

Department for
Transport

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Our Ref: 07/000960/08

Thank you for your letter of 5 January addressed to the Secretary of State for Transport.

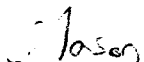
Due in large part to the success of the economy in recent years and the improvements in punctuality delivered by the rail industry, demand for rail travel is growing significantly. Around 1.2 billion passenger journeys were made on the rail network last year and growth continues at around 10% a year. The Government recognises that the rail industry needs to address this additional demand and, in July this year a White Paper entitled 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' was published to address ever growing demand for rail services. The White Paper looks at the potential future challenges that the railway will face over a 30-year horizon and identifies three long-term agendas for Government and the rail industry working in partnership: increasing the capacity of the railway, delivering a quality service for passengers, and fulfilling rail's environmental potential.

As part of the White Paper, the Government set out how much public expenditure it wishes to devote to rail and specified what it wants the railway to deliver, notably in relation to safety, reliability and capacity. Specifically, we have committed to providing an additional 1300 railway carriages between now and 2014, to be used to meet the growing demand for rail travel and to reduce overcrowding in the key areas of congestion. The indicative number of additional vehicles has recently been published and I have attached an extract of this information. Further detail can be found on the DFT website.

Although we cannot be specific at this point in time where the extra capacity will be provided within the Northern area, it will be focused where the need is greatest.

Please be assured that capacity remains high on the agenda for the Department and that we continue to work in partnership with the rail industry to ensure that it meets the growth in demand that we are seeing.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Nason
Contract Manager