

We are Future Transport London campaigning for sustainable transport solutions for London’s transport problems.

We are in general supportive of the aims for reconstructing Britain’s railways as set out in the document ‘***A Railway Fit for Britain’s Future***’.

Most of the proposals are outside our remit but would like to comment on two.

**1. GOVERNANCE**

Para 6.3 states that GBR ‘***will [work] closely with devolved leaders and local partners, drawing on their experiences and expertise. But it is also vital that devolved governments and Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs) can integrate local railways with other transport modes***’.

We very much support this approach and note Transport for London’s success in integrating rail services with other modes. We would like to see Transport for London’s scope increased so it assumes authority over local national rail services not yet incorporated in the Overground network.

 At the same time we note question 15 which reads: ‘***The government intends that GBR’s statutory duty in relation to devolved leaders should strike a balance between enhancing their role whilst also ensuring that GBR has the appropriate flexibility to direct the national network. Do you agree with this approach?***’

Again we very much agree with this approach. In most cases in London, long distance rail services are separated from local services but there are some lines in which this is not the case and, in the long run, action to separate services may well be necessary. These include West Anglia line out of Liverpool Street and the south-eastern line out of Victoria via Brixton.

**2. FARES**

One of the objectives is that fares should remain affordable ‘***so that prices are kept, wherever possible, at a point that works for both passengers and taxpayers***’.

Obviously we agree with this, but would point out that the general level of fares in Britain is higher than in comparable countries and that the proportion of revenue accruing from the government is less than in comparable countries. We would like to see the savings being made by the establishment of a unified system being directed to fare reductions rather than by reducing taxpayer contribution. We would also like to see a simplified fares structure using the ‘tap in, tap out’ system used successfully in London.

 We also note para 1.17 which says ‘***The Secretary of State will have the power to issue directions and guidance to shape how GBR carries out its functions, enabling the government to drive performance and improvement where appropriate through proportionate and strategic interventions. The powers will be used sparingly, so as not to unduly restrict GBR’s autonomy.***’

We would hope that this will give GBR power to experiment with schemes to attract passengers, such as a national Rail Card or special offers, although it might initially result in lower revenue.

Chris Barker

Chair

Future Transport London