

## **APPENDIX 1**

# **GREAT WESTERN RAIL FRANCHISE**

## **DRAFT CONSULTATION RESPONSE FROM EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

### **Introduction**

I Exeter City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to such a detailed consultation exercise. Before responding to the specific questions, it would be helpful to set out some background and key principles.

#### **“Good transport equals good economics”**

II So says the Secretary of State for Transport<sup>1</sup>, and we agree. We support her aspirations for “a modern, fast reliable railway that will transform connections between our cities, regions and the continent” and “truly rebalance our economic geography”<sup>2</sup>. The Secretary of State was speaking about High Speed 2 (HS2), but she could equally have been referring to the Great Western railway serving Exeter and the wider South West.

#### **Exeter as an economic driver**

III Exeter’s economy punches above its weight; the city is an employment hub supporting a population of more than 500,000 people, having grown at 6.6% per annum between 1999 and 2009 (compared with a national average of 4.6% pa), thereby creating 19,000 additional jobs. Exeter’s Core Strategy provides for at least 12,000 additional dwellings, 60 hectares of employment land and up to 40,000 square metres of net retail floorspace by 2026. Significant growth is also planned within the city’s immediate surroundings, which the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS)<sup>3</sup> acknowledges will result in around 18,500 additional dwellings, 37,000 additional inhabitants, and up to 28,500 extra jobs by 2026.

#### **The role of rail in supporting the economy**

IV Around 44% of Exeter’s labour force commutes in from surrounding areas, and the city’s arterial roads operate close to capacity for much of the day<sup>4</sup>; therefore rail will need to play a key part in growing the local economy, getting people to work and catering for other travel needs. The Secretary of State rightly acknowledges this in the national context and Exeter’s situation is no different. Indeed, ambitious rail projects elsewhere, such as HS2 and electrification to Bristol and Cardiff, risk putting Exeter and the far South West at a competitive disadvantage. Given Exeter’s role as an economic powerhouse, reaching far beyond its boundaries, this must not be allowed to happen.

#### **Our response to the consultation**

V While this response naturally has an Exeter focus, it is definitely not a self-centred pitch on behalf of the city or a narrow interest group. We have

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<sup>1</sup> The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, speech to ADEPT, 18 January 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Speech to Transport Times conference, 26 January 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Network Rail Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy, March 2010, para 5.2.2.4 and Figure 5.1

<sup>4</sup> LTP3 Evidence Report, para 7.9.6

contributed to TravelWatch South West's articulate statement of stakeholders' proposed principles for the new franchise, "Greater Western or Lesser Western", and are similarly contributing to that organisation's response to the consultation. We continually engage with local Rail User Groups, the Exeter Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Devon County Council as the Local Transport Authority, and their respective views and aspirations have been reflected in our response. Our specific "asks" of the new franchise complement those of others, rather than conflicting with them, being based on principles which apply across the whole franchise area.

VI In broad terms these principles are:-

- capacity;
- speed;
- frequency;
- working with customers and other stakeholders.

Our responses to the specific consultation questions are based around these principles.

VII **Capacity** We welcome the fact that the current level of service is to be the starting point for the new franchise, with no regression to the inadequate level of service specified in the existing franchise. "Current level of service" should mean the entire service pattern described in Chapter 7 of the consultation document, including all rolling stock used thereon, however funded. In addition, the new franchise needs to give the operator both the freedom and incentives to enhance services to match growth. Use of rail services within Devon increased by 59% between 2002 and 2010<sup>5</sup>. In 2011 alone, Exeter/Exmouth/Paignton services saw a 10.7% increase and Exeter/Barnstaple a 14/6% increase<sup>6</sup>. This strong growth looks set to continue given the amount of growth planned in the subregion.

The rail industry has surprised everyone over the past 15 years, so the next 15 are impossible to predict. The franchise needs to contain mechanisms for review at regular intervals, to determine the appropriate level of service to go forward.

