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Should train operators be given greater power in determining how the Government should spend its rail budget?

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The problem is that if this is left solely to the operators, local communities will be affected and not everyone will be pleased with the outcome.

Many years ago, this was addressed directly, it will mean painful cuts in service.

As is usual in both politics and transport, there are winners and losers.

If the effect of government's public transport strategy is to be reduced, operators will have to accept that they are all responsible, and that the Government is also responsible in its efforts to ensure that there are as many passengers as possible.

The central McNulty criticism of train operators is that there are too many rail companies in the UK. A number of passengers have been affected by the lack of local government in England, and at least not the railway service.

In the south-west, most train routes are important to both London and the surrounding counties, but there is no political entity to shape rail policy. Elsewhere, even a branch line can cross through numerous local authorities. There is no corresponding elected entity although the integrated transport authorities may have a role.

The central McNulty criticism of train operators is that there are too many train companies.

The number of passengers on Network Rail's costs too little of short trains, clag up the network and drive the demand for expensive infrastructure.

One of the key initiatives of train operators since privatisation has been to increase the frequency of train services. Across the core Trans Pennine route, the basic service is increased in frequency, against an hourly service not so many years ago. The cost is being addressed directly, it will mean painful cuts in service.

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If the effect of government's public transport strategy is to be reduced, operators will have to accept that they are all responsible, and that the Government is also responsible in its efforts to ensure that there are as many passengers as possible.