



Department for  
**Transport**

From the Secretary of State

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Our Ref: AA/031690/09

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29 January 2010

*L. Keith,*

Thank you for your letter of 21 December 2009. I understand the concerns you raise, and am sure that for your part you understand that planning within the rail industry is inherently complex, and constrained by inevitably lengthy timescales. I am grateful for the way your officers are working with my officials and Northern Rail to find a way through these complexities to produce solutions which benefit passengers as soon as possible.

Electrification is undoubtedly the right way forward; once the order for new Thameslink rolling stock is finalised, we shall be clear about the delivery profile and will then be able to give firm dates for transfer of the existing Thameslink rolling stock to routes in the north-west, where they will provide more capacity and improve performance. This also depends, crucially on when Network Rail complete the electrification work.

In the shorter term, we are as you know in discussion with Northern Rail on a first phase of HLOS changes whereby diesel and electric rolling stock transferred from elsewhere on the network will be used to address the most pressing crowding issues. I am hopeful that we shall be able to make some announcements quite soon.

Concurrently we are working on a second phase; we expect new passenger demand forecasts, in which your officers have been closely involved, to be finalised next month, and we shall then work with Northern to develop a plan to deal adequately with the demand levels indicated by those new forecasts. We will then have to look at what would be required to meet this additional demand and evaluate whether it is value for money and affordable.

I hope this clarifies the position.

*Yours ever,  
Andrew.*

**ANDREW ADONIS**