



Political Update – October 2008

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Crossrail: Consultants

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on consultation fees for the Crossrail project.

Paul Clark: The amount spent by the Department for Transport on financial, legal and technical consultancy fees in support of Crossrail is shown in the following table.

	<i>Amount (£)</i>
2003-04	1,144,920
2004-05	1,780,816
2005-06	2,621,620
2006-07	3,962,625
2007-08	4,416,936
2008-09 (to end September)	2,798,708
Total	16,725,625

The figures include consultancy costs incurred by the Department both in support of the Bill process and on the development of the funding and governance arrangements for the Crossrail project.

Euston Station: Access

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ask (a) the Health and Safety Executive and (b) the Equality and Human Rights Commission to inspect Euston station to ensure it complies with the relevant legislation in respect of access for the (i) disabled and (ii) parents with pushchairs from (A) car parks, (B) taxi ranks and (C) London Underground to the station and train platforms.

Paul Clark: I am aware that the Association of Train Operating Companies is currently carrying out a programme of access audits of all stations on the network, the results of which will be made available in due course.

Inspection and enforcement of safety legislation on the operational railway is the on-going responsibility of HM Railway Inspectorate, which is overseen by the Office of the Rail Regulator, as set out in the Railways Act 2005. HMRI determine when visits to assess compliance are necessary.

Any works at stations must also comply with the standards in the DfT publication: "Accessible Train and Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice". Assessing compliance with these standards for new or existing station infrastructure is not a role of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when Euston station was last inspected to ensure it meets disability discrimination legislation in respect of access from (a) car parks and (b) taxi ranks to (i) the station concourse and (ii) train platforms; and if he will make a statement about the adequacy of the station's compliance with such legislation. [226594]

Paul Clark: All train and station operators self-certify to ensure that they meet the provisions of disability-related legislation and appropriate infrastructure requirements for accessibility. They must additionally produce a Disabled People's Protection Policy, agreed by the Secretary of State, which sets out the level of service and facilities at all stations that they operate, and which is updated regularly.

Network Rail's Disabled People's Protection Policy was last updated in June 2008 and is reviewed regularly. The current Disabled People's Protection Policy sets out arrangements for assisting passengers with reduced mobility to access the station from the car park and taxi rank.

Inside the station building, level access is possible to all platforms, and staff assistance is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Modern facilities include an accessible toilet, induction loops and mobility vehicles which are available on request. As such, people with reduced mobility should be able to obtain any assistance that they require in order to use the station.

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure that access to all parts of Euston station is improved for (a) the elderly and disabled, (b) parents with pushchairs and (c) travellers with large amounts of luggage. [226602]

Paul Clark: This is an operational matter for Network Rail who own and operate the station. Station operators are required by part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to make reasonable physical adjustments so that disabled people can access their services.

Network Rail are responding to this duty and are currently developing plans to install a lift link between the station concourse, taxi rank, car park and Underground ticket hall to improve access for passengers with reduced mobility. This facility is planned for completion in October 2009. In addition, Network Rail have confirmed that a comprehensive programme of refurbishments is being considered for 2015-16.

Railways

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what light rail schemes are scheduled to open in the next two years.

Paul Clark: No new light rail schemes are scheduled to open in the next two years. However, during this period work will be continuing on a project to refurbish and upgrade the Manchester Metrolink system. This will help to ensure improved journeys for passengers on the network. The Department is providing £58 million towards the £102 million costs of this project.

Furthermore, in May 2008 the Department approved £244.3 million towards a scheme to extend the Metrolink system to Rochdale, Oldham and Chorlton. These lines will be operational by 2012.

We are also working closely with the promoters of the Nottingham Express Transit in regard to their proposals to extend the system. If the project is granted full approval, these new lines could be open to the public in 2013.

Railways: Gloucestershire

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations (a) Network Rail and (b) First Great Western have made to the Office of the Rail Regulator on the issue of the Kemble to Swindon redoubling. [226646]

Paul Clark: Network Rail and First Great Western made representations in their draft determinations responses. These have been published on the Office of Rail Regulation's website at:

Network Rail response:

<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/DDresp-nr-040908.pdf>

First Great Western response:

<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/pdf/DDenS-fgw-310708.pdf>

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations the Office of the Rail Regulator has received from (a) Gloucestershire county council, (b) Gloucestershire First and (c) the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce on the issue of the Kemble to Swindon redoubling.

Paul Clark: The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) received responses to the draft determinations from Gloucestershire county council (two responses) and Gloucestershire First (two responses). ORR did not receive a separate reply from

the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce; however, their comments were included in one of Gloucestershire First's responses to ORR. The responses have been published on the ORR website at:

<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.9204>.

Railways: Lancashire

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration he has given to promoting the construction of the Todmorden Curve to cut train journey times between Manchester and Burnley. [226705]

Paul Clark: My noble Friend, the Minister of State for Transport, Lord Adonis met my hon. Friend, the Member for Burnley and Padiham (Kitty Ussher) on 9 October to discuss the proposal for a direct service between Burnley and Manchester. It would be for Lancashire county council, as transport authority, to consider the best way of achieving this, in discussion with Network Rail and Northern Rail.

