



Department
for Transport | Rail Executive

Great Western Specification Consultation

May 2014

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1. Introduction

Purpose

- 1.1** The aim of this document is to inform stakeholders of the planned approach for securing Great Western franchised services when the current direct award franchise ends in September 2015, and seek their views on the franchise specification with a focus on the changes planned during the 5 year period from September 2015, and in particular to:
- Provide stakeholders with background information about the current services on the Great Western Railway;
 - Provide information about the impact of major projects on the franchise;
 - Advise stakeholders of the objectives and expectations for the franchise;
 - Inform stakeholders of the options being considered for the franchise;
 - Seek the views and input of stakeholders; and
 - Give potential promoters of incremental schemes the opportunity for meaningful engagement in the process, including the opportunity to comment on these proposals and formally notify the department of any specific increments or decrements they may wish to purchase.
- 1.2** This consultation document should be considered within the context of the broader transport policy environment, and stakeholders should be aware of a number of other relevant studies and documents that are considering or have recently considered this area of the rail network and that have affected the proposals set out within this consultation. A list of the most relevant of these can be found at **Appendix 2**.
- 1.3** We have considered whether the potential changes are likely to have any impact (adverse or differential) on race, disability or gender equality as provided for under the Equality Act 2010. It is not anticipated that any such impacts will occur. However, the Department for Transport (“the department”) takes its equalities duties very seriously and would welcome respondents’ views on any issues that may affect equality of opportunity in these areas.

The closing date for consultation responses is 26 June 2014.

Background

- 1.4 This consultation document seeks views from passengers and other stakeholders on the specification to be developed for future Great Western franchising, on expiry of the current, two year direct award.**
- 1.5** The Great Western franchise is a vitally important transport network. It is a franchise that serves a diverse range of different markets with intercity, regional, metro and commuter routes providing rail links for both business and leisure passengers. All of these different markets have different priorities and requirements from the railway. We in the Department for Transport's Rail Executive recognise this and want to encourage the operator of the franchise to serve these markets in the way that best meets their needs. To do so we want to create a specification for the future operator that acknowledges and reacts to these needs and provides the right incentives for that operator to continue to do so throughout the franchise term. We also recognise that, while we are well informed on the franchise, we are not always best placed to assess what the priorities for different aspects of it should be. That is why we are conducting this consultation; we want to hear from those that use and benefit from the franchise and recognise where there may be opportunities for it to serve the markets better.
- 1.6** The Great Western franchise is a vital link for the many different communities within the franchise area. The recent storms and bad weather events that saw the railway so badly disrupted and disconnected at Dawlish highlighted how much rail matters to the South West of England and the actions of the operator (First Great Western), Network Rail and Government to try to resolve the issues show the importance we place on it too. The economic role that rail plays should not be underestimated, particularly on a franchise like GW, which covers such a wide area and includes such important regional and inter-regional connections, as well as those to the capital. To make sure that GW continues to drive the economies it serves we want to hear from you about how it can serve you better.
- 1.7** There is a real period of opportunity on the Great Western franchise in the coming years. The period covered by this consultation comes at a time where huge investment is being made in the franchise area. Around £7.5bn is being spent on substantial schemes and service enhancements on the franchise (details of these schemes are given in Chapter 5). These schemes will make a potentially dramatic difference to the franchise and we are keen that this investment is felt in a meaningful way by those that use it. So we invite you to tell us how the operator might build on this investment in the delivery of services that will make a difference to the passengers, businesses and other users of the franchise.
- 1.8** Rail Executive has decisions to take in the coming months about exactly what the best form of contractual arrangements will be for the GW franchise over the next five years. We are considering whether the opportunity presented by the investment on the franchise and the need to manage the

disruption that the works will cause might be best met by a by a shorter direct award followed by a competed franchise or a longer direct award for the whole period (more details on this are given below). This is a difficult issue and we will balance a number of factors, primarily the value for money and affordability of the different options when the decision is taken. While we are not asking for your views or opinion on what the arrangements should be explicitly, we do intend to take account of the responses you provide to this consultation, and how the contracts can be arranged to best meet your needs and proposals when we do so.

- 1.9** We can't predict everything about what the GW franchise can be and what it can do. We do, however, want it to continue to improve and we want to help make that happen through partnership and collaboration with passengers, local and devolved government, businesses and markets.
- 1.10** This document sets out a lot of detail about the franchise. We hope that this will help inform you and allow you to provide meaningful and considered responses to our questions. This will help us to make sure our specification for the franchise can create the railway that more closely meets your needs and delivers on the opportunity of the next five years.

Proposed Franchise Timetable

- 1.11** It was announced in March 2013 that a franchise period of two years and ten months would be procured by direct award to ensure the continuity of services. Accordingly, an initial direct award of 23 months was negotiated with First Great Western (FGW) and put in place in October 2013, with the expectation that a further, second direct award would follow, as the initial direct award could not exceed two years under the relevant regulations.
- 1.12** The department published an Information Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union in March 2014, which confirmed that the department is currently planning a second direct award of at least 10 months followed by a competed franchise. The Information Notice also confirmed that the Department for Transport's Rail Executive ("Rail Executive") is exploring the possibility whether a longer direct award of up to 5 years could create better overall value and facilitate wider government rail projects. The refresh of the franchising schedule published by the Department for Transport on 8 April 2014 reflects this.
- 1.13** The Rail Executive is now considering options for successor contractual agreements to the current, first direct award which expires in September 2015 in order to best meet the needs of the franchise over a period of significant infrastructure and rolling stock change.
- 1.14** The Rail Executive considers that the bulk of the changes brought about by electrification, new and cascaded rolling stock, the InterCity Express Programme (IEP), Crossrail and HS2 infrastructure will take place during the 5 year period from September 2015. There may be benefits to having in place, over this period, an appropriately incentivised operator, which

will be well placed to work with the industry to deliver the changes. This consultation therefore focuses on the priorities and decisions for that 5 year period. It is not seeking views on the specific nature of the contractual vehicle that will deliver them which will be determined by the Secretary of State in accordance with the policy statement issued under section 26 of the Railways Act. Government accepts that the term for each franchise must be considered carefully on a case by case basis.

- 1.15** It is currently intended that whoever is designated as the successor operator during that period, and subject to the outcome of this consultation, the specification for the new Great Western franchise, will be based on the timetable of services presently operated by First Great Western (FGW) with the following planned changes:
- Heathrow Connect services are expected to transfer to Crossrail in May 2018; and
 - The full Crossrail service is expected to operate to Heathrow, Maidenhead and Reading by December 2019 and will replace the current suburban services provided by FGW to and from Paddington. This means that responsibility for the services will transfer from the Great Western franchise to Transport for London.
- 1.16** Consultation has also recently been carried out by First Great Western under their current direct award, to explore opportunities for improved intercity services to the South West, as well as other timetable enhancements. FGW are also considering potential enhancements for the North Cotswolds route, and may issue a further consultation in due course. If successful, we expect that these additional new services will be continued in the new franchise arrangements.

Planned Network Upgrades

- 1.17** Network Rail is now progressing its plans for a complete upgrade of the GWML route between London and Cardiff by 2025 as part of a £7.5 billion project that involves complex dependencies between large scale infrastructure and rolling stock projects. Achieving co-ordination with the following workstreams will therefore be critical for the new franchise:
- The InterCity Express Programme;
 - Electrification from Paddington to Bristol, Cardiff, Oxford, and Newbury, Banbury and the Thames Valley branches;
 - Provision of an electric suburban fleet for Thames Valley regional and local services;
 - Crossrail works and Crossrail rolling stock introduction
 - High Speed 2 (HS2) infrastructure and planning, in particular in the vicinity of Old Oak Common

- 1.18** During the construction period of Crossrail and network electrification, disruption will inevitably impact the Great Western franchise through changes to service patterns and rolling stock deployment.
- 1.19** However, significant increases in capacity will be possible as a result of the planned upgrades to the route; the new InterCity Express Programme (IEP) trains; and the opportunity for a new timetable. In addition, it is expected that a new electric fleet for the Thames Valley routes will enable the cascade of diesel units to strengthen services elsewhere on the franchise where demand for rail travel is strong and growing.
- 1.20** As a result of the Crossrail, IEP and Great Western Main Line (GWML) electrification projects, enabling the running of larger, electric trains, a major increase in peak hour capacity into Paddington is forecast.

2. Process and timescales

- 2.1** The Rail Executive is now working through the outline design stage for the specification of the Great Western Franchise for the 5 year period from September 2015. We expect to negotiate with First Great Western (FGW) a second direct award provided it is affordable and delivers value for money. The duration of the direct award will be at least 10 months and may be up to 5 years (see also the Background section which explains this proposal). The Rail Executive's initial view of the outline service specification is described in Section 7 of this document. Responses to this consultation will inform the development of that specification. Any changes to current services that are proposed will be assessed for deliverability, value for money and operational impact.
- 2.2** Over the coming months the Request for Proposal ("RfP") for the second direct award will be compiled. This document will provide the basis upon which First Great Western (FGW), must submit their proposal and will reflect accurately what Rail Executive wishes to procure, including elements that it may buy if these are affordable. Importantly, it will set out the basis upon which the proposal will be evaluated.
- 2.3** Depending upon the decision taken on the term of the second direct award, the final specification may either be reflected fully in the RfP for the second direct award and also, alternatively, may be reflected in the Invitation to Tender for the subsequent franchise competition as appropriate. In either case the specification will have been updated as appropriate to reflect responses to this consultation including any proposed increments and decrements suggested by potential funders (see section 6), and modified to reflect other emerging information. Unless otherwise stated, subsequent references to the RfP in this consultation paper should be read as referring to either the initial RfP for the second direct award or the ITT for the subsequent franchise competition, as is appropriate depending on the length of any initial direct award.
- 2.4** It is expected that any further direct award contract will come into force in September 2015 at the end of the current agreement.