VIII **Speed** As the Secretary of State has observed in support of HS2, "Who would choose to have a slow train journey rather than a fast one?"<sup>7</sup> It is particularly important for Exeter's journey times to London to keep pace with those from other cities, at the same time bringing travel time advantages to Plymouth and Cornwall. Complementary to this is the ability to work on intercity trains, with sufficient table space and reliable wi-fi connections.

IX **Frequency** Increasing the frequency of trains increases capacity. It also increases end to end journey speed by reducing the time spent waiting for a train.

X **Stakeholders** First Great Western deserves credit for working well with Local Transport Authorities, Rail User Groups and the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership. This should be a feature of the new franchise, whoever wins it.

<sup>5</sup> LTP3 Evidence Report, para 6.4.2

<sup>6</sup> Figures from First Great Western

<sup>7</sup> Speech to Transport Times conference, 26 January 2012

The system needs to be responsive to local needs – it should be a requirement of the new franchise that the operator must work with local stakeholders to develop schemes embodied in LDFs and LTPs. We fully support Devon County Council’s “Devon Metro” proposals, contained within its LTP3<sup>8</sup>, as making best use of existing infrastructure through some well-targeted improvements, and these proposals underpin the growth planned through our Core Strategy. In summary Devon Metro comprises:-

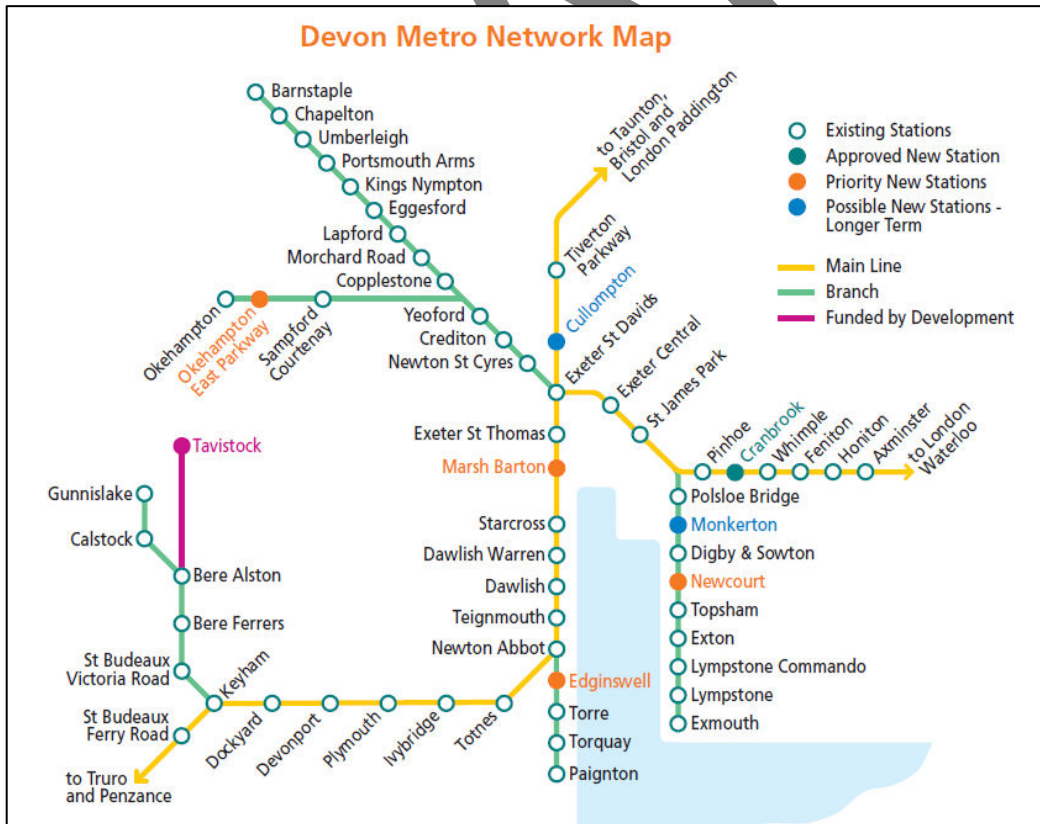
**Short Term**

- 4 car trains in the peaks
- New station at Newcourt on the Exmouth Line
- New station at Marsh Barton
- 30 minute local service frequency on the Paignton Line (RUS proposal)
- Cranbrook Station\*

**Longer Term**

- 30 minute frequency to Cranbrook, Honiton and Axminster\*
- Further new stations on the Exmouth line
- 15 minute frequency on the Exmouth line
- 15 minute frequency on the Paignton line

\*Served by South West Trains, but see response to Q6.



