

Andrew Jones on Parliamentary Questions – 27th January 2011

Andrew Jones Question 1:

What plans has she for the reform of rail franchising, and if she will make a statement?

Theresa Villiers, Minister of State (Rail and Aviation): On 19th January the government set out a new approach to franchising, taking account of the consultation which took place last summer. We expect these reforms to deliver a railway which is more responsive to passenger needs and provides better value for tax payer investment.

Andrew Jones Question 2:

Last week East Coast Mainline announced a new direct service from London to Harrogate, the first for 20 years, after some excellent local work promoting the economic case for that service. As the new franchise requirements for the East Coast Mainline are developed, will that economic case see Harrogate to London links built into the franchise requirements?

Theresa Villiers: I have been very impressed with the work that has been done by the honourable member and the Chamber of Commerce in Harrogate and a number of Harrogate business interests, to make the case for improved rail services between Harrogate and London. I would encourage them to continue that input when the consultation takes place on re-letting the East Coast franchise. We will, of course, take those representations into account in the decisions we make on Harrogate services.