3. The Great Western franchise

The current franchise

- 3.1** The Great Western franchise is a large and complex railway providing long distance, commuter, regional and branch line train services from London Paddington to the Midlands, Cotswolds, South Wales and West of England, the South Coast, Devon and Cornwall and Gatwick airport.
- 3.2** The franchise serves the key locations of London, Reading, Bristol, Oxford, Cardiff, Swansea, Exeter, Plymouth, Penzance, Southampton, Portsmouth, Brighton, Newbury, Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester amongst a large number of stations, approximately 210, 208 of which are managed by the operator, Reading and Bristol Temple Meads having transferred to Network Rail on 1 April 2014. The franchise serves approximately 115 parliamentary constituencies.
- 3.3** FirstGroup commenced operations of the Great Western passenger rail franchise on 12 December 2005 under a previous franchise agreement and now operates as First Great Western through its First Greater Western Ltd subsidiary (FGW) under a 23 month direct award franchise agreement which started on 13 October 2013.
- 3.4** The current franchise operates around 1,580 train services per weekday,¹ covering approximately 17 million train miles per year. FGW has approximately 4,800 employees.
- 3.5** The franchise operates over approximately 1,300 route miles in total. Services are divided into 14 Service Groups some of which, at various times in their history, have been operated by a number of different franchises (for example, Great Western was created in 2006 out of the former First Great Western, First Great Western Link and Wessex Trains franchises).
- 3.6** FGW operates 72% of train miles on Network Rail's Great Western Strategic Route area, with two other Train Operating Companies (TOCs) each operating over 5%. A previous report for the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) stated that a fifth of Great Western passengers travel on routes shared with other TOCs – therefore some limited competition exists, in particular with:
- CrossCountry (Penzance–Bristol–Cheltenham and Banbury–Oxford–Reading–Basingstoke);
 - Arriva Trains Wales (ATW: Carmarthen–Swansea–Cardiff–Newport–Severn Tunnel Junction and Gloucester–Cheltenham);

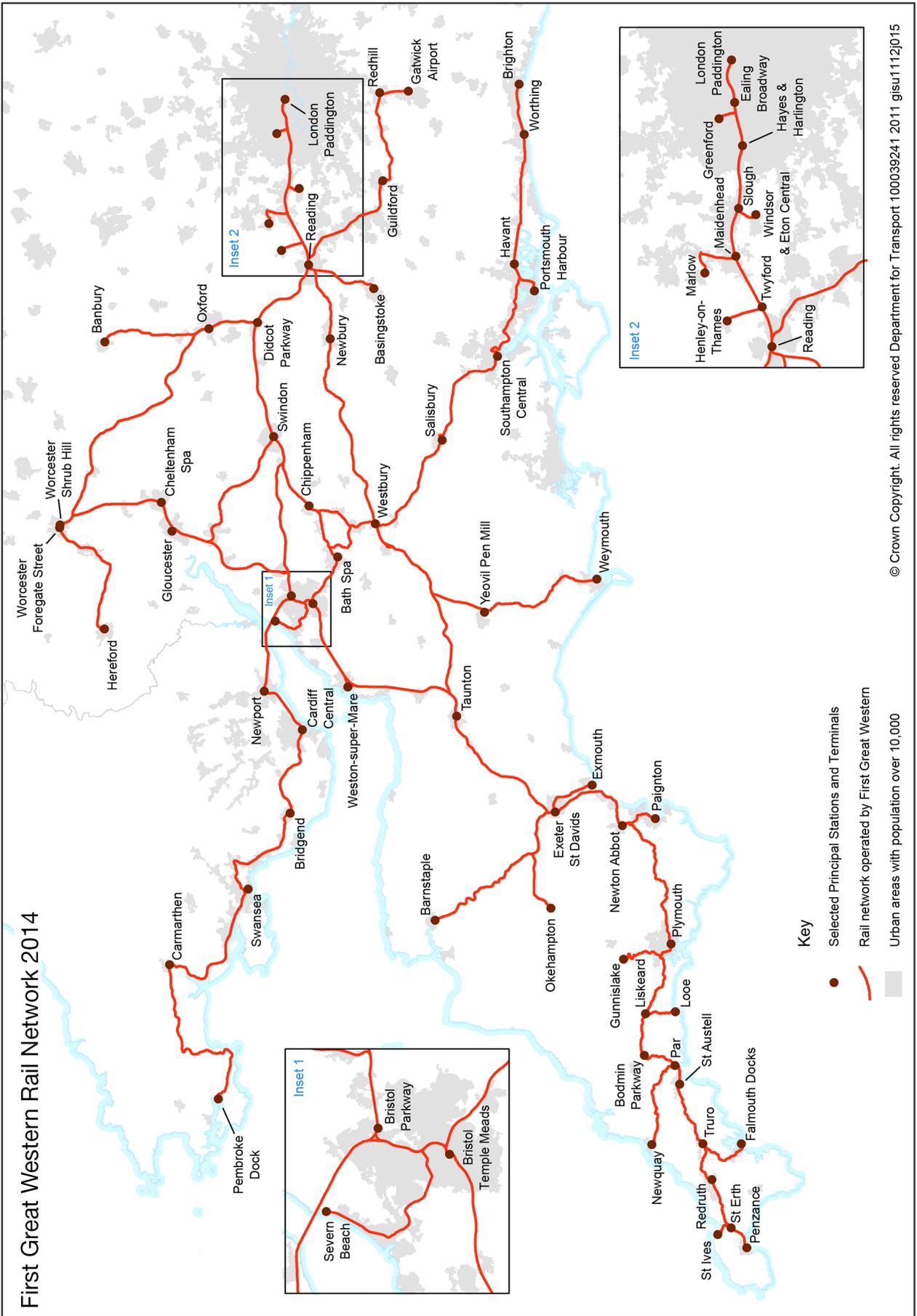
¹ Fewer on Mondays, more on Fridays.

- South West Trains (SWT: Bristol–Salisbury–London, Reading–Wokingham and Salisbury–Portsmouth);
- Southern (Portsmouth to Brighton and Reigate to Gatwick); and
- London Midland (Worcester–Hereford).

Franchise scope

- 3.7** Figures 3.1 and 3.2 depict the geography, route and stations served by the current Great Western franchise.

Figure 3.1 and 3.2 Franchise geography and Network Map, 2014



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- 3.8** There are different infrastructure characteristics across the franchise, which provide different challenges and opportunities for service. A four-track section extends from London Paddington to Didcot Parkway, from where two-track sections diverge north (to Oxford and the Midlands) and west (to Swindon, South Wales and the West of England). From Reading, two-track sections radiate south-west (to Newbury, the South Coast and the West of England), south (to Basingstoke) and south-east (to Redhill and Gatwick Airport). There are also several branch lines (predominantly single-track) in the franchise area, primarily in the Thames Valley and West of England.
- 3.9** Electrification of the Great Western Main Line (GWML) currently extends from London Paddington to Heathrow Airport Junction, which is 25 KV AC overhead line (OHL). The line to Heathrow Airport is also electrified and is currently operated by BAA from Airport Junction to Heathrow. The electrification programmes now in progress will extend from Airport Junction to Maidenhead (delivered by the Crossrail project), and from Maidenhead to Oxford and Newbury in 2016, and to Bristol (via Bath and Bristol Parkway) and Cardiff by 2017. Electrification of the Henley, Marlow and Windsor branches and Reading to Basingstoke is also now approved and delivery dates are being confirmed. Finally, electrification of the line from Cardiff to Swansea is anticipated by May 2018, Third rail electrification (750 V DC) extends from Reading to Wokingham and in part along the North Downs Line, as well as from Redbridge Junction to Portsmouth Harbour and Brighton, but is not used by these franchise services, as it only covers part of the relevant routes.
- 3.10** A variety of signalling systems feature across the area, with the majority of lines signalled with three- or four-aspect colour light signalling. The core Great Western Main Line is currently operated from electronic power boxes from London Paddington to Bristol, Plymouth and Swansea. Outside the core Great Western Main Line, west of Plymouth, to the south coast and southern routes and north to the Cotswolds, there is a mix of mechanical and electronic signal boxes. The National Operating Strategy will move towards concentrating signalling control at the Thames Valley signalling control centre at Didcot and the South Wales signalling control centre at Cardiff.

Local Authority funded services

- 3.11** Historically, local authorities have subsidised additional services on some routes, above those specified by the original Service Level Commitment (SLC) for the franchise, including:
- Bristol to Avonmouth and Severn Beach;
 - Truro to Falmouth;
 - Exeter to Barnstaple and Okehampton and
 - Exmouth to Torbay.

