



From the Minister of State

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Jen Clark

Thank you for your letter of 27 April and for our very constructive meeting held on 2 April to discuss plans for the West Anglia Main Line route.

I share your determination to deliver significant improvements for passengers and communities served by this important route, and I am pleased that you are reassured by the positive developments recently announced by the Department and across the rail industry.

As you know, our recent progress report is helping to shape plans for the route in the longer term, from 2017/18. As discussed, I have asked that officials send you further details of the work underpinning our report, so that these may be considered ahead of the forthcoming meeting of the West Anglia Routes Group (WARG).

These long-term plans are at a very early stage, with much further detailed development work required before decisions on scheme and funding options for railway Control Period 5 can be considered. These are expected nearer 2012, providing sufficient time for this work to be undertaken. As you know, this work is now being led by Network Rail.

I can confirm that our business case work has been developed in accordance with appraisal guidelines for all railway schemes seeking significant public funding. As I am sure you would expect, this work has sought to identify those train services and potential infrastructure improvements that add the most benefits for the most passengers, given their costs, so as to provide the best value for money to the taxpayer. I can reassure you that this work has not yet been concluded. We have already recognised that there is further work required to evaluate potential regeneration benefits in relation to the Lower Lea Valley. I am pleased that this work is now being contemplated by local stakeholders. It will be important that this considers appropriate options for improving transport links in this area, not just improvements to WAML services. This is a key area where I believe that you can help and support the further work required.

I look forward to receiving details of the proposed Politicians' Meeting by the West Anglia Routes Group, once the date of this event has been confirmed.

Yours ever,

Andrew

ANDREW ADONIS