West Coast Railway Line

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects Network Rail to end disruption to train journeys from London Euston to Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester at weekends during the modernisation of the West Coast Main Line. [226600]

Paul Clark: Network Rail has advised that the seven day railway will start with the new timetable in December. However, after the modernisation programme has finished, there will still be a continuing need to maintain and renew assets. This will take place late on Saturday evenings, on Sunday mornings and on Bank Holiday weekends.

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects rail journey times from London Euston to Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester on (a) Saturdays and (b) Sundays to run as frequently as the weekday service. [226601]

Paul Clark: The weekday off-peak service pattern and journey times from Euston to Stoke and Manchester will apply to Saturdays, and from 12.00 on Sundays, when the new timetable commences in December.

Railways: Manpower

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of his Department's staff are working on (a) high speed rail development and (b) the

reopening of former railway lines and stations as part of their official duties. [226743]

Paul Clark: The Department for Transport's approach to developing transport strategy, set out in the October 2007 White Paper "Towards a Sustainable Transport System", proceeds from the identification of transport challenges and specific problems to be resolved, rather than by developing specific potential investment options.

The Department's rail network strategy division is working on this basis, and Network Rail has been invited to examine options for supporting further growth in the longer term, which might include new lines. Network Rail's new lines study is due to be completed in summer 2009.

Crossrail Line: Finance

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial commitments have been made by the Government as part of the Crossrail scheme for each of the next five years. [226260]

Paul Clark: Over the next five years, the Department for Transport and Transport for London (as joint sponsors of the Crossrail Project) will make total funding contributions of £5.7 billion for Crossrail. Further detail is provided in the following table.

<i>£ million</i>		
<i>Year commencing 1 April</i>	<i>DfT committed funding</i>	<i>TfL committed funding</i>
2008	—	500
2009	172	522
2010	220	832
2011	622	788
2012	1,250	799
Total	2,264	3,441

Railways: Exhaust Emissions

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to her statement on 22 April 2008, *Official Report*, column 1184, that a high-speed rail service emits approximately double the carbon dioxide of a lower-speed rail service, (1) if she will place in the Library her Department's analysis of the carbon dioxide emissions from high-speed rail and lower-speed rail; [217517]

(2) how much her Department spent on analysing the carbon dioxide emissions from high-speed and lower-speed rail in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many staff worked on that analysis; [217518]

(3) what estimate she has made of the volume of carbon dioxide emitted per mile travelled by (a) a high speed train, (b) a lower speed train and (c) an average aeroplane. [217519]

Paul Clark: The 2007 Rail White Paper estimated that carbon emissions per passenger for a journey between London and Edinburgh would be approximately 7 kg for conventional speed rail, 14 kg for high speed rail and 26 kg for aviation.

This analysis was informed by Professor Roger Kemp's work on the environmental impact of high speed rail and his report for the Rail Safety and Standards Board on traction energy metrics. Further information on the assumptions underpinning these estimates can be found on the Department for Transport's website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/whitepapercm7176/>

Professor Kemp's energy metrics report can be found at:

http://www.rssb.co.uk/pdf/reports/research/T618_traction-energy-metrics_final.pdf.

Departmental staff have analysed the carbon impacts of high speed rail but within the context of their wider environmental and rail responsibilities. Consequently, the Department is unable to provide the information on staff and resources as requested.

In March this year, the Secretary of State invited Network Rail to examine options for supporting further growth in the longer term, which might include new conventional and high speed lines. As part of this work, further consideration will be given to the relative carbon performance of higher and lower speed rail options.

Crossrail: Construction

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what disruption to roads he expects to take place during the construction of Crossrail; and if he will make a statement.

Paul Clark: The likely construction impacts of Crossrail are described in the environmental statement (ES) for the project that accompanied the Crossrail Bill and was considered during the lengthy parliamentary scrutiny of the Bill.

Construction of Crossrail will be subject to the environmental minimum requirements for the project (including a construction code and the many undertakings and assurances given by the Secretary of State during the Bill's passage) as well as the safeguards in the Act itself, to ensure that the impacts of the project do not exceed what has been assessed and described in the ES. Many of the detailed arrangements for how construction will affect roads and traffic will be subject to approval of the relevant local highways authority and consultation within traffic liaison groups which will be established along the whole route.

Railway Network

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to open new train lines in England. [225606]

Paul Clark: The Government's immediate priority is increasing capacity on the existing rail network and £10 billion will be invested from 2009 to 2014 on measures to bring this about.

In March 2008, the Secretary of State for Transport invited Network Rail to examine options for supporting further growth in the longer term, which might include new lines. Network Rail's new lines study is due to be completed in summer 2009.

Railways: Contracts

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which train operators have requested a renegotiation of their franchise agreement in the last 12 months. [227129]

Paul Clark: None. The Department for Transport has consistently stated that it will not renegotiate franchises.