- 3.12** In negotiating the first direct award, the department agreed that a number of these services would be incorporated into the base SLC and in addition, two sets of additional services that were included as Priced Options in the previous ITT are now up and running:
- Westbury and Swindon via Melksham (The Transwilts service); and
 - Newton Abbot to Paignton (The Riviera service).
- 3.13** Notable progress is being made and further initiatives being pursued by FGW in the first direct award period. On 10 December 2013, FGW announced the fitting of free Wi-Fi to the whole of the FGW High Speed Train and Sleeper fleet, by December 2014 and June 2014 respectively. This meets strong demands from Plymouth and West of England stakeholders for better digital connectivity to allow more productive use of train journeys for business travellers.
- 3.14** The department has agreed with First Great Western to increase standard class capacity on all of its High Speed Trains, by converting some of the first class carriages, and reconfiguring the remaining first class carriages:
- This will create 3,000 more standard class seats a day for passengers across the network and deliver nearly 16% more standard class accommodation on services into London in the busy morning peak. It is of direct relevance to busy long-distance train services to the West of England, in particular in the summer;
 - In addition to work to increase standard class capacity, FGW will reconfigure and refresh the remaining first class accommodation, which will improve the travelling experience for business and leisure passengers; and
 - The first completed carriages are expected to be running in June 2014, with the entire fleet completed by late summer 2015. The programme to provide additional standard class seats is being funded by the department while the changes to first class accommodation are being funded by First Great Western.
- 3.15** A continuing increase in demand has meant that crowding levels have continued to be a significant challenge, but recent initiatives by FGW and interventions by the Government are delivering improvements, and the planned upgrades to the Great Western network will deliver further significant, additional capacity.
- 3.16** In 2010, FGW services accounted for all 10 of the top 10 most crowded services in the London area according to the Office of the Rail Regulator (ORR). However in the most recently published study (July 2013 covering the Spring–Autumn 2012 period) FGW services accounted for just 3 of these. This consultation seeks views on how the operator should approach planning to meet passenger demand, both in day to day operation and for special events.

Reliability and performance

- 3.17** Historically, the performance of the franchise has been broadly consistent with national trends and across business segments (Thames Valley, long distance, and West of England services) showing significant reliability problems in the early years of the franchise, followed by gradual improvement from 2006, and a slight deterioration since 2009.
- 3.18** However in recent years, as is widely appreciated, extreme weather events have had a dramatic effect on the network, and the reliability of track and signalling has been a major contributory factor to performance over recent years, with flooding north of Exeter and the breach of the sea wall at Dawlish being particular factors which the operator has had to contend with over the initial period of the first direct award. While this is not within the operator's direct control, this Consultation seeks the views of respondents on how best an operator can manage to meet the needs of its passengers, when 'force majeure' events of this magnitude occur on the network.

Rolling stock and depots

- 3.19** The franchise currently operates a large diverse fleet of trains, including:
- 53 High Speed Train (InterCity 125) sets (lengthened under the November 2011 HLOS intervention);
 - 2 sleeper trains;
 - Class 143 Pacers – small 2-car DMUs serving commuter/regional services in the West of England;
 - Class 150 (additional, being added to the franchise under August and November 2011 HLOS interventions), 153 and 158 Sprinters 1, 2 and 3 car DMUs serving rural routes, and commuter/regional services in the West of England;
 - Class 165/6 Network Turbo trains – larger capacity DMUs operating mainly on routes in the Thames Valley and North Downs; and
 - Class 360 Desiro electric trains on the 'Heathrow Connect' Paddington–Heathrow stopping train service jointly operated with BAA.
 - 5 x 5-car Class 180 intercity diesel units on London to Oxford and London to Cotswolds services to provide additional capacity in the Thames Valley.
- 3.20** FGW operates 7 train maintenance depots (Old Oak Common, Reading, Bristol St Philips Marsh, Swansea Landore, Plymouth Laira, Exeter and Penzance Long Rock). Additionally, a number of other locations are used for overnight train stabling. It is anticipated that depot operations will change over the life of the new franchise, principally because the IEP trains are planned to be maintained by Hitachi, at depots at North Pole (west London), Stoke Gifford (Bristol) and Maliphant (Swansea), with some

maintenance performed at sites where Hitachi is not the Depot Facilities Operator. The operators' depot strategy for non IEP fleets will be a key component of their response to the RfP or ITT. Additionally, the operator will need to continue to address the issues associated with the requirement by the HS2 project for Old Oak Common Depot to be vacated. From May 2017, new IEP trains are expected to be delivered to the operator, with the full fleet available from mid 2018, and the opportunity for a full timetable change to exploit the performance of the new trains with effect from the timetable change date in December 2018. The IEP contract is based around a given number of train sets in service each day, with the overall fleet size determined by the train supplier, not the operator. The service pattern is indicative and is used for business case and authorisation purposes as part of the IEP project. Proposed allocations of IEPs are set out in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Proposed IEP weekday diagrams allocations (the proposed fleet consists of 50 diagrams divided into 57 train sets as shown)

Length	Mode	Quantity
5-car	Bi-modes	32 (36)
9-car	Electrics	18 (21)
Total		50

3.21 All trains are required to comply with the Technical Standard for Interoperability (TSI) for Persons of Reduced Mobility (PRM) by 1 January 2020. On the current franchise, Class 180 and 360 fleets comply with modern access standards (as will IEP trains) but the older units will need further improvement works in order to achieve compliance, which will be facilitated in any new contract.

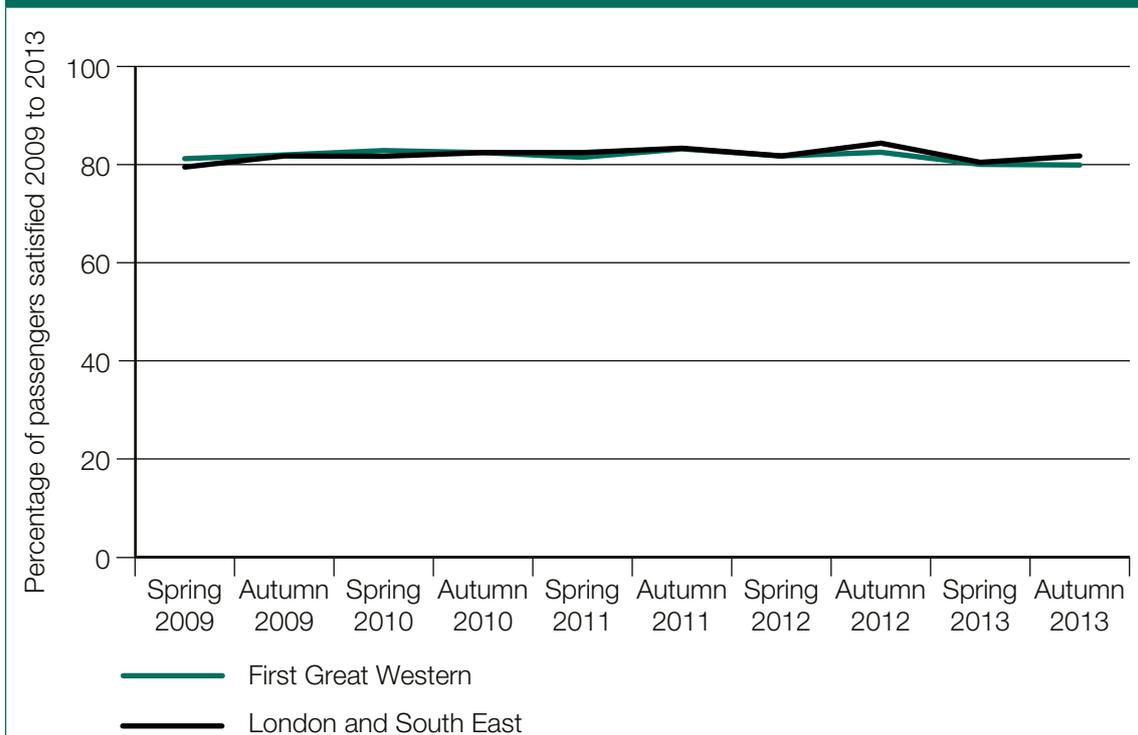
Service quality

3.22 The Rail Executive places great value on the quality of service which rail passengers feel they receive from train operators and works closely with Passenger Focus to ensure train operators have appropriate targets and incentives. In recent years, performance on the Great Western, as measured by the National Passenger Rail Survey (NPS), has remained fairly consistent with the London and South East category, with results of around 80% overall satisfaction. Table 3.5 sets out the most recent (Autumn 2013) NPS results and Figure 3.5 shows the overall trend since 2009.

Table 3.5 Overall Passenger satisfaction (Autumn 2013)

Great Western building block	%	TOC sector comparison	%
Thames Valley	74	London and South East	77
Long distance	84	Long distance	89
West	80	Regional	83

Figure 3.5 NPS statistics: overall customer satisfaction: 2009–2013



4. Objectives for the franchise

4.1 It is important for the franchise to have clear objectives. The Government's objectives for the Great Western franchise, for the 5 year period from September 2015, whether these are delivered through a 10 month direct award followed by a franchise competition, or through a longer direct award are to:

- Ensure the overall passenger experience improves over the period up to 2020, subject to value for money and affordability constraints. This will include but not be limited to improvements in: service quality, retailing, implementing 'smart' technology and integrated ticketing throughout the franchise area on an interoperable basis, improving the accessibility of services and stations (including access for people with reduced mobility), passenger security and improving the transparency of information about the franchise. In the short term we will seek to maintain at least the existing arrangements. Any improvements will not restrict options for a future competition.
- Support economic growth through the provision of train services of appropriate frequency, journey time and capacity. Use flexibility in the train service requirements to optimise services, delivering a balance of commercial and passenger benefits.
- Support the capacity enhancement of the Great Western routes through delivering a franchise agreement that balances the constraints of affordability and value for money in the context of the wider benefits to be delivered by the Great Western Route Modernisation Programme, and supporting where possible effective alliances between relevant industry partners.
- Ensure that train services perform to the highest practical reliability and punctuality standards, and any agreed revised train plan can continue to deliver this objective during the implementation phases of major project works, including HS2. Enable the successful delivery of the Great Western Route Capacity Programme (including Crossrail, IEP, electrification and all other route improvement schemes), working collaboratively with the Rail Executive and other industry partners to ensure that the benefits are realised on time. This will also include, where possible, working with Local Stakeholders to facilitate locally funded rail enhancement projects. Where any direct award enables future benefits (i.e. those that will be realised following the term of the direct award), to ensure that direct award does not delay or reduce any benefit, particularly where doing so risks reducing the value of the franchise to

the Department in a competition. To procure a partner who can work with us to assess franchise structural options, including the possible future partition of the franchise.