Source: Devon County Council

<sup>8</sup> At p56 ff

## Responses to the specific consultation questions

*Italic text generally indicates other material taken from the consultation document, included in this draft response to assist understanding, but some of which will be removed from the final version.*

### 1. Are the proposed franchise objectives an appropriate expression of the priorities?

- (i) *“Effectively **manage franchise changes** by working collaboratively with the Authority and other industry partners to ensure that the Great Western upgrade, Crossrail project works and future transfer of services to the Crossrail operator, and the Intercity Express Project procurement programmes are successfully delivered and the benefits envisaged are fully realised;*
- (ii) *Provide **appropriate capacity** for passenger services which **delivers value for money for the taxpayer** within **defined infrastructure and rolling stock constraints** on the Great Western network;*
- (iii) *Ensure the **overall passenger experience improves** throughout the life of the franchise. This will include but not be limited to improvements in: service quality; retailing; provision of information to customers particularly during times of planned and unplanned disruption; implementing ‘smart’ technology and integrated ticketing throughout the franchise area on an interoperable basis; improving accessibility (including disabled access) and access to all stations and services; passenger security and improving the transparency of information about the franchise;*
- (iv) *Ensure that train services perform to the **highest practical reliability and punctuality standards** and continue to be amongst the most reliable and punctual services on the national network. Benchmark and optimise the overall environmental performance and **minimise the carbon footprint** for the franchise;*
- (v) *Deliver services in the **most cost-effective and efficient manner possible** and, where appropriate, consider improving alignment and better collaboration between Network Rail and other relevant industry partners. Consider **possible devolution** of some specification or management of services in keeping with the recommendations of the McNulty Report.”*

It is essential that expressions like “value for money”, “cost-effective” and “efficient” are not interpreted as meaning “on the cheap”, but are given a qualitative dimension. In other words, they should mean that taxpayers and users get good value in return. It is imperative that DfT is not tempted by a bargain basement bid that short-changes all stakeholders.

We are also concerned that the “defined infrastructure and rolling stock constraints” need to reflect current deficiencies and allow for future growth. See answer to Q2.

Following on from our introductory paragraphs, we consider there should be an additional objective: “Take full advantage of the potential of the rail network to contribute to economic growth, both by connecting the south west with London, and by effectively serving local commuter markets across the franchise area.”

### 2. Specific local factors that might influence the future level of passenger demand, and HLOS recommendations that the franchisee should be required to implement.

The HLOS for 2014-19 (CP5)<sup>9</sup> is not due to be published until summer 2012, but the Initial Industry Plan (IIP) which will inform it recognises the sharp growth in demand for rail over the last decade in the commuter markets to major employment centres<sup>10</sup>, together with “a sound business case for investment to support the growth of the regional economies these services support”. It also recognises an increasing demand in the long distance travel market, and the associated Network Specification (Western) recognises<sup>11</sup> that “linespeed improvements will be required to further maximise the benefits IEP will bring”.

The IIP identifies a number of “investment choices”<sup>12</sup> which will be vital to the economy of Exeter and its wider subregion, to deliver the housing and employment growth outlined in introductory paragraph III. It is therefore essential for these to be included in the HLOS and accommodated in the franchise specification:-

**InterCity enhancements (in order of priority):-**

- capacity improvements at Westbury;
- line speed improvements between Bristol and Bridgwater;
- capacity improvements at Filton Bank and Temple Meads (both Bristol);
- new interchange at Old Oak Common;
- western rail link to Heathrow airport.