Railways: Fares

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to repeat the 2003 Future Fares Policy Consultation to review the Strategic Rail Authority's fare structures. [225703]

Paul Clark: In our White Paper "Delivering a Sustainable Railway" published in July 2007 we confirmed the policy of capping most regulated fares to RPI plus 1 per cent. until 2014.

But we are never complacent about issues that affect rail passengers. The previous Secretary of State for Transport asked Passenger Focus to address how well the current system of fares and ticketing meets passenger expectations

so that we can consider options for further improvements. That process is under way.

Railways: Milton Keynes

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the upgrade of Milton Keynes Central train station is due to be completed; and at what cost. [226473]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 13 October 2008*]: The upgrade of Milton Keynes Central Station, including the track and associated signalling, is due to be completed over the Christmas and new year period 2008.

The total cost is some £120 million.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many extra (a) Virgin and (b) London Midland trains will stop at Milton Keynes Central as a result of the platform upgrade. [226538]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 13 October 2008*]: With the introduction of new timetables on the West Coast Main Line, there will be an additional hourly service, provided by Virgin Trains, between London and Chester, which will call at Milton Keynes Central.

London Midland will also provide a new hourly service between London and Crewe, via Northampton, also calling at Milton Keynes Central.

Southern is planning to extend their hourly West London Line service, presently terminating at Watford Junction, to Milton Keynes Central.

Currently these changes are proposed to be phased in between early December 2008 and late January 2009.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what (a) potential and (b) actual capacity for commuters has been created at Milton Keynes Central train station by the recent works. [226539]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 13 October 2008*]: An opportunity exists to increase commuter services between Milton Keynes Central and London as a result of the work now being completed on the West Coast Main Line. Up to two such trains an hour could operate on the fast lines, if additional 125 mile/hour trains are available and demand increases to justify such an investment.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what capacity for non-stopping trains will be created at Milton Keynes Central by the recent works; and how many trains per hour this represents. [226540]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 13 October 2008*]: The new layout at Milton Keynes Central station, with an extra line and additional platform capacity, provides for the operation of up to four additional fast trains an hour.

Railways: Public Appointments

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to appoint a Chairman for the Office of Rail Regulator. [226630]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 13 October 2008*]: The process for appointing a new chairman of the Office of Rail Regulation is already under way. It is hoped that the new chairman could be in place by July 2009, with a transition period beginning in April 2009.

Railways: Students

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money the Government provided for scholar discounts for train tickets for young people attending schools in Cambridge via First Capital Connect and WAGN in each of the last three years. [223942]

Paul Clark: The Government have not provided any funding to either First Capital Connect or WAGN in any of the last three years in relation to discounted scholar train tickets.

Rolling Stock

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy, when assessing the benefits of new railway rolling stock, to base such an assessment on the operational life of the stock rather than the length of franchise. [226688]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 13 October 2008*]: When taking a decision to procure or require the procurement of new rolling stock, the Department for Transport's policy is to assess the life-time costs and benefits of that rolling stock. It is also open to the Department to take into account the life-time benefits of bidder proposals when appropriate in franchise competitions, for instance when considering the purchase of options.

Trains

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many train carriages have been refurbished in the last five years. [225608]

Paul Clark: Rolling stock goes through major overhaul cycles approximately every six years, which would mean the majority of rolling stock will have had

some form of modernisation in the last five years. The specific information requested is not collected by the Department for Transport.

London to Midlands Railway Line

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent steps the Government has taken to improve railway services between Coventry and (a) London and (b) Birmingham. [224981]

Paul Clark: The introduction of new timetables from December 2008, on the West Coast Main Line, will bring further improvements to train services between Coventry, Birmingham and London.

The Virgin Trains Pendolino operated London service will increase from a half hourly frequency, to one every 20 minutes. This will be provided throughout the week. The journey time will be one hour, compared with one hour 11 minutes in 2004, before the first stages of modernising the route were implemented.

The service provided between Coventry and Birmingham by London Midland is being increased to three trains an hour. Additional new rolling stock is also being introduced by this operator, of similar design to the modern Desiro units already in operation on the semi fast services between Birmingham, Coventry and Northampton.

London Underground

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions his Department has had with (a) the Mayor of London and (b) Transport for London over future funding of the London Underground; and if he will make a statement. [226127]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The then Secretary of State (Ruth Kelly) made a written statement to the House on the future funding of London transport as a whole on 6 February 2008, *Official Report*, columns 74-75WS, the position of which remains unchanged. Departmental officials continue to hold regular meetings with Transport for London (TfL) to monitor spending and pressures across the TfL estate, including London Underground.

Railways: Infrastructure

Bill Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Government's policy is on encouraging separation of train and station operations from infrastructure maintenance and renewals. [223867]

Paul Clark: It is generally accepted that the structures put in place at privatisation were flawed. The 2004 Rail White Paper and 2005 Railways Act set

out a new streamlined structure, which meets the requirements of the European Commission's First Rail Package, to deliver safer, more reliable railways that work efficiently. The new arrangements provide much-needed stability for the industry as a whole.