- Deliver services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible, including, where appropriate, improving alignment and collaboration with and between relevant industry partners. This will include an expectation of closer working between the incumbent operator and Network Rail. In the event of any direct award, to enhance the delivery of capacity enhancements facilitating effective alliances between relevant industry partners where timely and appropriate. To ensure that any direct award commercial agreement considers the Department's wider risk position and in particular the Great Western Route Modernisation Programme and HS2.
- Benchmark and optimise the overall environmental performance and minimise the carbon footprint for the franchise. In the short term, to maintain at least the existing arrangements. Any improvements must not restrict options for a future competition.

1. Respondents are encouraged to consider whether any additional objectives should be reflected in the franchise specification for the 5 year period from September 2015

- Facilitate Community Rail Projects, and support local new and existing rail partnerships sharing responsibility for running parts of the regional railway to implement the department's Community Rail Strategy.

5. Enhancement Schemes

The Rail Investment Strategy (RIS) also known as High Level Output Specification (HLOS)

- 5.1** In advance of each of the Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR's) Periodic Reviews of Network Rail's outputs and funding, the department is required to set out the RIS/HLOS and Statement of Funds Available (SOFA) for the next five-year railway period (Control Period). The RIS/HLOS specifies the outputs that the Government wishes the industry to achieve, in areas such as reliability, safety and capacity. These are then incorporated into delivery plans by the industry, under the oversight of the ORR. During each Control Period the Government can also agree changes to the RIS/HLOS and SOFA, based on emerging industry needs. The first Control Period to use this process was CP4 which ran from April 2009 to March 2014. Control Period 5, which includes around £7.5bn of spending on the Great Western Mainline, began on 1st April 2014. The process for planning control period 6 will run during the period covered by this consultation.

Committed infrastructure schemes for Control Period

- 5.2** This section provides more detail on the committed enhancement schemes which are planned to be implemented during the present control period (CP5). These schemes represent a great deal of investment and will have a significant impact on the franchise. This detail is provided as context to inform the consultation in general and the particular responses to question 3 below.

Swindon–Kemble redoubling

- 5.3** A scheme to install an additional track (redoubling) from Swindon to Kemble will provide increased capacity from this year (2014). This should allow for an increased number of services to pass through the area and the RfP or ITT will invite the operator to propose how they would use the additional capacity.

Reading station redevelopment

- 5.4** Reading station and the surrounding network are currently being substantially redeveloped and completion is anticipated in spring 2015. The enhancement will allow an increased throughput of trains through what has been a historic bottleneck on the franchise and will reduce delays.

- 5.5** Until December 2015 the main changes to weekday services will be determined by the track and platform layout at Reading, as successive sections of the new infrastructure there are brought into use and there will be some level of disruption during this period. After the signalling commissioning exercise over Easter 2015, the full functionality of the enhanced Reading layout should become available for use; which should provide the potential for improved services that the operator can take advantage of.

Great Western Main Line electrification

- 5.6** A very substantial programme of investment in the GWML infrastructure and trains is planned to take place between now and 2018/19. Electrification of the routes from Airport Junction to, Oxford and Newbury is expected to be completed by December 2016, to Bristol by May 2017, to Cardiff by December 2017, and to Swansea by May 2018. From this date London suburban services are expected to operate with electric stock, possibly resourced from cascades of stock from elsewhere on the network, which could provide faster, cleaner journeys for the franchise. This, in turn, will release some of the existing Diesel Multiple Units (DMU) stock for redeployment elsewhere on the network.

The InterCity Express Programme

- 5.7** The InterCity Express Programme (“IEP”) is a deal worth £5.7bn for new rolling stock for the Great Western and InterCity East Coast franchises. 57 new, bi-mode and electric class 800/801 IEP trains in 50 diagrammed sets are planned for introduction on the Great Western franchise from May 2017 to replace most of the High Speed Train sets currently in operation. These trains could be deployed on services between London, Bristol, Weston-super-Mare (via Bath and via Parkway), Cheltenham, Worcester/Hereford and South Wales with the full service in place from the December 2018 timetable change date.
- 5.8** This is planned to happen in conjunction with electrification to Cardiff, Oxford and Newbury, which should already have been completed by the time the first units come into service. These new trains are capable of providing faster journey times and potentially more services and greater capacity than the current rolling stock provides. They will also provide a significant improvement in the passenger experience. The long term IEP deployment may vary from IEP business case assumptions, and the RfP or ITT will ask the operator to determine how best to optimise fleet deployment, taking into account the response to this consultation.

Crossrail

- 5.9** Crossrail is a new west–east railway linking Reading and Heathrow in the west via tunnels under central London to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east. It will add significant capacity to London’s rail network through the

provision of up to 24 high-capacity, 9-coach trains an hour in each direction in the central section between Paddington and Liverpool Street during peak periods. This major development will provide a stimulus to the economies it serves. Crossrail services will commence from 2018. Under current plans Crossrail services will take over the Heathrow Connect services from Paddington to Heathrow Airport from May 2018. and will provide the suburban relief-line service between Paddington and Reading by December 2019 The Great Western operator will be expected to facilitate the transfer of services and specific stations to the Crossrail operator. In addition, although through services from Greenford to Paddington will cease, a shuttle service will operate between Greenford and West Ealing and will be included in the Great Western franchise as part of the changes associated with the Crossrail programme.

- 5.10** A combined model IEP/Crossrail timetable has been developed, and refined, which the department has referred to in our assessment of future Great Western demand. The timetable is an operational model upon which the department will base its comparator model assumptions, but the Specification will not mandate it as a requirement for implementing IEP services. This means that there is opportunity for the operator to develop a timetable that it considers best meets the needs of the franchise and its users and can take into account responses to this consultation when it does so.

Bristol

- 5.11** The Secretary of State wishes the industry to undertake work to expand the capacity of the railway serving passengers to and from Bristol including increasing route capacity into Bristol from Filton Abbey Wood and increasing station capacity at Bristol Temple Meads by bringing back into railway use the historic station building. This will help the franchise to better serve the growing passenger demand of the Bristol economy.

Oxford

- 5.12** Capacity and station expansion is sought at Oxford in conjunction with East West Rail and the Electric Spine programme of electrification, to ensure that full advantage can be taken of this programme.

Welsh Valleys Electrification

- 5.13** Electrification to Cardiff is expected by 2018, and it is anticipated that this will be extended to Swansea, in conjunction with electrification of the Welsh Valleys. This will provide an electrified route throughout much of South Wales.

2. Respondents are encouraged to consider and identify any specific local factors that they believe might influence the future level of passenger demand, which should be reflected in the specification for the new franchise.

The Rail Industry Long Term Planning Process (LTPP)

- 5.14** Network Rail's recommendations for the longer term upgrade strategy to 2019 were set out in detail in the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (March 2010), which covers the 10-year period from 2009 to 2019 and which should be read in conjunction with the London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy (July 2011). Both of these were used to inform the HLOS /Rail Investment Strategy plans for the period until 2019.
- 5.15** Network Rail has started the long term planning process for the period from 2019 with the publication of four studies covering the London and South-East, Long Distance, Regional Urban and Freight markets (all October 2013).
- 5.16** These will be followed by geographical route studies. The study for the Western route is underway as part of the first tranche of work. It will report in 2015, in time to inform the consideration of HLOS/rail investment strategy for Control Period 6 and beyond.
- 5.17** The operator will be expected to contribute to the route studies covering the franchise area.

Further schemes for development in CP5

- 5.18** Network Rail's Control Period 5 Delivery Plan was published in March. It includes a commitment to take forward the following schemes during CP5:
- East-west rail, commencing in March 2016 with the extension of Chiltern Railways to Oxford, which is expected to deliver the full route from Milton Keynes and Bedford by the end of the Control Period (2019).
 - Western rail access to Heathrow – an initial study is under way, and this access could be in use by approximately 2021 if it can be successfully incorporated with the other major works in the area.
 - The Government recognises the need for a resilient rail route to Plymouth and the far South West and expects that Network Rail will take forward initiatives towards delivering this during the Control Period.

3. Respondents are encouraged to highlight interfaces with any other schemes that are likely to be delivered during the next five years, which the operator may need to consider.

Potential Franchise remapping

- 5.19** From time to time the department considers the overall franchise map and looks at synergies between franchise areas as part of the refranchising process, and how the routes are organised by franchise area. We expect franchised operators to work with us in this respect. As part of the

2011–2012 Great Western Franchise Consultation, consultees were invited to suggest changes as part of their response and we would now like to refresh that exercise. As part of the direct award process or any franchise competition to cover the next 5 years, the Rail Executive may consider proposals for new routes to be served, or where appropriate for existing Great Western services to be transferred into other franchises; or for services currently operated by others to be incorporated within the Great Western franchise. To be considered, any proposals will need to provide good value for money for the passenger and the taxpayer. Therefore we would welcome your views, however, putting any such proposals in place may be subject to further consultation.

4. Respondents are invited to identify any changes or reorganisation to the routes served by the Great Western franchise that they would recommend; and to explain their rationale.