**Devon Metro** (see introductory paragraph X)

- new stations at Newcourt and Marsh Barton;
- 4 car trains during the peaks;
- additional Paignton service (see Q4).

The Devon Metro improvements are themselves likely to release frustrated demand, as shown by Digby & Sowton station on the Exmouth branch, which opened in 1994 and now caters for over a quarter of a million passengers annually.

The aim is to fund the stations themselves from funds raised locally, such as through section 106 planning agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy. However, these sources will not stretch to the passing loops and associated signalling required for the longer term objectives of Devon Metro. These will therefore require investment from Network Rail, and the operator will be required to operate the additional services. Planning for this should form part of the mid-franchise review referred to in introductory paragraph VII.

**3. Local factors to be considered in connection with major schemes (electrification including DMU redeployment, Reading blockades, Intercity Express programme, Crossrail).**

Electrification, Reading blockades and Crossrail are all likely to cause disruption to InterCity services to Exeter and the wider South West. As with the WCML ITT<sup>13</sup>, bidders should be required to show what specific actions they would expect to take to

<sup>9</sup> HLOS = High Level Output Specification; CP5 – Control Period 5, ie. 2014-19

<sup>10</sup> IIP at p9

<sup>11</sup> At p11

<sup>12</sup> At p12 ff

<sup>13</sup> West Coast Main Line Invitation to Tender, para 3.3.1.11

ensure that the timetable can be delivered robustly and reliably. Please also refer to Q22.

It is essential that all trains from the South West call at Old Oak Common once it becomes the principal interchange west of London. To maintain journey speeds, we consider that the number of trains from the South West calling at Reading should then be significantly reduced (see answer to Q11).

Specifically on the issue of **DMU deployment**, we are seriously concerned about the adequacy (in terms of quantity and quality) of the DMU fleet into the future, given the lack of any plans for rolling replacement. These concerns are echoed in the IIP<sup>14</sup>, which says “a key part of franchise reform should be to open the provision of rolling stock to the competitive tension of the franchising process, to negotiate the best balance between life extension, cascade and new build in each franchise area”.

Many peak local services through Exeter are currently formed of two cars, often the lower capacity Class 143s, which have proven inadequate and cause overcrowding as acknowledged in the RUS<sup>15</sup>. If the current upward trend in rail use continues, and is augmented by the growth in housing and employment planned for Exeter, it will be essential to increase train lengths and ultimately frequencies, as proposed through Devon Metro (see introductory paragraph X).

The successful bid must address this issue and include a commitment to increase the DMU fleet during the period of the franchise. At the very least, the Class 165/166s displaced by electrification of the Thames Valley lines should be retained on the Great Western for use on local services such as the Devon and Bristol Metros. (Their construction to Brunel loading gauge supports this, as these lines would require less, if any, modification to accommodate them than would lines elsewhere.) However, this would only result in a significant increase in vehicles if in addition some Class 15x units were retained.

While we fully support progressive electrification of the network, we have grave concerns about the adequacy of the residual DMU fleet into the future. Some lines are likely never to be electrified, so it is unrealistic to expect the existing DMU fleet to last for ever without replacement:-

- The Class 150 units are 25 years old now; the class 165/166s around 20 years old. By the end of the franchise they will be over 40 and 35 respectively.
- Some units are already in poor condition; some of the 150s recently cascaded to FGW have not been maintained to the standard of their previous fleet.
- The existing fleet fails to satisfy standards for persons of reduced mobility and modification of some older vehicles may not be cost-effective.

(Our position is different in relation to the HST fleet which has been refurbished and better maintained, and which we wish to see retained as explained in response to Q13 and 14.)

The new franchisees of the Great Western and other parts of the network should therefore be required to work together to achieve a rolling replacement programme as recommended by the Network RUS: Passenger Rolling Stock<sup>16</sup>. Since the need is for a “go anywhere” DMU, a development of the “Turbostar” family would be a logical way of achieving this.

