



## LONDON

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# Mayor should control rail services, says Boris Johnson

**Boris Johnson has called for the government to hand over London rail network so he could improve the "totally inefficient" service.**

The current mayor of London wants to franchise the suburban railways and integrate them into the existing Transport for London (TfL) system.

Labour's Ken Livingstone has already called for this.

The Green Party's Jenny Jones supports the plan while Lib Dem Brian Paddick said candidates should focus on crime.

In the next four years, six London-area rail franchises come up for renewal.

### 'Fractured'

TfL has identified those currently operated by Southeastern and West Anglia as priorities for devolution when they come up for renewal in 2014.

Mr Johnson said if re-elected, his planned shake-up would save millions of pounds and give passengers more reliable and frequent services, safer and cleaner stations, more staff and simpler fares.

He said the current system, which has two distinct networks operated by TfL and the government, needs to be reformed.

"The fractured organisation of London's suburban railways is totally inefficient and needs a complete overhaul.

"Devolving the commercial franchises would allow us to invest millions of pounds in improving stations and to simplify the ticketing system."

### **'Ignoring the issue'**

In January, Mr Livingstone announced his plan to bring all suburban train services under the mayor's control.

A spokesperson for the former mayor said Mr Johnson was "following Ken's lead again."

"A mayor who is in touch with the day to day reality of using London's rail services would have used every possible opportunity to argue that TfL should take over rail services in London, rather than ignoring the issue for years as Boris Johnson has done," added the spokesperson.

Mr Paddick said: "It is exactly six months since the London riots, yet Mayor Boris Johnson decided to mark this serious event by announcing he should have control of overground trains.

"This is unacceptable. Londoners consistently rate crime and policing as the most important issues in this election - not transport."

Ms Jones said: "Londoners want railways that link up well with the rest of transport system and don't come a constant poor second to out of town commuters. We need more orbital links, especially in outer London."

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