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Dear Carole

CONSULTATION – WEST MIDLANDS, EAST MIDLANDS AND CROSS COUNTRY FRANCHISES

This letter is Transport for London's (TfL's) response to the consultation papers on the West Midlands, East Midlands and Cross Country franchises. The geographical scope of these franchises is wide and this response concentrates on matters relevant to London only. Each franchise is dealt with separately.

West Midlands

Fares & Ticketing

The consultation states that the successful franchisee will be required to accept Oystercards (including prepay) within the London zones. The consultation paper recognises possible further changes to London fares systems by referring to the proposals outlined in the White Paper, *The Future of Rail* and emerging arrangements to rationalise fares and ticketing technology and for the franchisee to be a party to these new arrangements.

TfL expects this obligation to be clearly defined to potential bidders in the Invitation to Tender. TfL believes the franchisee should also be required to retail Oyster products within London and also to commit to introduction of a zonal fares structure to replace the present point to point system. Whilst this is implicit in the consultation paper TfL believes it needs to be defined more explicitly.

The consultation requires the 'London' fares and ticketing obligations for the West Midlands franchise to only extend to 'the London Zones', i.e. between Harrow & Wealdstone and London Euston and not on to Bushey and Watford Junction. TfL draw DfT's attention to the fact that local 'DC' services operated under the London

Rail concession from November 2007 and calling at Bushey and Watford Junction will allow full 'Oyster' ticket availability and, on that route, see an extension of the Zonal system to Watford Junction.

Limiting the 'London' fares and ticketing obligation to the present Zonal boundary (i.e. Harrow & Wealdstone) would result in confusion to passengers using the stations beyond. TfL believes that the requirement for Oyster retailing and the adoption of a zonal fares system should therefore extend to the new Zonal boundary implemented under the London Rail Concession (i.e. Watford Junction) and that the franchise requirements and the forthcoming industry arrangements should take account of this.

Demand Management

On demand management, TfL supports the need for growth to be managed through longer trains and, in some cases, vehicle reconfiguration. TfL's modelling indicates that a full service of 12-car trains will be necessary by 2014 and would expect to see this catered for in the franchise commitment.

TfL does not support 'fares measures' to control growth (as recently evidenced by the restrictions imposed on First Capital Connect services) without full and proper consultation between itself and DfT. The provisions of London franchise agreements relating to fares and service specifications impact materially on TfL's ability to perform its functions and we would expect the DfT to undertake full consultation with us on such matters. The consultation document clearly indicates that a large proportion of the franchise's revenue is generated from London-based operations and we would not wish to see this exploited to the detriment of passengers travelling to and from London. Any fares policy decisions affecting London must have the full agreement of the Mayor and TfL before being set as franchise conditions.

Services/Stations

On services, TfL's longer-term plans envisage the development of Queen's Park as an improved interchange. As well as providing improved connections to new orbital services such an interchange will also provide much better access to the growing Paddington area and provide an alternative West End route to the overcrowded Victoria line. As a result, additional stops at Queen's Park on the present County services will be required and the franchisee should be informed of the possibility of this change during the course of the franchise.

TfL also wish it to be noted that they aspire to improve provision of late-night services from London to be complementary to last Underground train times. Whilst late night trains do operate on the present County services the picture is mixed with discrepancies between weekday services and Saturday night/Sunday morning services. TfL would wish to see continuity of service provision both in times and in station stops. For example it would be desirable to avoid the skip-stop pattern of the last services passing through Bushey to provide a more regular service than the hourly pattern at present in existence from 2251.

Rolling Stock - Marston Vale Line

At present the 'Marston Vale' Bedford – Bletchley line is planned to be resourced from diesel stock presently maintained within the London Rail concession at Willesden. TfL draws DfT's attention to the fact that longer-term plans envisage the London Rail concession becoming an all-electric operation. If that were the case we would expect bidders to consider how they might most effectively resource fleet for these services in the longer term rather than relying on the London Rail Concessionaire. TfL believe that it may be worthwhile considering operation of this line under the East Midlands franchise (a diesel-based franchise) rather than under the West Midlands operation which will be predominantly electric.

Safeguarding of orbital paths to/from West London Line

Although not part of the West Midlands franchise, Southern services from south London to Watford Junction via the West London Line could be enhanced to provide a 30 minute service during the course of the franchise. This would provide valuable connectional opportunities to/from the south and improve access to west London from the West Coast Main Line. The timetable commitment for West Midlands services passing through Watford Junction should be structured to not preclude this development in the longer term.

East Midlands

TfL welcome the limited service improvements to long distance services to/from St. Pancras. It is assumed that such developments accord with the Midland Main Line RUS and do not preclude development of existing First Capital Connect and post Thameslink 2000 services.

TfL also advocate transfer of the Bedford – Bletchley service to East Midlands as described earlier.

Cross Country

The proposals for Cross Country see the withdrawal of the two trains a day each way between Manchester, the West Midlands and Brighton running via Kensington Olympia. Whilst alternatives are stated to be provided by improved First Great Western services between Reading and Gatwick via the North Downs Line (proposed for December 2006) long distance passengers (e.g. to/from Brighton) will be disadvantaged by enforced changes and longer journey times. TfL suggests the effect of this could be mitigated by the following measures:

- a) Enhancing the south London – Clapham Junction - Watford Junction service via the West London Line to a 30 minute frequency; and
- b) Provision of more Clapham Junction stops on fast Brighton and Gatwick services.

Assuming the DfT's 'Railways for All' proposals are implemented, step free access will be available at both Clapham Junction and Watford Junction stations. The enhanced West London Line service could provide improved access to the West Coast high speed services to and from the West Midlands/Manchester thus

mitigating the effect of the service withdrawal by allowing access to faster services yet avoiding the need to travel via congested Underground routes which do not offer step-free access at present. TfL wishes the DfT to consider this proposal and respond with their views.

TfL also draw DfT's attention to the fact that there are alleged to be problems in Network Rail's acceptance of the enhanced service between Reading and Gatwick. If this remains the case there will be a need to consider other options such as enhanced services to Watford as noted above.

This service withdrawal is assessed to require closure proposals for the Reading – Kensington Olympia part of the route, although this is not mentioned in the consultation. TfL would like the DfT to explain how they will be consulting with TfL on these closure proposals and whether this will be through the existing legislation or the new closure proposals which have yet to be enacted.

This completes TfL's comments on the three consultations. Please address any questions on this letter to me on 020-7126-1687 or by email at richardwallace@tfl.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

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