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<sup>14</sup> At para 8.3.2

<sup>15</sup> At para 6.9.12

<sup>16</sup> Network RUS – Passenger Rolling Stock, Section 8.5

Alternatively, if main line electrification reaches Exeter during the lifetime of the franchise, incremental electrification of branches would provide a total or partial solution by enabling use of cascaded EMUs.

#### 4. Specific RUS recommendations that the franchisee should be required to implement.

The RUS recommends<sup>17</sup> an additional hourly Paignton - St James' Park service from 2016, which forms an element of Devon Metro (see introductory paragraph IV). There should be a requirement for the franchisee to implement this at an early opportunity, given that it can be achieved on existing infrastructure. When the new station at Cranbrook (on the Exeter to Waterloo line) opens, this service should be extended beyond St James' Park, at least to Cranbrook (see Q6).

Generally, the RUS is a distinctly unambitious document given the acknowledgment within its pages of the growth due to take place in and around Exeter (see introductory paragraph III). The recently issued IIP sets out a number of options which should be included in the HLOS and accommodated in the franchise specification (see response to Q2).

#### 5. Investment priorities for the franchise, including alternative approaches to reduce cost.

For investment priorities, please refer to our responses to other questions.

We would highlight the following as potential areas for cost reduction:-

- Closer alignment of incentives between the TOC and Network Rail.
- Infrastructure improvements to be carried out by whichever party can achieve the most cost-effective solution, whether it be Network Rail, the TOC, a local authority, or someone else.
- Consideration of alternatives to the leasing of stock from RoSCos, given the high price for leasing additional elderly vehicles. For example, a parent company for a number of franchisees may find it cost-effective to own outright a small fleet of DMUs (see response to Q3) and should be permitted to do so.

#### 6. Changes to services as part of a remapping exercise.

The Devon Metro proposals include a new station at Cranbrook to serve a new settlement of 6000 new homes<sup>18</sup>, currently progressing through GRIP stage 4, and due to be delivered with section 106 funding on occupation of the first 1000 homes. The existing South West Trains Exeter-Waterloo service will call every hour.

As mentioned in response to Q4, the proposed Paignton – St James' Park could be extended along the Waterloo line to improve connectivity across Exeter; it is understood that it could run to Axminster every two hours. As Cranbrook expands, an hourly service would complement the existing hourly South West Trains service but would require signalling alterations.

There would be advantages in including these additional services, and at least some of the intermediate stations between Exeter and Axminster, in the Great Western

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<sup>17</sup> At para 6.9.12

<sup>18</sup> 6000 homes projected by 2026, with scope for further expansion

franchise, to provide consistency of operation across the Devon Metro network. We are not suggesting any reduction in the highly valued Waterloo service, merely that this would run over part of an expanded Great Western network.

**7. Increments or decrements.**

We consider that the increased service levels and other enhancements proposed through Devon Metro, referred to in our responses to other questions, reflect what is required to address existing shortcomings and enable the rail network to cater for future growth. As such they should be mainstream franchise requirements, rather than increments to be funded by a third party.

Similarly, the franchisee should be required to provide sufficient rolling stock to run these services with enough carriages so that everyone generally gets a seat, and it should not be down to Local Transport Authorities to fund additional vehicles to rectify shortages as has happened under the current franchise.

**8. Devolution.**

The current operator has successfully devolved management on an area basis, which has led to productive co-operation with local authorities, user groups, and community rail organisations. This has resulted in an ability and willingness to adapt services to meet local needs, and to ensure that this continues, the new franchisee should be required to adopt a model which involves locally-based management rather than centralised control.

Devolution to Local Transport Authorities could be appropriate for some local service networks which are largely self-contained, such as that in Devon (along its historical boundaries including Plymouth and Torbay) and indeed Cornwall. It would be essential for sufficient funding to be transferred with any devolution of power.

**9. Relevant research, evidence or publications.**

None in addition to those referred to elsewhere in this response.

