



Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

09/10/2017

Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to you as the co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Southern Rail. We urge your Department to take immediate action to address the historic and corrosive underfunding of the South East network and its infrastructure that has persisted through successive administrations.

As you are aware, the South East route is the busiest in Britain, and with the majority of passengers commuting for work or travelling to airports, it is also the most economically important.

Yet the South East route also has the worst train performance nationally, and passenger satisfaction is lower than on any other route.

At the last meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Southern Rail, senior industry figures presented compelling testimony as to the impact of less investment in rail infrastructure as calculated per passenger in the South East, compared with other regions. Our constituents are now paying the price.

In the last financial year your department unlocked an additional £300m to invest in critical infrastructure upgrades. This, as you know, was welcomed by our cross-party group as it has made a positive impact on services. As you know from the Gibb Report and your own experts, this level of investment must now be sustained for some time in order to deliver the reliability and comfort passengers deserve into the future.

As another spending settlement is imminent, it is the unequivocal and unanimous conviction of our group that for the foreseeable future the underinvestment in the southeast network must be corrected in order to modernise commuter rail services and transform the passenger experience.

We urge you to commit to a level of funding for the South East route that will support both Chris Gibb's recommendations for targeted investment on the expanded Thameslink network, as well as increased spending on maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure across the rest of the route. After the grotesque suffering experienced by our constituents who depend on the Southern network, levelling the per-passenger investment with other regions seems the very least they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Kyle MP, co-chair

Rt Hon Sir Nicholas Soames MP, co-chair