



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Paul Maynard MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

18 July 2016

I write to congratulate you on your recent appointment to the Department for Transport (DfT). Rail delivery is one of the biggest issues in Bromley and Chislehurst – with thousands of constituents commuting to the City on a daily basis – and while I believe there is significant room for improvement in the current provision, I was always grateful for the open and amenable working relationship I enjoyed with your predecessor, something I hope we can maintain.

As you will know, Southeastern as an operator face considerable challenges, reflected in their significant decline in the recent *Transport Focus* satisfaction ratings, which now put them as joint worse in the country. While this can, in part, be attributed to the unavoidable disruption caused by the much needed upgrade work at London Bridge – which I fully appreciate will, in the long-term, help to improve rail reliability in south east London – this does not account for, or excuse, the tangible deterioration in day-to-day services many local residents continue to experience, and which I notice everyday commuting to Westminster.

Many of these problems are deep-rooted and cannot be solved overnight. However, I believe there are a number of steps your Department can take to swiftly improve outcomes for passengers. I would urge you to continue with the reforms to the compensation framework the former Chancellor announced in his Autumn Statement last year, as well as giving serious consideration to the introduction of financial penalties to those franchises, like Southeastern, who consistently fail to meet their target Public Performance Measure (PPM).

Moreover, a timely decision on releasing additional rolling stock to Southeastern would reassure passengers and serve as a practical demonstration that the DfT understands the reality of this problem and is taking steps to address commuters' concerns. Both in responding to a debate I tabled in January, as well as in a one-to-one meeting I had with her in March, the former Minister committed to making a decision as soon as possible on the proposal Southeastern formally submitted earlier this year. Given the public assurances they have received, rail users understandably expect that a solution is brought forward as a matter of urgency, a view I share.

Finally, writing in both a constituency capacity and in my role as co-chair of the APPG for London, I would encourage you in the strongest possible terms to proceed with the proposals



set out in January in the joint rail prospectus with Transport for London (TfL). These plans are, as far as I am aware, universally supported by London MPs from both sides of the House, with the creation of a frequent metro style service offering passengers, on every measure, a vastly improved rail network.

I would be very grateful for your thoughts on these issues, and would welcome an early opportunity to discuss them with you in greater detail, perhaps through the arranging of a roundtable with other MPs whose constituencies are served by Southeastern.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill'.

Bob Neill MP