

The Government must bring to an end the costly failure that is privatised rail – Andy McDonald

Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, responding to the failure of the East Coast franchise, said:

"The Government is trying to bury the news that they're giving Stagecoach and Virgin a get out of jail free card to walk away from their franchise and a potential £2billion of payments to the Treasury.

"It is outrageous that the Transport Secretary Chris Grayling is refusing to answer what the true cost to the public purse will be.

"Under public ownership, the East Coast Mainline returned over £1bn to the Treasury, outperformed its commercial competitors and kept fares down when no private operators made the same move.

"When the Tories cynically re-privatised the line on the eve of the 2015 General Election, they said the decision would deliver for the British taxpayer, but we're now being left with a colossal tab.

"The Government must now come clean and reveal the true cost to the public purse of this decision and bring to an end the costly failure that is privatised rail."