

National Statistician and Registrar General

Len Cook

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Dear Hilary,

**QUALITY REVIEW OF BUS, COACH AND LIGHT RAIL
STATISTICS**

Thank you for your letter of 12 May enclosing the Quality Review of Bus, Coach and Light Rail Statistics. Having read the report I welcome and approve its content. Your report will be essential reading for any major participant in the passenger transport industry. It highlights the great variety of statistics we produce, where they are well integrated and the limitations that come from the differing information sources.

Transport statistics face at least three major challenges in terms of their extent. Firstly, recent years have seen a strong policy concern with equity of access, and the ability to measure this can be judged from this report. Secondly, performance targets have produced an overlay which may at times seem to contradict efforts at lifting compliance rates, because of both the intensity of the information need and the detail disclosed. Finally, both deregulation and the explosion in pricing and service mix options has made it difficult to establish the sort of standard journeys and fares that previously simplified costs and price comparisons, and measures of the volume of services offered and used.

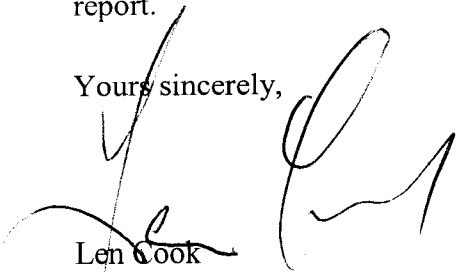
We need to see from this report a strong warning that increased regional detail will have disproportionate compliance costs, and therefore may necessitate finding quite new measurements methods. These new methods may come from the very technologies that now generate readily new services and rapidly responsive price schedules, although this is a service where some operators still function as before.

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As we are going through a period when public policy in public transport is likely to experience further development, the understanding of our national and regional information base that this report gives, is both timely and will prove a rewarding task.

I look forward to seeing the implementation of recommendations in the Review and would like to thank the team involved in the production of the report.

Yours sincerely,



Len Cook

National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales