

Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London
Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

25 May 2004

Dear Mr Livingstone,

RE: LONDON'S RAILWAYS

Thank you for your letter of 13 April inviting the South East England Regional Assembly to comment on TfL's proposal to create a London Regional Rail Authority.

The South East England Regional Assembly formally opposes the proposal. It submits that far from helping to improve the planning and operation of the rail network, the proposal would serve only the narrow interests of London to the exclusion of adjoining regions and arguably the rest of the country.

The suggestion that London's rail services should, or even could, be treated as a distinct operation ignores the fact that they exist as part of a complex pattern of services that serve an increasingly diverse pattern of movement between the regions in the wider South East. In particular it ignores the fact that the traditional pattern of commuting is changing to be replaced by a more dynamic and two-way pattern of movement between the regions. We believe the Census results, now becoming available, will graphically demonstrate this fact.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 now places regional planning for the South East on a statutory basis. It requires the Regional Assembly to set out within a Regional Spatial Strategy (including the Regional Transport Strategy) the basis on which land use and transportation planning is to be integrated. The new statutory regional planning framework provides the context within which investment decisions on transport infrastructure, including that related to the development and enhancement of the rail network should be taken and implemented. The proposal put forward by TfL is fundamentally incompatible with such an approach in that it would separate decision making on rail investment and operational planning for a significant part of South East England from the broader spatial and transport planning for the region.

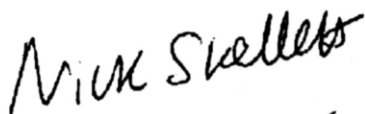
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The significance of the rail system to South East England is well established. The Secretary of State has identified in his proposed modifications to the draft Regional Transport Strategy, that priority should be given to improving rail access to key international gateways, the development of rail services that provide an alternative to orbital rail movements and the enhancement of services to regional hubs where this improves the overall levels of accessibility. The Secretary of State's proposed modifications require these priorities to inform the Strategic Rail Authority's Regional Planning Assessments. The proposal put forward by TfL is fundamentally at variance with these priorities.

The need for efficient movement between South East England and London is acknowledged in the Secretary of State's proposed modifications to the RTS. However, the nature of this movement is more complex than the simplistic representation portrayed by TfL. The South East England Regional Assembly, East of England Regional Assembly and Greater London Authority have a good track record of co-operative working through the Inter-Regional Forum. The three regions are partners in a research programme recently commissioned that will use the most recent census information to examine the nature of cross-regional movements. The output from this work will be used to assist in the development of the respective planning frameworks and associated investment priorities.

The Inter Regional Forum established between the regional authorities provides an appropriate mechanism through which planning issues can be addressed in a way that addresses the aspirations of all three regions whilst ensuring that no one partner has the dominance of the kind that the TfL proposal would create for London. We are very disappointed that this proposal was not first discussed at the Forum, rather than launching it with no prior consultation, which runs contrary to the whole spirit of inter-regional partnership.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Skellett
Chair of the Regional Assembly

c.c	Rt. Hon Alistair Darling	Secretary of State for Transport
	Mark Lambeth	Director of Rail, Department for Transport
	Andy Roberts	Government Office South East
	Richard Bowker	Strategic Rail Authority
	Cllr Keith Mitchell	Chairman South East Regional Planning Committee
	Alan Moore	East of England Regional Assembly
	Sue Seda-Lockett	Chair East of England Regional Assembly
	Ian Brown	Managing Director London Rail
	Pam Alexander	SEEDA