Tyne and Wear Metro

Bill Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if she will publish business cases submitted by the Nexus PTE in the last two years in respect of the future of the Tyne and Wear Metro. [223868]

Paul Clark: Nexus (the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive) has submitted two business cases to the Department for Transport in the last two years in respect of the Tyne and Wear Metro.

The Metro Reinvigoration Business Case was submitted to the Department in January 2007. This document is on Nexus' website at:

<http://www.nexus.org.uk/wps/wcm/resources/file/eb1bd00c5571bc6/MetroReinvigorationBusinessCaseFinal110307.pdf>

with appendices at:

<http://www.nexus.org.uk/wps/wcm/resources/file/eb1bd10c55796e2/Appendices140207.pdf>

The Business Case for the Ticketing and Gating Scheme was submitted in March 2007. This is available on Nexus' website at:

<http://www.nexus.org.uk/wps/wcm/resources/file/eb7cb04aedbf98e/Metro.pdf>

Bill Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment has been made in respect of value for money for the future of the Tyne and Wear Metro in respect of (a) keeping the Metro as an integrated railway and (b) separating train and station operations from infrastructure maintenance and renewals. [223869]

Paul Clark: The Department for Transport believes that the funding it intends to provide for the renewal of major capital assets on the Tyne and Wear Metro represents value for money as a capital investment. The Department believes that this value for money is most likely to be secured by retaining the capital infrastructure of the system within public ownership and under the direct control of Nexus, the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive. However the Department believes that a market test, such as Nexus are intending to undertake, for the running of train services and station

operations, should provide an effective way to secure best value for money in the ongoing operation of the system.

Bill Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether tendering of Tyne and Wear Metro operations is a condition of future funding. [223870]

Paul Clark: The Department for Transport announced, on 31 July 2008, its intention to provide funding to Nexus (the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive) to support a programme of asset renewal on the Tyne and Wear Metro and the continued operation of the system until 2019.

The funding was approved on the basis of Nexus' procurement plans, which involved a proposal to tender for the operation of the system. Final approval of the funding will be considered only once the tender process has been completed to the Department's satisfaction.

Potters Bar Investigation Board

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the operation of the Potters Bar Investigation Board. [225146]

Paul Clark: The Potters Bar Investigation Board (PBIB) was appointed by the Health and Safety Commission following the fatal derailment at Potters Bar on 10 May 2002. Following the closure of all the PBIB's recommendations, the Office of Rail Regulation's Board reviewed the work of the PBIB this summer and agreed to its disbandment.

Railway Stations: Greater London

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations she has received on the proposed closure of the South London Line between London Bridge and London Victoria stations. [223730]

Paul Clark: There is no plan to close the South London Line. However, during the period of construction works at London Bridge to deliver the Thameslink Project, it is unlikely to be possible to operate direct trains between Denmark Hill and London Bridge.

Railways: Construction

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate she has made of the average cost per mile of new high speed rail track construction. [209070]

Paul Clark: According to the 2003 Strategic Rail Authority report on high-speed rail, the average cost for the channel tunnel rail link (CTRL) section one was £19

million per route-kilometre, although this excludes some major cost items associated with station works and sunk costs. The report considered that section of the CTRL characteristic of a high-speed line extending north from London. If costs for CTRL sections one and two are included, the average cost of the CTRL was £48 million per route-kilometre including tunnelling.

Precise costs vary depending on a number of factors including the route, whether construction is on a disused railway alignment or built on green fields and the need for major works such as tunnelling. Costs of operation and maintenance must also be considered. Average costs do not therefore tell the whole story, but recent work for the Department for Transport suggested a new double track high-speed rail line might cost £12-16 million per route-kilometre.

Network Rail recently announced a strategic review of the case for new rail lines. The study is expected to be complete next summer.

South West Trains: Tickets

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if she will make it her policy to oppose the plans by South West Trains to reduce ticket office opening hours at 114 stations, following the August 2008 report from Passenger Focus; and if she will make a statement. [223763]

Paul Clark: The procedures for making changes to ticket office opening hours are set down in the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA). The TSA permits operators to make changes to the opening hours of their ticket offices as long as the appropriate specified criteria are met.

If objections are raised and not resolved, the TSA provides for an arbitration process to be followed. This can include referral by the train operating company to the Secretary of State for Transport for a decision. It would therefore be inappropriate for the Secretary of State to comment on the proposed changes at this stage.

East London Line: Finance

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when she plans to authorise the release of the funds for the phase 2 extension of the East London Line. [224181]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The East London Line extension is a TfL project. At the end of last year we agreed a generous a long term funding settlement with Transport for London (TfL). This gives TfL and London's Mayor the ability to set their own priorities and deliver a wide range of improvements to London's transport network. In this context, it is a matter for TfL and the Mayor to decide on the funding of this £100 million phase 2 extension of the East London line.