**10. Which aspects of service should be mandated, and which could be left to greater commercial discretion.**

We consider that different approaches should apply to Intercity and local services (by the latter we mean services such as Exeter-Exmouth, Exeter-Paignton and Exeter-Barnstaple). The table below indicates aspects that should be mandated, and in what way.

<b>Aspects suggested by DfT</b>	<b>InterCity</b>	<b>Local</b>
<i>First and last train times</i>	Yes (latest arrival times of first trains, earliest departure times of last trains)	
<i>Frequency of services by week, day or hour</i>	Trains per day	Trains per hour (Exeter-Barnstaple currently includes gaps in basic hourly service, which need to be filled)



<i>Calling patterns</i>	Some trains, see Q11/12	Yes, see Q19
<i>Journey times</i>	Yes for certain number of trains per day, see Q11/12	Not important on shorter branches; is on longer ones (Exeter-Barnstaple)
<i>Capacity</i>	Yes, see Q23	
<i>Week v weekend services</i>	Different treatment required because of different markets	7 day railway = presumption should be that weekday off peak service applies at weekends, and in evenings
<i>Onward connections</i>	Yes - work towards standard pattern timetable <sup>19</sup>	

As stated in introductory paragraph VII, the franchise should contain a mechanism for periodic reviews so that necessary adjustments to the timetable can be carried out. However, in adjusting the timetable, the franchisee should be required to consult stakeholders and take their views into account, as set out in introductory paragraph X (and which reflects the way that First Great Western has actually operated).

*Current/indicative InterCity service pattern (as it affects Exeter), relevant to Q11-15.*

- *Hourly Paddington to Plymouth, with some through trains to Torbay and to Penzance.*
  - *It is suggested one IEP (bi-mode) train will run per hour semi-fast to Westbury, with some extensions to Exeter and one mid-day round trip to Paignton.*
  - *Non-IEP trains will deliver Paddington-Plymouth/Cornwall services, and the majority of Paddington-Paignton services.*
- *Nightly sleeper to Penzance.*

11. What balance should be struck between end-to-end journey times and intermediate stops on long distance services; and

12. Can the indicative modelled intercity service pattern be improved?

Q11-12: It is essential that the current pattern is maintained in so far as all trains call at Exeter St Davids, in view of its role as a hub for connections.

The ultimate objective should be a clock face timetable with hourly fast trains (eg. Paddington-Taunton-Tiverton Parkway-Exeter and beyond, with a London-Exeter time of around 2 hours) plus hourly slower services. If current patronage does not justify, and initial resources do not permit, two trains per hour at all times, fast trains are a priority at the beginning and end of the working day (to enable someone from London to do a day's work in Exeter, and vice versa), as well as mid morning in the down direction (for travel after an overnight stay in London).

When Old Oak Common becomes the key interchange west of London, all trains should stop there. In consultation with Stakeholders, the operator should review whether all trains need to call at Reading as they do currently.

<sup>19</sup> A standard pattern timetable is a "broad expectation" in the West Coast Main Line ITT, para 3.2.1.

13. Should HSTs be refurbished, if so how many, and what would be their revised life expectancy; and

14. Should other intercity rolling stock be acquired or cascaded.

Q13-14: There are several advantages in keeping refurbished HSTs for all non-IEP intercity trains, until displaced by progressive electrification:-

- This would be consistent with the Government's stated policy of progressive electrification.
- With the right seating configuration, they are capable of being a very comfortable train, suitable for rapid services to Exeter and beyond, whereas the bi-mode IEPs could have a higher density configuration suitable for the Paddington-Exeter semi-fasts.
- There will be a plentiful supply of these units, to ensure availability.

As mentioned in introductory paragraph 8, the ability to work on the move is essential, so the following (including in standard class) should be included in any refurbishment:-

- Seating at tables where passengers can work;
- Reliable, free wi-fi. We understand Network Rail's wi-fi system is inadequate, a possible solution being for the operator to work with mobile operators to achieve comprehensive coverage for all mobile broadband networks across the franchise area.

