

Nick Smith

Regional Growth Manager
Avanti West Coast, Corporate Affairs Directorate
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7 October 2022

Dear Nick

Re: Liverpool-London services

On behalf of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) I would like to express my full support for Avanti's application to operate an additional service between London Euston and Liverpool Lime Street, which will enhance rail connectivity for the Liverpool City Region and help us to continue to grow our economy.

The Liverpool City Region's Long-Term Rail Strategy highlights that the city of Liverpool has been one of the most poorly connected cities by rail despite its size, relative to rival cities across the UK. For too long, this has held back many of the people that I represent as Mayor and has acted as a barrier to opportunity.

Before becoming the Metro Mayor, I was the Member of Parliament for Liverpool Walton and used the Liverpool-London service on a weekly basis for seven years. The hourly service was something I valued as it was more often than not reliable and efficient. Nonetheless, whenever presented with the opportunity, I have always called for its frequency to be increased as it will not only provide more flexibility for regular users of the link, but will add capacity, allowing for more visitors to travel to our area and boost our economic growth.

It is important to highlight that prior to COVID-19, there had actually been an increase in numbers on West Coast services to the city region, with more northbound than southbound services taking place – demonstrating the attractiveness of our cultural and economic offer to businesses, investors and tourists. Furthermore, the level of patronage between Liverpool and London was greater than between Leeds

and Liverpool – a testament to our ability to pull in more visitor numbers than our competitor northern cities.

As we emerge from the pandemic, Liverpool Lime Street has been highlighted as the best performing station by Network Rail in terms of patronage levels, with footfall 17% higher in March 2022 than the equivalent date in 2019. This is supported by patronage levels on our own Merseyrail network which are running at around 90% of pre-COVID levels.

I understand Avanti has expressed an interest in calling at Liverpool South Parkway with the additional service. This is something that we welcome and we are actively investigating how it could be made to happen, potentially through the extension of platforms at the station. Providing a link at Liverpool South Parkway would further improve connectivity to the rest of the area I represent, opening up a direct link into the Merseyrail 'Northern Line' with areas such as Southport, Kirkby, Maghull, Formby, Crosby and Bootle all then benefiting from services to London.

In summary, the delivery of the second train each hour between London and Liverpool would:

- Address the historical poor connectivity of Liverpool with the rest of the country;
- Address the increasing demand for services on this route;
- Improve connectivity of a significant element of the wider Liverpool City Region geography with London;
- And represent a genuine example of levelling up.

Officers at the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority would be happy to speak directly on this matter and provide whatever further information is required.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Rotheram

Mayor of the Liverpool City Region