Potential Third Party Promoted Schemes

5.20 In addition to the base case specification, Rail Executive may consider proposals for third party promoted schemes for implementation during the franchise period. These could involve the provision of additional services or, in certain circumstances, a reduction in the level of service from that proposed by the Rail Executive. These increments or decrements could include schemes that promoters, such as local authorities, have requested be included. Some potential candidates include:

- Bristol – Portishead
- Additional half hourly services between Bristol and Bath
- Half hourly services on the Bristol – Severn Beach line
- Plymouth – Penzance additional services
- Bere Alston – Tavistock additional services

5.21 In addition, new stations at:

- Newcourt (now committed)
- Marsh Barton
- Edginswell
- Portway Park and Ride
- Reading Green Park

5.22 The operator will be required to work with the promoters of these schemes as they progress towards implementation and also with promoters of schemes under development during the franchise period but which are expected to be implemented beyond 2020. These include further new

stations in the Greater Bristol area and the re-opening of the Henbury Loop to Passenger services (MetroWest phase 2). Many of these additional services could be secured by seeking priced options from the operator.

5.23 Any proposed increments or decrements must:

- Comply with the objectives of the franchise;
- Be operationally deliverable;
- Demonstrate value for money; and
- Be funded by promoters for at least an initial three year period (for which the promoter will need to provide evidence of funding).

5.24 For further information, please see *Conditions Relating to the Funding of new or Enhanced Services Promoted by Local Bodies*, which is included at **Appendix 3**.

5. Respondents who wish to promote service changes should clearly identify these in their response to this consultation, as well as any supporting business case or value for money (VfM) analysis.

6. Stakeholders

Devolved governments and local transport authorities

- 6.1** In addition to the Welsh Government, and Transport for London (TfL); a large number of local Government organisations and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) take a keen interest in the Great Western franchise and the Rail Executive recognises the importance of train services to the economy and well-being of the areas the franchise serves.
- 6.2** All Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) have the powers to specify increments or decrements to Rail Executive's base specification. Where these require additional funding, the LTA will be required to provide this, at least for the first three years, but where savings are made the LTA is able to use these for other transport purposes, including the funding of other increments. In addition to our general discussions about decentralisation (see below), over the coming months the Rail Executive will continue to work with the LTAs served by the Great Western franchise as we consider the specification further. Should any LTA intend to sponsor increments, we will consider incorporating them into the franchise requirements, either as part of the base specification or as priced options, so long as they are operationally feasible and identified in response to question 5 of this consultation.

Passenger Focus

- 6.3** Passenger Focus provides independent advice to the Secretary of State, based on research and consultation with wider stakeholders on the key issues that the new franchise should consider.
- 6.4** As part of the franchising process, Passenger Focus may also choose to conduct specific research of customer expectations for the GW franchise, analysing responses from passengers representing the services operated on the franchise area. Findings from this research, together with information from the regular National Passenger Survey (NPS) and other research into passenger views and priorities, will be used to inform the development of the Request for Proposal where possible.
- 6.5** Research by Passenger Focus in 2012 identified some key recommendations for passengers' priorities, including:
- Delivering value for money;
 - Providing a punctual and reliable service;

- Provision of sufficient capacity, both in terms of train frequency and the availability of seating on board the train;
- Effective management of disruption, especially through information to passengers;
- The availability of accurate information about trains and platforms;
- The comfort and adequacy of accommodation on the train, especially on longer distance journeys;
- The availability of train and station staff;
- The ease of buying the most appropriate ticket for the journey at a ticket office, online or via a ticket machine; and
- The ease of access to services for passengers with reduced mobility.

6.6 Rail Executive will continue to work with Passenger Focus and Travelwatch Southwest in considering how best to incentivise the GW operator to deliver these recommendations in a cost-effective, affordable and practical manner. In general, Rail Executive is supportive of those elements that seek to improve service quality, passenger information and link improvements to monitored results.

Other consultee groups

6.7 South West England has the benefit of a number of dedicated and knowledgeable stakeholder groups, such as Travelwatch Southwest, who complement the work of Passenger Focus.

Trade Unions

6.8 Rail Executive recognises that many of the people employed in the delivery, maintenance and operation of the Great Western railway are members of trade unions and the value that this perspective can bring.

6.9 Rail Executive places a high value on the insight and knowledge that all stakeholders can bring to the franchising process and appreciates the contributions already made. Rail Executive will continue to engage positively with interested parties, including those groups listed in Appendix 4.

6. Respondents are encouraged to bring to our attention research, evidence or publications which they believe should be considered in the development of the franchise specification.

7. The service specification

- 7.1** This section sets out Rail Executive's proposed approach to the specification of the services to be required of the Great Western operator during the five year period from September 2015. It contains details of how the franchise objectives may be addressed through the specification and seeks consultees' views.
- 7.2** The major projects that will be implemented on Great Western in the early years of the franchise will, to some extent, constrain the operator's room for manoeuvre in timetable development. This will be particularly true of the timings of London-based services, although there may well be some 'knock-on' effects of those timings on the regional and rural services further west.
- 7.3** Following the responses to this consultation, Rail Executive will consider how to best incorporate these into future franchise specification, which will be developed, and tested by specialist advisors. The overall specification will need to be both affordable against the department's future budget, and deliver value for money.

Train Service Specification

- 7.4** The Rail Executive intends that any specification for the 5 year period covered by this consultation should aim to ensure continuity of the service pattern in operation today, as set out in Service Level Commitment (SLC) and the current timetable while providing flexibility for the operator to respond to demographic and market changes and commercial opportunities in the future. We also expect that the service specification for the 5 year period from September 2015 will enable the operator to deploy the new Electric Multiple Units and IEP trains, and cascaded rolling stock, so as to realise the benefits of the new fleet and infrastructure. This is likely to require a number of sequential SLCs. The franchise requirements will define the minimum service specification that is required, and may also invite the operator to propose cost neutral enhancements or refinements to the service specification as part of their response. The Rail Executive will consider the value for money and financial impacts of all proposals for the service specification before it can proceed with them.

7. Respondents are invited to propose any changes to the current service pattern which they feel should be considered and to explain their rationale, for example by identifying specific local factors which might influence the future level of passenger demand which they consider should be reflected in a revised specification.

The service pattern

- 7.5** This section contains questions about specific aspects of the service pattern that currently operates and describes how that pattern may need to change over the 5 year period in question. The actual service pattern run will be decided by the operator within the constraints of the Train Service Specification. Respondents are encouraged to consider the service components set out below. Comments on this section will be examined the by Rail Executive and will also be provided for the operator to consider.
- 7.6** The current weekday off-peak service pattern, in each direction, is broadly the following:

InterCity

- 7.7** Trains to and from Paddington
- Half-hourly services to Cardiff with an hourly continuation to Swansea and one train a day to Carmarthen;
 - Half-hourly from London to Bristol Temple Meads, with some extensions to Weston-super-Mare and Taunton;
 - Hourly to Plymouth, with some through trains to Torbay and to Penzance;
 - Hourly services to Worcester with five daily extensions to Hereford
 - Nine trains a day to Gloucester and Cheltenham; and
 - A nightly sleeper service to Penzance.

Thames Valley

- Paddington to Greenford services, half-hourly;
- Heathrow Connect, operated jointly with Heathrow Airport Holdings Limited (formerly BAA), half-hourly stopping services to Heathrow Airport;
- Heathrow Express services, quarter-hourly fast services (not part of the GW franchise));
- Four trains an hour providing services to Slough, Maidenhead and Reading and other intermediate stations, two of which extend as local services to Oxford;
- Thames Valley branches:
 - Slough to Windsor and Eton Central – approximately every 20 minutes;
 - Maidenhead to Bourne End and Marlow (hourly, with peak hour extensions to and from Paddington);
 - Twyford to Henley-on-Thames (hourly, with peak hour extensions to Paddington);
 - Half-hourly services from Reading to Basingstoke;
- Reading to Newbury all stations (hourly);

- London to Newbury fast, continuing all stations to Bedwyn, some operated as part of the West of England group – one train an hour;
- London to Oxford fast – two trains an hour, many extending to Worcester and Great Malvern as part of the North Cotswolds group;
- Oxford to Banbury stopper services (irregular intervals);
- Reading to Redhill/Gatwick (half-hourly, hourly extension to Gatwick).

West of England (summer service pattern)

- West of England branches:
 - St Erth–St Ives (half hourly);
 - Truro–Falmouth (half hourly);
 - Par–Newquay (irregular interval);
 - Liskeard–Looe (hourly);
 - Plymouth–Gunnislake (two-hourly).
- Local service overlays, Somerset–Devon and Cornwall main line;
- Bristol ‘spokes’, a mix of longer distance and regional services:
 - Cardiff to Portsmouth via Bristol (regional – hourly), with two trains a day to Brighton;
 - Cardiff–Taunton and Bristol Parkway–Weston-super-Mare, both via Bristol (each hourly);
 - Bristol–Westbury/Salisbury/Southampton and other overlays (local – hourly);
 - Bristol–Severn Beach via the Severn Beach Line
 - Weymouth to Gloucester/Cheltenham/Great Malvern (local – two-hourly);
 - Westbury–Swindon (twice daily); now increased to a two-hourly service
- Exeter area local services:
 - Exmouth–Barnstaple via Exeter (hourly)
 - Exmouth–Paignton via Exeter (hourly), now increased to a half hourly service

- 7.8** Additional summer-only routes currently operated include Exeter–Okehampton (Sundays under contract to Devon County Council) and London–Pembroke Dock via Carmarthen (Saturdays only).