Railway Network: Electrification

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of the rail network was electrified in (a) 1978, (b) 1988, (c) 1998 and (d) 2008; what plans exist to electrify further sections; and on which of these sections electrification has commenced. [228028]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 17 October 2008*]: The following table provides the information requested:

	<i>Percentage of total route kilometres open to passenger traffic that are electrified</i>
1978	26
1988-89	31
1998-99	34
2006-07 ⁽¹⁾	37

⁽¹⁾ Latest year for which figures are available. *Source:* Transport Statistics Great Britain 2007.

The Department for Transport is working closely with the rail industry to examine the case for extending the electrified network.

Railways

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the net change in the number of train carriages on the rail network has been since 1 May 1997, allowing for the removal of Mk 1 trains and other time-expired vehicles, in (a) absolute and (b) percentage terms; and what the change in passenger numbers has been over the same period. [226565]

Paul Clark: The Department for Transport does not hold the detailed information.

In May 1995 the number of vehicles on lease was 10,401 and, as of today, the number on lease on the Rail Network is around 11,150, an increase of around 7.2 per cent. It should also be noted that a further 1,300 vehicles will be delivered as part of the High Level Output Specification (HLOS), of which 423 have already been ordered. In 1997-98 there were 846 million passenger journeys and by 2007-08 this had risen to 1,232 million.

Although the numbers may seem disproportionate in percentage terms it should be noted that off peak traffic and non—London traffic has grown substantially faster

than London peak traffic; hence, a large proportion of the extra journeys are being made on what were previously under utilised trains.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has a comparator to assess the relative value for money of private and public operation of railway passenger services. [227147]

Paul Clark: The Government's policy is that rail passenger services are provided by the private sector through competition to operate publicly-specified franchises. There are no public operations which could provide the yardstick for a comparator.

Railways: Contracts

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which train operators have requested a time extension for payments of the premia due under their franchise agreements in the last 12 months. [227127]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 14 October 2008*]: No operators have requested a time extension for payments of premia due in the last 12 months.

Railways: Fares

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to ensure the implementation of fair and competitive pricing structures by train operating companies. [225701]

Paul Clark: Train operators have been encouraged to implement the simplified fares structure set out in the 2007 White Paper, reducing the number of principal fare types to three types—Anytime, Off-peak and Advance, with standard terms and conditions for each category.

Train Operating Companies continue to set fares, where regulated, within the Policy of limiting overall increases to RPI + 1 per cent., in all but two cases. The Southeastern franchise, and the West Yorkshire part of the Northern franchise, are subject to an overall regulatory cap of RPI + 3 per cent. to reflect investment by the franchisees.

Unregulated fares are set commercially and are a matter for each Train Operating Company.

Railways: Infrastructure

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what European Union law governs whether train and station operations should be separated from rail infrastructure maintenance and renewals. [227148]

Paul Clark: Directive 91/440/EEC requires separation of accounting between infrastructure management business and the provision of transport services, and prohibits the transfer of public funds between these functions. It allows member states to achieve this through the organisation of distinct divisions within a single entity or by requiring the infrastructure to be managed by a separate entity.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department has made an assessment of the value for money of (a) integrating rail infrastructure and operations in the public sector and (b) separating train and station operations from rail infrastructure maintenance and renewals. [227149]

Paul Clark: No such formal assessment has been made. It is generally accepted that the structures put in place at privatisation were flawed. The 2004 Rail White Paper and 2005 Railways Act set out a new streamlined structure, specified by the Government and delivered by the private sector, under which rail investment is based on affordability and value for money as determined by the independent Office of Rail Regulation.

This structure provides coherent and effective management and delivers safe, reliable railways that work efficiently. The new arrangements provide much-needed stability for the industry as a whole.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the value for money of operating rail passenger services in the public sector after each passenger franchise expires. [227150]

Paul Clark: The Government's policy is that rail services are provided by the private sector to a specification developed in the public sector; therefore, no formal assessment has been made of the value for money of operating rail passenger services in the public sector.

Railways: Milton Keynes

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2008, *Official Report*, column 1043W, on railways: Milton Keynes, how many more southbound Virgin trains will call at Milton Keynes during (a) peak and (b) off-peak times once the platform upgrade is complete than did so before the work commenced. [228450]

Paul Clark: On weekdays between 0600 and 0900, the number of southbound Virgin trains calling at Milton Keynes Central will increase from four to seven trains once the upgrade is completed. In off-peak periods, the number will increase from two to three per hour.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 14 October 2008, *Official Report*, column 1043W, on railways: Milton

Keynes, what the aggregate number of Virgin trains stopping per day at Milton Keynes will be once the platform upgrade is completed and a new timetable introduced; and what change this will represent from the previous aggregate number. [228451]

Paul Clark: The number of trains, operated by Virgin Trains and stopping at Milton Keynes Central station, once the enlargement work is completed, is likely to be 110 on a normal weekday. This will represent a 31 per cent. increase from today's number of 84 services operated by Virgin Trains and stopping at Milton Keynes.

