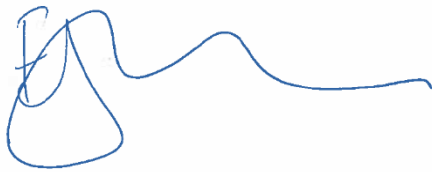
Yours,

⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport Committee response to 'A railway fit for Britain's future' consultation](#), 15 April 2025

⁶ UK Parliament, [Parliamentary Bills: Railways Bill](#), 7 November 2025

⁷ TfL, [Board meeting agenda papers](#), 11 June 2025, p.227

⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Williams-Shapps: The Committee's response to the Plan for Rail](#), February 2022; see also TfL, [London Overground celebrates 10 successful years](#), 10 November 2017; see also Steer, [Is the future orange?](#), 7 August 2014; see also London TravelWatch, [Rail Devolution Scrutiny](#), June 2015

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'E' followed by a series of loops and a long, horizontal tail stroke.

Elly Baker AM
Chair of the Transport Committee