Future service pattern

IEP InterCity services on Bristol, Swansea, Cheltenham and Worcester routes

- 7.9** The new InterCity Express Programme (IEP) trains will bring faster services and additional capacity to major UK cities, along the Great Western Main

Line between London, Reading, Bristol, Cardiff and Swansea. The size and make-up of the new IEP fleet will be capable of delivering the following indicative modelled service pattern. The indicative service pattern is described below and also illustrated in Figure 7.1. Within the contractual commitments of the IEP programme the operator may have flexibility as to how the fleet is operated on a day-to-day basis.

7.10 The indicative IEP service pattern described below and illustrated in Figure 7.1 is a model only and in both the direct award, and competed franchise scenarios the department will be looking to rail operators to propose their preferred solutions:

- 4 trains per hour (tph) London–Bristol Temple Meads; 2 tph running via Bath and 2 tph running via Bristol Parkway. Some of the Parkway trains would extend to Weston-super-Mare and, in the peaks, to Taunton;
- 2 tph London–Cardiff, with 1 tph serving Swansea, and 1 train per day extending to Carmarthen;
- 1 tph London–Worcester, with some extensions towards Hereford; and
- 1 tph London–Cheltenham.

West of England and non IEP Intercity Services

7.11 The remainder of the InterCity service, while IEP trains may be deployed on some routes, will likely need to be provided by more conventional rolling stock, including:

- Regular trains to Westbury, with some extensions to Exeter and Paignton;
- Frequent fast trains between London and Plymouth and Cornwall;
- Any additional long- or middle-distance trains that cannot be resourced by IEP trains; and
- Special events trains to serve events such as Cheltenham Races or Glastonbury Festival not resourceable from the IEP fleet.

7.12 The franchise specification in both a direct award or a competition will include a requirement for the operator, or for franchise bidders, to consider and propose options for the best provision of these services.

7.13 There will be a balance to be achieved between faster end-to-end journeys, and intermediate station calls on these routes – although we are optimistic, following improvements to infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling, that both may be able to be maintained or improved.

8. Respondents are invited to say whether they value a faster headline journey time, or more intermediate stops, on a particular journey that they make (and to identify that journey).

9. Should any elements of the indicative modelled intercity service pattern be mandated, and can it be improved? What should the priority be for intercity services where IEP trains are not planned to operate?

London, Thames Valley and North Downs suburban services

- 7.14** The completion of suburban electrification works, to Oxford and Newbury, expected in 2016, will coincide, approximately, with the reduction in capacity of the Paddington 'throat' in connection with the construction of the Crossrail facility at Westbourne Park. This combination of circumstances will increase the capacity available to commuters through the operation of longer (8-car) trains, but may result in slightly fewer services.
- 7.15** This reduction in capacity at Westbourne Park will mean that the two-car through trains from Greenford to Paddington will need to terminate at West Ealing, because all the available timetable slots will be required for high-capacity trains. Greenford will be served by a shuttle service from West Ealing, connecting with trains to Paddington and Heathrow.
- 7.16** It is anticipated that the completion of this suburban electrification programme, will present opportunities for service improvements in addition to the extra capacity, lower operating cost and improved environmental performance provided by the longer, EMU trains compared to the turbo diesel fleet they will replace. For example, there could be an opportunity to run high-capacity (up to 12-car) fast trains on middle-distance routes from, for example, Oxford and Newbury. In the peaks this may give the operator the chance to provide commuters from stations such as Reading, Twyford and Maidenhead with fast trains on which long-distance passengers have not taken all the seats.
- 7.17** In addition the faster acceleration and expected running speed, up to 110mph, of the fast services could provide opportunities for journey time improvements compared to the current timetable.
- 7.18** The specification will also need to consider how to achieve the best outcome for communities served by stations which will, under current plans, remain outside the perimeter of the electric network. For instance, after the planned electrification to Newbury in 2016, trains from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury on the Berks & Hants line would still have to be diesel-operated. FGW has recently consulted on future options for services from Pewsey and Hungerford stations as part of its consultation on improvements to long-distance services to the West of England. We would therefore like respondents to consider:

10. What do you feel the Great Western operator's priorities on the suburban network should be once it is electrified in 2016 e.g. for additional higher capacity, fast commuter services, or improved journey times?

11. After the electrification to Newbury, expected in 2016 would passengers' needs be best served by a diesel service from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to Newbury connecting into a fast service to London Paddington, or a diesel stopping service from Bedwyn to Reading connecting to a fast service from Reading to London Paddington, or other options? The former would give faster journey times to London but add a change at Newbury for passengers to Reading.

Regional and Rural services, and Community Rail

- 7.19** For regional and rural services, the main challenge to be addressed is the capacity of the trains in the light of the rapid growth in passenger numbers experienced in recent years. There may also be the possibility of improved service patterns; making the best use of planned electrification and of infrastructure enhancements in the far South West. Rail Executive will pay close attention to the operator's rolling stock proposals to assess whether sufficient capacity is planned to meet the forecast demand and that the proposals are not placing a disproportionate burden on the public purse.
- 7.20** Rail Executive is keen to see a continuation of the improvements in the financial performance and usefulness of local and rural railway lines delivered through the application of the Community Rail Development Strategy. The strategy (published in November 2004 and available on the department's website) sets out pragmatic and practical steps that can be taken to increase revenue, reduce costs and increase community involvement in local and rural railways.
- 7.21** Community Rail initiatives are designed to support and develop the local rail network and create links between the community, businesses and the railway, including seeking ways to improve facilities on stations through local station sponsoring.
- 7.22** Within the Great Western franchise area there are three community rail partnerships supporting eight formally designated community rail lines and services: The Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership; the Severnside Community Rail Partnership; and the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership. These partnerships have been highly successful in promoting railway lines, creating links between the community, businesses and the railway and improving facilities in stations.

- 7.23** Rail Executive expects the Great Western operator to demonstrate a commitment to work with existing designated Community Rail Partnerships, and with any new partnerships that develop over time including continuing to provide funding and to indicate how they propose to work with communities over the life of the franchise. We would welcome respondents' views on the following questions pertaining to Regional and Rural services which we wish to address in the specification:

12. Respondents are invited to suggest ways in which Community Rail Partnerships could deliver more of the beneficial outcomes for passengers achieved so far.

13. While maintaining end-to-end service frequency, could the needs of passengers be better met by providing the operator with some flexibility over calling patterns on branch lines?

Implementing changes to the timetable

- 7.24** The timetable proposal for the December 2015 timetable change will already have been made by the time any new contract comes into force over the franchise, so changes to the inherited train service are unlikely to occur before the timetable change date in December 2016.
- 7.25** Any proposals for timetable change by the operator will need to be accompanied by an operational plan showing the impacts on capacity and demand.
- 7.26** For material timetable changes during the franchise period, the operator may also be required to carry out a public timetable consultation, at an appropriate time, before any changes are incorporated into the planning process.

Managing disruption

- 7.27** Because of the engineering works planned to deliver the upgrade of the Great Western route, during the 5 year period there will be some unavoidable temporary reductions in service levels to facilitate them. Once the upgrades are complete, Network Rail will still need adequate access to the rail network to meet its maintenance and renewals obligations – obligations that are likely to be intensified by the greater traffic levels arising from enhanced Great Western services; high frequency Crossrail services; and increasing numbers of long-distance heavy freight trains. Changes to access arrangements may enable Network Rail to undertake this work with greater efficiency or at a faster rate. Such considerations need to be balanced against the needs of rail users and opportunities for business growth in the evenings and at weekends.

- 7.28** The operator will be expected to work with Network Rail and other operators to develop the ‘seven-day railway’ initiative which aims to increase the amount of time the network is available for trains to run, and to achieve the optimal trade-off between efficient use of engineering resources and journey opportunities, taking into account forecast growth in demand for travel, particularly at weekends.
- 7.29** The operator for the next 5 years will be expected to demonstrate their approach to provision of services at times of engineering work, including working with Network Rail to minimise ‘all line’ blocks and use of diversionary routes to minimise the need for replacement road services especially on the Thames Valley Lines during the forthcoming periods of infrastructure upgrade.
- 7.30** The operator will also be required to set out how, if no diversionary route exists, frequent, high-quality, accessible and well-managed rail replacement services are to be provided during periods of disruption.

14. Respondents are asked to suggest what mitigating actions and steps the GW operator should be expected to take to meet the needs of its passengers both during the planned disruption to the GW franchise as a result of planned upgrade works and when ‘force majeure’ events such as extreme weather, impact the network.

15. Where the provision of temporary, alternative service is unavoidable, respondents are invited to suggest what alternative provisions they would prefer the GW operator to put in place.

Capacity

- 7.31** Passengers generally expect to be able to get a seat on trains within the infrastructure available, though there are times where some standing may be possible, particularly on shorter, busier journeys.
- 7.32** The operator will be required to include detailed operational plans in their proposal, which should demonstrate the efficient allocation and deployment of available rolling stock to ensure that appropriate capacity is matched to demand, addressing existing and forecast crowding to the maximum extent possible.
- 7.33** Where additional capacity can be commercially provided by the operator, they may be expected to take steps to meet expected demand. However, if public subsidy would be required for this, Rail Executive would need to decide whether this is affordable and delivers value for money before imposing such a requirement on the operator.

16. Respondents are encouraged to consider what steps the GW operator should be expected to take when reacting to changes in passenger demand, and what targets for capacity should be set.