15. What should be the future of sleeper train.

The DfT should be guided by the views of those further west, for whom this is undoubtedly a valuable service.

16. Not relevant to us (outer suburban services).

17. Not relevant to us (non-electrified branches in Home Counties)

18. Not relevant to us (are Portsmouth – Brighton services best use of diesel rolling stock?)

Q16-18: No comment.

19. Should branch line stations continue to be served by all trains.

The Devon Metro proposals are designed to make best use of existing rail infrastructure, and limited stops mean that some stations are an underused resource, probably with unexploited demand.

In Exeter this applies to St James' Park and Polsloe Bridge – these are not lightly-used stations but are situated in heavily populated suburban areas, accounting for 46,750 and 70,000 journeys respectively in 2009/10<sup>20</sup>.

To provide a true "metro" system we believe all local services should call at these stations. This needs to be mandated by the franchise, given that the existing franchisee chooses not to operate services in this way.

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<sup>20</sup> Figures from Office of Rail Regulation, National Rail Trends

**20. Value of regional services eg. Cardiff – Portsmouth.**

No comment.

**21. Suggest service changes.**

Please refer to other relevant answers.

**22. How to deal with planned disruption and alternative service propositions.**

The aim should be to keep passengers on trains (rather than buses) as far as possible, as reflected in the ITT for the West Coast Main Line. The current franchisee has responded to pressure from Rail User Groups to limit closures to part of a branch rather than the entire line, and this should continue.

Pressure from Network Rail to increase the length of Saturday night / Sunday morning possessions (as in para 3.2.5 of the WCML ITT) should be resisted. The current franchisee has been effective, for example, in achieving earlier Sunday services on the Exmouth branch in response to pressure from the local Rail User Group, and there should be no regression from this. Indeed, on dual lines, the industry should work towards avoiding total where possible by using single-line working through engineering sites.

**23. Mechanisms for ensuring adequate capacity, and how it should be measured.**

Generally this should mean everyone getting a seat.

The West Coast Main Line ITT refers to this as an expectation, but indicates that it “may not be realistic for some peak short distance passenger flows (ie. those under 20 minutes)”. In the Exeter area there are no true intercity flows where this would be justifiable, as any short-term overcrowding of intercity trains is a symptom of inadequate capacity on local services.

Local services in Exeter do not benefit from a captive market like services in, say, London, and having to stand reduces the train’s competitiveness with other modes, particularly the car. It also prevents using the journey productively by reading. Getting a seat is the second priority for passengers according to survey work by Passenger Focus (after punctuality/reliability).

**24. Any performance areas of concern.**

The major area of concern is the lack of information when things go wrong. See Q30.

**25. How to improve efficiency of industry and reduce unit costs.**

Bidders should be required to indicate how they will work with Network Rail to align incentives and improve value for money.

A rolling replacement programme for rolling stock (see Q3) has the potential to reduce procurement costs, as identified by the Network RUS (Rolling Stock).

**26. How to fund major station enhancements. Any local accessibility issues.**

We favour comprehensive station leases to operators, including bridges and forecourts. The current division of responsibilities, particularly between train

operators and Network Rail, results in incomplete refurbishment programmes where both parties are unable or unwilling to co-ordinate works.

The operator should be required to consult local stakeholders and take their views into account when making changes to stations.

The successful bidder will need to recognise that many stations are likely to see continued growth, and will need to be developed to accommodate this. For example, Digby and Sowton station (on the Exmouth branch) was opened in 1995, and usage increased to around 250,000 passengers p.a. within 15 years. Increasing usage on this scale creates a need for additional facilities in terms of waiting shelters, ticket machines, bicycle parking, and car parking (where applicable).

#### 27. Proposals for Access for All schemes.

Bidders should be required to demonstrate how they will continue to improve access to stations and trains by all users.