Railways: Standards

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of hours of delays there will be on the railway in (a) 2010, (b) 2015 and (c) 2025. [226696]

Specification, published in July 2007, required an improvement in the Public Performance Measure (PPM) to an average of 92.6 per cent. by the end of 2013-14, with associated reductions in significant lateness and cancellations. Delay hours are reported periodically by Network Rail, but are not separately estimated by the Department for Transport.

Waterloo International

3. Dr. Vincent Cable (Twickenham) (LD): What progress has been made on the conversion of Waterloo International for the use of London suburban rail services. [228327]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Paul Clark): Works to convert one platform of Waterloo International for domestic use will be completed by December 2008. The Department continues to work with South West Trains with a view to some existing services operating into and out of platform 20 from next year.

Dr. Cable: I thank the Minister and his predecessor for their support for this project, but the rail operators are saying that they cannot improve services unless they have more rolling stock. Will the Government give priority to that additional investment, under their accelerated programme for railway investment?

Paul Clark: The hon. Gentleman will be aware that there are, in a sense, two stages—a short-term and a medium-term solution—in relation to, in this instance, Waterloo station. In the short term, we need to establish a service by next year through South West Trains. The longer-term solution will involve HLOS—the high-level output specification—and the reconfiguration of all routes into

Waterloo, with longer trains to meet capacity requirements. That is part of the £10 billion package in which the Government are investing until 2014.

Mr. Denis MacShane (Rotherham) (Lab): The Minister may be aware that Waterloo International, designed by that great British architect Nick Grimshaw, is one of the finest steel and glass constructions—if not the world’s best—since the Crystal Palace was built for the great exhibition in 1851. Alas, at present we can only see it from the top of the London Eye. As the Minister contemplates what will happen to Waterloo International, will he arrange for one or two buildings around it to be demolished, so that we can actually see one of the finest bits of glass and steel architecture built in recent years?

Paul Clark: I thank my right hon. Friend for his comments. I am currently dealing with issues related to transport, but he is right to point out that redeveloping and proceeding with plans in an optimal way invariably involves many other players. We will certainly take his comments on board, and I am sure that the relevant authorities will imagine seeing Waterloo in the same splendid way as we now see the Barlow shed at St Pancras.

Sir George Young (North-West Hampshire) (Con): As well as finding out whether Waterloo International might be used for London suburban rail services, will the Minister find out whether it might be used for services from further afield—from Hampshire and the south-west, where there is enormous pressure on the train service?

Paul Clark: The right hon. Gentleman has raised a wider issue, relating to capacity and ways of making the best possible use of our existing facilities and infrastructure. The current HLOS plan is to build on capacity and the available options through that £10 billion package. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, West (Ruth Kelly) has asked Network Rail formally to consider a number of options for the period beyond 2014, and we await further work which will undoubtedly start to feed ideas into the work stream in 2009.

Stephen Hammond (Wimbledon) (Con): I welcome the Minister to his new role, and hope that he is as successful in it as his predecessor.

Every morning commuters from all over south-west London, and indeed from further afield, are reminded that they travel on one of the most overcrowded parts of our railway network, yet they continue to see four platforms not being used. The Government knew in 2004 that Eurostar services would go to St Pancras, yet only one platform will be in operation before 2014, as the Minister has just confirmed. According to estimates provided by industry, it would cost only £10 million to bring the other four platforms into use, and it is costing half a million pounds to mothball them. Is this any way to treat commuters?

Paul Clark: One thing of which I am certain is that we must invest constructively in infrastructure fit for the 21st century. I am well aware of the vast increase in passenger journeys over the last ten years, causing substantial demand on our safe, secure and relatively efficient network. That is important. Reliability has improved tremendously and South West Trains' latest figures show that its reliability is up to 92.5 per cent from August to September. That is what people want: reliable services at a reasonable cost.

On investing, there will be many demands on the £10 billion to which I have referred to increase capacity. I am sure that other hon. Members from all regions have demands in their neck of the woods. We are dealing with the short-term requirements to 2009; the longer term will involve changing capacity at Waterloo and other stations.

Midland Main Line

6. Mr. Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con): What steps are being taken to raise line speeds and reduce train congestion on the midland main line. [228330]

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): Network Rail has proposed line speed enhancements on the midland main line as part of the plan to deliver the capacity improvements sought by the Government in the July 2007 rail White Paper. The independent Office of Rail Regulation has indicated that it is minded to agree to that project. A final determination is expected from the ORR at the end of the month.

Mr. Hollobone: When the next timetable change happens, half the trains north from Kettering will be lost, and all the fast trains between Kettering and the capital will disappear, because of capacity constraints on the midland main line, inadequate line speeds and the Department's insistence that services between Sheffield, Nottingham, Derby and the capital be sped up. Can the Secretary of State reassure my constituents in Kettering that the line speed upgrades that he has just promised will ensure that those services are reinstated to Kettering as soon as possible?

