

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Mayor's Office

Cllr Mark S Worrall OBE

Leader of the Council

Cllr Nicolas Heslop

Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

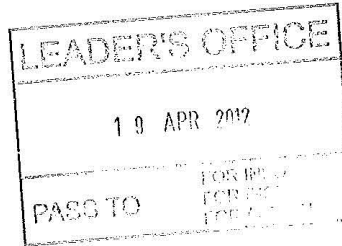
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Date:

16 APR 2012

Dear Cllr Worrall and Cllr Heslop

Rail services in London and the south-east

Thank you for your letter of 28 February about the proposals I set out in January in my 'Rail Vision' publication. I am pleased that my proposals have been the subject of debate at your meetings, and I thank you for inviting me to comment on the concerns that were raised. I appreciate the issues you raise and understand your concerns.

I am proposing that stopping services originating within or, occasionally just outside, the boundary between Greater London and Kent should be transferred to the Mayor of London's responsibility. On the Southeastern network, the services concerned are those starting from Dartford, Hayes, Orpington and Sevenoaks (via Knockholt, but not via Swanley). This means that only three Kent stations (Dartford, Sevenoaks and Dunton Green) would be served by Transport for London (TfL) rail services. The first two would retain regular, fast non-TfL services to London, while the third is served overwhelmingly by stopping services at present anyway.

This, of course, would not be a new situation. London Underground has served towns in Essex, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire since 1933, and London Overground has served Watford since 2007. The TfL Board includes two members specifically appointed to represent and safeguard the interests of users of TfL services who live outside Greater London. In any case, the Mayor and TfL have a strong interest in facilitating travel across the Greater London Authority (GLA) boundary because of the economic benefits these journeys bring to the Capital. TfL has discussed my proposals with representatives of Kent County Council and I am very open to further discussions regarding the means by which neighbouring transport authorities can be consulted on any changes to TfL-contracted rail services where they cross the GLA/Kent boundary.

Let me reassure you that my proposals would have no impact on longer distance services that originate further out in Kent or Sussex and run into central London from stations such as Tonbridge. These services would continue to be operated by a franchisee appointed by the Department for Transport (DfT), with track access rights being allocated by Network Rail and the independent Office for Rail Regulation, just as they are now.

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TfL has no power to add additional stops now, and would have none under my proposals. These decisions would remain, as now, with the franchisee and DfT.

The improvements that TfL management could bring to the transferred routes would enhance the travel experience for hundreds of thousands of passengers and encourage modal shift from private to public transport. My proposal would also save money. An independent report has shown that, by moving to a different form of contracting for Train Operating Companies (TOCs), which is more suitable to the suburban nature of these routes, around £100m could be released over 20 years, which could be ploughed into real service quality improvements instead.

These inner-suburban services are markedly different from longer distance ones in that they are part of London's internal transport network. Grouping longer distance services under a DfT-appointed TOC and London's local stopping services under TfL-appointed TOC allows operators to focus on what they do best rather than having to serve two different travel markets. There is no reason why this should adversely affect capacity or reliability. Rather, the increased accountability should improve operational performance.

Finally, I would like to reassure you regarding fares. Sevenoaks would remain a Southeastern station, exactly as now, and fares from there to London would continue to be set by Southeastern.

I hope that this information has been useful to you, and provides some reassurance that my proposals are made in the spirit of closer working between the Mayor, TfL, the TOCs and adjoining transport authorities. Daniel Moylan, Deputy Chairman of TfL, would be happy to meet with you and discuss my proposals in more detail. Please contact James Tringham, TfL's Corporate Communications Manager for Rail, at jamestringham@tfl.gov.uk or on 020 7918 4139 to set this up.

Thank you again for writing to me.

Yours sincerely



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London

Cc: Rt Hon John Stanley MP
Tracey Crouch MP
Rt Hon Greg Clark MP
Michael Fallon MP