#### 28. How to improve security and safety.

Bidders should be required to maintain existing levels of CCTV as a minimum, and demonstrate how any reductions in staffing levels would be balanced by enhancements to other security measures. An example of good practice is the recent introduction at Exeter Central of a waiting room with a window into an office, meaning that staff are visible and available to assist when required, without the need to provide dedicated staff to deal with the public all of the time.

#### 29. How to make ticket purchase easier and minimise revenue loss.

As a minimum, a ticket vending machine should be located at every station. If cashless machines need to be used at high-crime locations, an alternative is necessary for passengers (such as children) without access to credit or debit cards. An example would be smartcards capable of being topped up online or at local shops.

In the interim at least, popular destination stations (such as Exeter Central and St Davids) with large numbers of passengers arriving from unstaffed stations should have on-platform ticket machines to reduce congestion at the barriers being caused by people without tickets.

As with the WCML ITT<sup>21</sup>, bidders should be required to introduce ITSO smart ticketing, and to work with local authorities who wish to introduce multi-modal ITSO schemes.

The current franchisee offers certain local carnet and season ticket products aimed at part-time workers<sup>22</sup>, and these should be retained (as a minimum) and where possible rolled out across the franchise area.

The existing level of gate line coverage should be maintained and increased during the franchise.

#### 30. How best to communicate with passengers including during disruption.

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<sup>21</sup> At para 3.4.4.1

<sup>22</sup> eg. for certain journeys in Devon and Cornwall

Credit should be given to bids which set out proposals for:-

- Improving information to passengers, such as extending the coverage of real time information displays, coupled with making the most effective use of staff resources and help points. As a minimum, current levels of help point and RTI provision should be maintained.
- Improving the supply of prompt and reliable information to passengers during times of disruption, including advice about alternative travel options.

### 31. How to monitor and improve service quality (include proposed approach).

The key issue here is to minimise delays and cancellations, followed by achieving high levels of customer satisfaction. The franchise needs to include some clear targets<sup>23</sup> and require bidders to demonstrate how they plan to ensure they are achieved.

### 32. What level of catering provision.

The catering service provided by First Great Western is considered to be an example of good practice, and the new franchise should require at least this level of catering to be maintained.

### 33. Local accessibility and mobility issues.

Bidders should be required to set out how they will progress the implementation of the Railways for All Strategy.

Bidders should be required to work with local authorities to determine and provide the appropriate level of car parking at stations, bearing in mind the distinction between (a) stations (principally rural railheads) where parking capacity needs to match demand so as not to inhibit rail travel, and (b) other stations (principally in urban areas) where parking needs to be limited as part of a package of measures to encourage linked journeys by other sustainable modes.

Parking charges should be set at a level that is proportionate to the price of the train ticket. At present, this is generally considered to be the case at local stations, other than Tiverton Parkway where the charge makes it unattractive to park for a short train journey. The availability of combined parking/local train tickets (as sold at Exmouth) would be a way of resolving this.

### 34. What environmental targets.

Credit should be given to bids which:-

- Make use of existing depots for the non-IEP fleet, eg. Exeter (recently extended, resulting in the creation of additional local jobs); this avoids wastage of existing valuable infrastructure, and a reduction in the number of depots would result in an increase in dead running and therefore use of fuel<sup>24</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> As in the WCML ITT, para 3.5.1

<sup>24</sup> This is consistent with the WCML ITT, para 3.10.2, which expects bidders to consider energy efficient stabling arrangements.

- Make best use of rolling stock in the context of the network as a whole (eg. retaining Class 165/166s which, with their Brunel loading gauge, are a better fit for Great Western lines than elsewhere in the country).
- Include ambitious proposals for enhancing facilities for cyclists at stations throughout the franchise area, and for maximising opportunities for taking non-folding bikes on trains. The carrying of folding bikes should be allowed on all trains.
- Include ambitious proposals for encouraging travel by multiple sustainable modes, including enhancing interchange facilities with other public transport modes, integrated ticketing such as PlusBus, and mutual supply of information about other operators' services.

### **How this response has been compiled**

This response has been prepared with the approval of the Council's Scrutiny-Economy Committee.

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