Reliability and performance

- 7.34** Recently let franchises have applied a single “Delay Repay” compensation policy based on delays to individual journeys for all passengers, Rail Executive would expect to follow this practice for the GW specification as soon as practically possible.
- 7.35** The operator will be expected to demonstrate how they would deliver improved punctuality, especially for arrivals at stations where connections are important. When evaluating any proposal Rail Executive may give additional credit in evaluation for alternative measures that could deliver better performance, greater capacity or improved journey times. Where these involve timetable changes, it should be noted that, as with all timetable changes, the operator will be required to consult fully with interested parties.
- 7.36** The new franchise may include an incentive regime which encourages the operator to work collaboratively with industry partners to improve the performance of the overall railway.
- 7.37** The Government is working towards greater transparency from the rail industry, both in relation to the public money spent on rail services and the outcomes that subsidy delivers. For example, Rail Executive believes that greater disaggregation of performance data will encourage TOCs to achieve consistency across different types of service they operate. This is particularly important for Great Western due to the diverse markets that the railway serves.

17. Respondents are invited to highlight if there are specific stations or services where they feel particular attention should be paid to reliability or punctuality.

Rail Value for Money

- 7.38** The Government aims to secure a sustainable and efficient railway. In May 2011, Sir Roy McNulty published the independent *Rail Value for Money Study* and Rail Executive will work with the rail industry in Great Britain to improve its efficiency.
- 7.39** Rail Executive and the rail industry are examining options for better aligning the incentives of the organisations responsible for track and trains. The aim is to get them working more closely together to drive down the cost to passengers and taxpayers while improving the quality of services, and a number of TOC and NR ‘alliancing’ arrangements are now being developed.

- 7.40** The new operator will be expected to work with the Rail Executive, Network Rail and the ORR on ideas for bringing costs down and improving co-operation between the management of track and trains. Any work done in this area will need to reflect the diverse use of the infrastructure in the Great Western franchise area and to take on board the interests of all users, including freight operators.

18. Are there any areas of the GW franchise where you feel cost savings could be made?

8. Delivering improvements for passengers

- 8.1** The GW operator will be asked to make proposals aimed at improving the overall quality of service delivered to passengers. The operator will be encouraged to find innovative ways to enhance the level of passenger satisfaction over and above that of today and will be free to propose alternative approaches to those noted below.
- 8.2** We would emphasise that, while we welcome ideas and proposals on all the matters set out below from stakeholders, only some of these issues are suitable for inclusion in the franchise specification and/or the Franchise Agreement that will flow from it.

Better railway stations

- 8.3** Stations ought to be attractive gateways to the railway system, as well as being modern, user-friendly interchanges with other forms of transport.
- 8.4** The new operator will be expected to consider and propose what appropriate enhancements should be made at stations. They will be expected to have considered how best to enhance the quality of the station portfolio in their proposals and are also encouraged to facilitate any enhancements proposed in as cost-effective a manner as possible.

Access for All (A4A) and National Stations Improvement Programme (NSIP)

- 8.5** A number of stations within the franchise area will see improvements under the Access for All scheme over the 5 year period and these are set out below in Tables 8.1 and 8.2 The Access for All main programme is a programme to improve access at stations in England, Scotland and Wales between through to 2019.

Table 8.1 Access for All main schemes

Station	Scheme
Burnham (Bucks)	Lift and stairs from subway to platform and associated works
Chippenham	2 lifts and new public right of way bridge with walkway and associated stairs. £800k funding from renewals for new bridge (not included on AFC hence reduction)
St Erth	Construction of new bridge with stairs and ramps, removing existing footbridge

- 8.6** The new operator will be expected to co-operate with and reasonably assist the implementation of the Programme. Further information can be found on the department's website at www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/rail/railstations.
- 8.7** A number of stations in the current franchise have already benefited from funding through the NSIP, the £150 million fund to improve approximately 150 medium-sized stations in England and Wales in Control Period 4, which was announced in 2007. A further £100 million has been made available in Control Period 5 (for the period 2014 to 2019) and the operator will be expected to co-operate in the implementation of works at stations designated by the Local Delivery Group for improvement under this fund. These schemes will be expected to deliver the objectives established in the 2012 High Level Output Statement. In particular LDGs have been asked to develop schemes that are able to attract additional third party funding from appropriate stakeholders and the operator will be expected to continue this initiative. Details about the NSIP programme can be found on Network Rail Website at www.networkrail.co.uk.

Security and safety

- 8.8** Improvements in station and on-train security are an important element in improving the overall passenger perception of the railway, which in turn helps attract new passengers.
- 8.9** Passenger Focus has highlighted security as an area of particular concern to passengers and has produced a publication on this subject entitled *Passenger Perceptions of Personal Security on the Railways*.
- 8.10** We anticipate that the operator will maintain the current level of secure stations accreditation throughout the franchise term, as well as CCTV coverage on rolling stock.
- 8.11** The proposal will also be expected to outline plans for other security enhancements, such as extensions to CCTV coverage, improved working with the British Transport Police (BTP) and identify opportunities to secure external funding.

19. Respondents are encouraged to consider which locations merit consideration for future improvement under these schemes.

Passenger information

- 8.12** Research by Passenger Focus has highlighted that the provision of timely and accurate information is a key priority for passengers, and this is especially true during periods of disruption. In recent years considerable improvements to information provision have been made with the introduction of real-time information at stations and improved access via mobile phones and the internet. The National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES) which all train operators use as a standard licence requirement, now provides a large amount of high-quality information on all aspects of the rail journey.
- 8.13** Rail Executive may seek proposals from the new operator that fully utilise existing channels of communication, such as real-time information, both at the station and on the train, to provide accurate and up-to-date information, especially when things go wrong.
- 8.14** Rail Executive may also encourage consideration of new ways in which the operator can communicate with their passengers and will ask the operator to consider linking information on rail journeys on their websites with Transport Direct website services to allow door-to-door journey planning.

20. Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to communicate information with passengers across the franchise and how best to keep passengers informed during times of disruption.

Service quality

- 8.15** Rail Executive is seeking improvements that, above all, are aimed at enhancing the overall quality of the service experienced by passengers using the Great Western services.
- 8.16** The operator may also be required to propose how to improve aspects of the rail journey not covered elsewhere, such as the quality and cleanliness of stations and trains.
- 8.17** Approaches may include the setting of disaggregated annual National Passenger Survey (NPS) targets by the operator, as summarised in Section 3 of this document. Respondents' views on the best approach are welcome. In the shorter term Rail Executive will aim to maintain current levels of service but this consultation seeks views on the five year period from September 2015.

- 8.18** Rail Executive is considering the appropriate approach for the new franchise and believes a combination of NPS results and periodic review of TOC Key Performance Indicators could provide a good solution.

21. Rail Executive is considering what the appropriate approach for monitoring and improving service quality in the new franchise would be. Respondents are invited to say what matters most to them (for example, cleanliness of trains and stations, or the helpfulness of staff) in terms of the service quality they receive.

Improving the environmental performance of the railway

- 8.19** Although rail is a relatively clean and efficient means of transport, it must still play its part in reducing its environmental impacts and in contributing to the Government's broader sustainable development objectives. In addition, with large populations living near the railway, all TOCs have an important role to play in managing their activities to reduce noise, pollution and other disturbance to their line-side neighbours.
- 8.20** Consequently, Rail Executive will expect the operator to set out plans for measuring, monitoring and reducing the environmental impact of their rail activities. Rail Executive will encourage the operator to set annual targets to improve the environmental performance of the franchise and to ensure they have appropriate environmental management systems.
- 8.21** The operator will be expected to reflect industry best practice in their proposals, in particular around measuring, monitoring and reducing traction and non-traction energy consumption. Where initiatives reduce energy bills or other costs, Rail Executive would expect the benefits to be reflected in lower franchise costs.
- 8.22** The operator, or bidders for the franchise may be required to develop and implement a sustainable procurement policy to reduce the environmental impact of goods and services procured as part of the franchise.

22. Please indicate if there are any additional areas that you think Rail Executive should consider consulting on and that have not already been addressed during stakeholder engagement.

9. Consultation

- 9.1** Consultees are requested to comment on aspects of the Rail Executive's proposed approach to specification set out in Section 7 of this consultation document, and on the key questions posed. Rail Executive would also welcome formal notification of any specific increments or decrements that potential funders wish to pursue as part of the franchise.

The consultation principles

- 9.2** The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's key consultation principles. Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principlesguidance>
If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

Consultation Co-ordinator
Department for Transport
Zone 1/29 Great Minster House
London SW1P 4DR
Email consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Impact assessment

- 9.3** The department has conducted a screening level assessment of the impact this franchise consultation will have on the promotion of equality and is satisfied that, at this stage, a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. Details of the screening level assessment can be obtained from the department on request.

Action following consultation

- 9.4** Following the consultation period, Rail Executive will consider responses, undertake such further analysis as might be necessary and, if appropriate, include consultees' suggestions within the franchise requirements as part of the Base Specification or as a priced option.
- 9.5** Rail Executive will produce a summary of the outcome of the consultation process as a Stakeholder Briefing Document and will publish this later in the year. the specification when it is published in due course.

Invitations to consultees

- 9.6** A list of bodies formally consulted is set out in Appendix 2.
- 9.7** Rail User Groups should send comments in the first instance to Rail Executive and also provide copies to Passenger Focus as appropriate.