Mr. Hoon: I have admired the consistency with which the hon. Gentleman raises issues of behalf of Kettering and his constituents, but I thought that he was less than generous in his observations about improvements on the midland main line, not least those that affect Kettering. Not only will significant investment improve line speeds, but a new timetable that comes into force in December is likely to provide two trains an hour from Kettering to London, one of which will actually start in Kettering. As he will be aware, there are times when those of us who catch the train from further up the line at Derby, Nottingham and Leicester fill it before his constituents have the opportunity to get on. Starting a train at Kettering and having an hourly service direct from Kettering to London will mean that his constituents are well served. I hope that when he goes from this place and talks

about the remarkable improvements in the service from Kettering, he will give them a bit more praise than he has so far.

Sir Peter Soulsby (Leicester, South) (Lab): I welcome the Secretary of State's positive response to the question, and I know that he knows the line very well. Does he agree that the most significant improvements to it can be achieved only as a result of electrification? Does he share his predecessor's commitment to a study of electrification, and does he recognise that, uniquely among main lines, this one has a very positive cost benefit attached to it?

Mr. Hoon: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that issue. He will be aware that I take a close, indeed personal, interest in the midland main line, as a regular user of it. I certainly share my predecessor's enthusiasm for electrification, and I assure my hon. Friend that the Department will examine it very closely.

Mrs. Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con): I welcome the new ministerial team to their posts. Typical—you wait months for a new Transport Minister, then three come along at the same time.

The Secretary of State's predecessors promised extra carriages. How many have been ordered for the midland main line?

Mr. Hoon: I thank the hon. Lady for her welcome. I remember her as an enthusiastic Member of the European Parliament, where she had a deserved reputation for a practical and pragmatic approach to issues. I am sorry that on her return from Brussels to Notting Hill she seems to have fallen in with a bad crowd. Nevertheless, I look forward to answering her questions, not least on the midland main line. I am delighted that she is so enthusiastic about it that she has chosen this matter to discuss with me. I use the line on a very regular basis and I can assure her, as I have assured Labour Members, that close attention will be paid to future investment in the midland main line.

Mrs. Villiers: I think that the answer that the Secretary of State is groping for is actually "zero". The Government's response to congestion on the midland main line and the rest of the network is wholly inadequate and painfully slow. He cannot even give a straight answer about the new carriages that they have promised time and again. Will he deliver all 1,300, and will they be in addition to the new Thameslink carriages? If he really wants to tackle congestion on the rail network, will he work with me on a cross-party basis to take forward plans for high-speed rail for this country?

Mr. Hoon: Again, I am sorry to hear such a grudging view of the investment in the railways that the Government are planning. We have proposed to spend £15 billion on improving our rail network, of which £10 billion will be devoted to reducing congestion. That is an enormous commitment. I am sorry that the former Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer is not in his place, because he

will know that no previous Conservative Transport Secretary could ever have made that commitment. I am proud that my predecessors were able to secure such support from the Treasury to allow that investment to go ahead.

Rob Marris (Wolverhampton, South-West) (Lab): May I suggest to my right hon. Friend that with the £15 billion of investment, and to try to increase rail line speeds and reduce train congestion, we should nationalise the railways, just as we are nationalising the banks, by not renewing the franchises as they fall due? Many of those franchises, just like the banks, are bankrupt and would not be operating except for huge Government subsidy. Let us move the railways back into state ownership. What are his views on that?

Mr. Hoon: I think that I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his question—I may have to reflect upon it. I am sorry that he takes that view of the contributions that have been made by train operating companies, not least because there has been a remarkable change in the usage patterns on the line that we have just been debating, the midland main line. Whereas trains used to stop only at Derby, Nottingham and Leicester on their way south, passing all the stations in between, there is now an hourly service from stations such as Kettering right down the line, and that has made a huge change to the usage. A further change has been the way in which off-peak services have attracted rail users. When I travelled down from Derby to London on Saturday, the first class compartments were full. In the days of the nationalised railways, those compartments would, sadly, have been completely empty on Saturdays. I hope that he gives some credit to the innovation that the private sector has brought. The position of Network Rail has clearly changed in recent times, and we ensure that Network Rail provides a safe and reliable system for users of the rail network. Thus, on balance, I shall probably resist his invitation.

Norman Baker (Lewes) (LD): I formally welcome the Secretary of State to his post on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, merely observing that the average tenure of office of a Secretary of State for Transport since 1945 is considerably less than 18 months—that is, of course, some way short of the next general election.

On the midland main line, is not one of the causes of the capacity constraints and the failure to electrify the cuts that have been made to the Department for Transport's budget? Rather than having the investment that the Secretary of State mentions, the reality is that the rail budget has reduced by 17 per cent. this year and is now lower than in 2003-04, whereas the road budget has doubled. Given that, and given the Secretary of State's unhelpful response to the Select Committee on Transport on the subject of fares and his support for aviation, is it not clear that the new Transport Secretary is no friend of either the railways or the environment?

