



From the Minister of State
The Rt. Hon. Theresa Villiers MP

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Dear Cllr Worrall

Thank you for your letter of 24 April, enclosing your Council's 'Manifesto for Improved Rail Services'.

The consultation period for the replacement Integrated Kent Franchise will commence later this month. We are running the Thameslink consultation in parallel because of the considerable overlap between the two franchises. We will treat your manifesto as one of the responses. However, I would still welcome any further points you might wish to make once you have seen the consultation.

I should add a little here about the backdrop against which these franchise replacements are taking place. We need to reduce the cost of running the railways. It follows that any proposals for the running of additional services are subject to intense scrutiny about their costs of operation. A sound financial and economic case should be established before new services are added to the network.

The other point to highlight is that there is very little spare capacity left for additional services in peak hours on the congested approaches to the London terminus stations or, in many cases (including Charing Cross and Cannon Street) at the terminus stations themselves. There may well be opportunities to lengthen peak trains in the new franchises. However, there are unlikely to be many, if any, opportunities to run more trains.

Thank you for sending me your manifesto and I look forward to receiving your response to the consultations later in the summer. The link to the consultation section of the Department's website is:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations>

Regards

Theresa

THE RT. HON. THERESA VILLIERS

*Your input on these important issues
is much appreciated.*