- 9.8** Members of the general public may also wish to copy their responses to their local district, county, unitary authority or London borough or Member of Parliament. Copies of comments can also be made available to Passenger Focus.
- 9.9** When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

Freedom of Information

- 9.10** Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
- 9.11** If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.
- 9.12** In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the department.
- 9.13** The department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.
- 9.14** It should be noted that submissions made will not in general receive an individual response, but all responses received will be considered and submissions received by email will receive an automated acknowledgement.
- 9.15** This document can be made available in appropriate accessible formats on request.
- 9.16** Responses to this consultation should be sent to:
Great Western Franchise Consultation Manager
Department for Transport
Zone 4/13
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
- 9.17** Or by email to:
GWconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk
- 9.18** The deadline for responses is 26 June 2014, but earlier replies will be very welcome.

Appendix 1: Consultation questions

- 1.** Respondents are encouraged to consider whether any additional objectives should be reflected in the franchise specification for the 5 year period from September 2015
- 2.** Respondents are encouraged to consider and identify any specific local factors that they believe might influence the future level of passenger demand, which should be reflected in the specification for the new franchise.
- 3.** Respondents are encouraged to highlight interfaces with any other schemes that are likely to be delivered during the next five years, which the operator may need to consider.
- 4.** Respondents are invited to identify any changes or reorganisation to the routes served by the Great Western franchise that they would recommend; and to explain their rationale.
- 5.** Respondents who wish to promote service changes should clearly identify these in their response to this consultation, as well as any supporting business case or value for money (VfM) analysis.
- 6.** Respondents are encouraged to bring to our attention research, evidence or publications which they believe should be considered in the development of the franchise specification.
- 7.** Respondents are invited to propose any changes to the current service pattern which they feel should be considered and to explain their rationale, for example by identifying specific local factors which might influence the future level of passenger demand which they consider should be reflected in a revised specification.
- 8.** Respondents are invited to say whether they value a faster headline journey time, or more intermediate stops, on a particular journey that they make (and to identify that journey).
- 9.** Should any elements of the indicative modelled intercity service pattern be mandated, and can it be improved? What should the priority be for intercity services where IEP trains are not planned to operate?
- 10.** What do you feel the Great Western operator's priorities on the suburban network should be once it is electrified in 2016 e.g. for additional higher capacity, fast commuter services, or improved journey times?

- 11.** After the electrification to Newbury, expected in 2016 would passengers' needs be best served by a diesel service from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to Newbury connecting into a fast service to London Paddington, or a diesel stopping service from Bedwyn to Reading connecting to a fast service from Reading to London Paddington, or other options? The former would give faster journey times to London but add a change at Newbury for passengers to Reading.
- 12.** Respondents are invited to suggest ways in which Community Rail Partnerships could deliver more of the beneficial outcomes for passengers achieved so far.
- 13.** While maintaining end-to-end service frequency, could the needs of passengers be better met by providing the operator with some flexibility over calling patterns on branch lines?
- 14.** Respondents are asked to suggest what mitigating actions and steps the GW operator should be expected to take to meet the needs of its passengers both during the planned disruption to the GW franchise as a result of planned upgrade works and when 'force majeure' events such as extreme weather, impact the network.
- 15.** Where the provision of temporary, alternative service is unavoidable, respondents are invited to suggest what alternative provisions they would prefer the GW operator to put in place.
- 16.** Respondents are encouraged to consider what steps the GW operator should be expected to take when reacting to changes in passenger demand, and what targets for capacity should be set.
- 17.** Respondents are invited to highlight if there are specific stations or services where they feel particular attention should be paid to reliability or punctuality.
- 18.** Are there any areas of the GW franchise where you feel cost savings could be made?
- 19.** Respondents are encouraged to consider which locations merit consideration for future improvement under these schemes.
- 20.** Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to communicate information with passengers across the franchise and how best to keep passengers informed during times of disruption.
- 21.** Rail Executive is considering what the appropriate approach for monitoring and improving service quality in the new franchise would be. Respondents are invited to say what matters most to them (for example, cleanliness of trains and stations, or the helpfulness of staff) in terms of the service quality they receive.
- 22.** Please indicate if there are any additional areas that you think Rail Executive should consider consulting on and that have not already been addressed during stakeholder engagement.

Appendix 2: Recent publications

- *The Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme*, published December 2012, and the Government response published July 2013;
- Network Rail's *Control Period 5 Delivery Plan* published in March 2014;
- The Department for Transport's *Rail Fares and Ticketing Review* published October 2013
- Network Rail's London and South–East market study , Long Distance market study , Regional Urban market study and Freight market study – all published in October 2013
- The Department for Transport's response to the 2012 Great Western Franchise Consultation
- The Government's *High Level Output Specification (HLOS) 2012 Railways Act 2005 Statement*, published July 2012;
- The Government's publication *Reforming our Railways: Putting the Customer First'* published March 2012
- Network Rail's *Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy* published in March 2010 and London and South East Route Utilisation Strategy published in July 2011;
- Network Rail's *Strategic Business Plan* published in October 2007 and subsequent updates published in April 2008, alongside Network Rail's CP4 Delivery Plan 2009 updated in June 2010 and CP5 Initial Industry Plan, published in September 2011;
- Sir Roy McNulty's independent review, *Realising the Potential of GB Rail – Report of the Rail Value for Money Study*, published in May 2011;
- The Department for Transport's response to the *Reforming Rail Franchising* consultation document, published in January 2011;
- Mayor of London's *Transport Strategy* published in May 2010

Appendix 3: Conditions Relating to the funding of New or Enhanced services promoted by Local Bodies

DfT will consider resourcing the provision of new and enhanced services where:

- a) The promoter has engaged at an early stage with DfT, the TOC, Network Rail and all have indicated that there is merit in the scheme being developed further.
- b) The promoter demonstrates, and has Network Rail and TOC endorsement, that the enhancement is deliverable in planning, engineering and operational terms including being consistent with RUSs.
- c) The scheme is affordable at the time when funding is being sought.
- d) The enhancement package (including any service reductions proposed to fund it) must demonstrate a business case (BCR in excess of 1.5) before implementation.
- e) The promoter accepts the risk on any capital investment required and identifies a funding source.
- f) The promoter agrees to fund any additional subsidy requirements arising from the provision of the new service for a period of three years (and remains on risk for a DfT decision not to support the scheme) OR identifies decrements elsewhere or new revenue sources (which would need to be agreed with DfT) on the local network including fares increases above RPI+1% or +3% (where applicable) which would contribute to a reduced overall subsidy requirement.
- g) The promoter should provide information to DfT on usage throughout the three year trial period. After year 2, the promoter would assess the financial and economic performance of the service based on year 2's results.
- h) Should continuing the service demonstrate a BCR in excess of 1.5, subject to affordability within the available budget, DfT would consider taking on the responsibility of funding its continuation after year 3 alongside other services within a franchise, OR if funding is not available, invite the promoter to identify decrements to enable the service to continue.

- i) Should continuing the service demonstrate a BCR of between 1.0 and 1.5, DfT and the promoter would negotiate but with no presumption of Government funding.
- j) Should the BCR be less than 1.0, DfT would not provide any funding.
- k) DfT would not propose to take any financial responsibility until April 2015.
- l) For new stations being served by existing services, although the promoter might have to provide some pump-priming funding until the station becomes established, DfT would expect that fare income would cover additional operating costs and that no additional subsidy would be required after 3 years.

For devolved networks within the TfL concession and Merseyrail Electrics concession, the policy adopted in the 2007 White Paper would apply and extra services would be funded through locally determined budgets.

Appendix 4: List of formal consultees within the proposed service area

Association of Train Operating Companies
BAA
BAR-UK
British Transport Police
Community Rail Partnerships (within the franchise area)
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee or successor
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Freight Operators (within the franchise area)
Freight Transport Association
Greater London Authority
Local Enterprise Partnerships (within the franchise area)
Local Government Association
Local, Metropolitan, County and Unitary Authorities (within the franchise area)
London Boroughs (within the franchise area)
London TravelWatch
Mayor of London's Office
Members of Parliament (within the franchise area)
Members of the National Assembly for Wales (within the franchise area)
National Rail Contractors Group
Network Rail
Office of Rail Regulation
Passenger Focus
Rail Freight Group
Rail Safety and Standards Board
Regional Assemblies (within the franchise area)
Rolling Stock Leasing Companies
Scottish Government
Train Operating Companies (within the franchise area)
TravelWatch SouthWest
Transport for London
Welsh Government

Appendix 5: Glossary of terms

A4A	Access for All
APC	Automatic Passenger Count
ATOC	Association of Train Operating Companies
BCR	Benefit–Cost Ratio
BTP	British Transport Police
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CIS	Customer Information System
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
CP4	Control Period 4
CP5	Control Period 5
DfT	Department for Transport
department	Department for Transport
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act 2000
HLOS	High Level Output Specification
HS2	High Speed Two
IEP	InterCity Express Programme
ITSO	ITSO (Smartcard system)
ITT	Invitation to Tender
LTA	Local Transport Authorities
MAA	Moving Annual Average
NPS	National Passenger Survey
NR	Network Rail
NRES	National Rail Enquiry Service
NSIP	National Stations Investment Programme
OHL	Overhead Lines
ORR	Office of Rail Regulation
PAYG	Pay As You Go

PDFH	Passenger Demand Forecasting Handbook
PIS	Passenger Information System
PIXC	Passengers In Excess of Capacity
PPM	Public Performance Measure
PTE	Passenger Transport Executive
ROSCO	Rolling Stock COmpany
RPI	Retail Price Index
RUS	Route Utilisation Strategy
SDO	Selective Door Operation
SFO	Station Facility Owner
SSA	Station Security Accreditation
TAA	Track Access Agreement
TfL	Transport for London
TOC	Train Operating Company
tph	Trains per hour
TOC	Train Operating Company
TVM	Ticket Vending Machine
VfM	Value for Money