Mr. Hoon: I thank the hon. Gentleman for his qualified welcome. He and I had many dealings in my time at the Ministry of Defence, and I always admired his ability to dig himself into a trench and launch a constant barrage at what he perceived to be the enemy; sadly, he sometimes did so after the war had finished. Nevertheless, I look forward to debating these issues with him. As a start, he might perhaps like to examine the remarkable increases in investment in the railways and the remarkable improvement in passenger journeys on our trains. I assure him that while I am Secretary of State for Transport—however long that might be—there will be no lack of investment in or commitment to our rail network.

Rail Network

8. **John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate his Department has made of the extent of the rail network infrastructure in 2038. [228332]

Mr. Hoon: No direct estimate has been made of the extent of the rail network infrastructure in 2038. The Government's long term vision for the rail network is set out in the 2007 White Paper "Delivering a Sustainable Railway".

Railway Stations

9. **Miss Kirkbride:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department plans to spend on (a) new railway stations in England and (b) a new railway station in Bromsgrove over the next three years. [228333]

Paul Clark: The planning and investment in new stations is largely a matter for Network Rail. However, the Government have invested in existing stations including the rebuilding of Birmingham New Street and Reading Stations and the provision of £150 million through the National Stations Improvement Programme.

The proposed new station at Bromsgrove is subject to consideration by the region on funding priorities.

England and Scotland Rail Links

10. **Danny Alexander:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for high speed rail links between England and Scotland. [228334]

Paul Clark: The Government are looking at the need for additional transport capacity as part of the new approach to planning set out in the October 2007 document Towards a Sustainable Transport System. While Network Rail are reviewing the case for new lines as one option, increased capacity and enhancements to the existing network are equally important as shown by the

£8.8 billion investment on upgrading the West Coast Main Line, leading to reduced travel times.

12. Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for high speed rail links between England and Scotland. [228336]

Paul Clark: The Government are looking at the need for additional transport capacity as part of the new approach to planning set out in the October 2007 document 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System'. While Network Rail are reviewing the case for new lines as one option, increased capacity and enhancements to the existing network are equally important as shown by the £8.8 billion investment on upgrading the West Coast Main Line, leading to reduced travel times.

Railways: Contracts

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which train operators have made late premia payments in the last 12 months. [227128]

Paul Clark [*holding answer 14 October 2008*]: In the last 12 months, the following train operators have made payments which were not received in the Department for Transport's bank on the correct day:

National Express (Gatwick Express Franchise)—three instances of late receipt of payments (13 working days, one working day and 10 working days late). This franchise ended in June 2008.

Midland Mainline—one instance of late receipt (one working day late).

Arriva Trains Wales—one instance of late receipt (one working day late).

First Capital Connect—one instance of late receipt (four working days late).

For those payments where funds were received one working day late it is possible that this was due to deadlines at the Office of the Paymaster General that may have meant the funds were not shown in the Department's account on the same day as receipt.

The late receipt of payment made by First Capital Connect was the result of an error on the bank sort code that meant that the initial payment made on the correct date was rejected. This payment was immediately resubmitted.

Crossrail: Finance

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial agreement he has reached with BAA and Transport for London on the funding of Crossrail. [230061]

Paul Clark: A Heads of Terms agreement was entered into between Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport for London (TfL) about the funding and governance of the Crossrail project in November 2007. Since then, DfT has been holding discussions with TfL about the detailed arrangements for the funding of the project and discussions have been held with key beneficiaries of Crossrail, including British Aviation Authority (BAA), about financial contributions. The discussions with TfL and BAA are at an advanced stage and should be finalised shortly.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding has been (a) committed and (b) provided for Crossrail from (i) BAA, (ii) Transport for London and (iii) London businesses. [230062]

Paul Clark: The funding for Crossrail was announced by the Prime Minister on 5 October 2007. Funding will be split roughly three ways; between the Government, Crossrail fare payers and London businesses. Details of the contributions expected to be made were included in a Heads of Terms agreement signed in November 2007 between Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport for London (TfL).

The Heads of Terms agreement can be viewed on the DfT website at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/162259/165234/302038/headsofterms.pdf>

Discussions between DfT and British Aviation Authority (BAA) about a funding contribution towards the cost of Crossrail are at an advanced stage and should be finalised shortly.

Under the Heads of Terms agreement, TfL is responsible for underwriting £7.7 billion of the Crossrail project's £15.9 billion estimated capital cost. This includes a contribution from fare payers but also covers the business contributions in the form of the proposed business rate supplement, contributions from property development around stations, the use of the existing s.106 mechanism and possibly a mechanism to extract planning gains. TfL is also funding the costs of Cross London Rail Links Ltd. during 2008-09.

The Heads of Terms agreement assumes considerable contributions from key beneficiaries of Crossrail. The City of London corporation has committed to make a significant contribution and to collect voluntary contributions from businesses across London. An in-principle agreement has been reached with Berkeley

Homes for them to construct, at their own cost and risk, a station box at Woolwich. In addition, terms have been agreed with Canary Wharf Group for a significant contribution to the project, the details of which are under negotiation.