



Department
for Transport

Attachment F ET Stakeholder Briefing Document

Stakeholder Briefing Document Essex Thameside Franchise Replacement (Updated)

July 2012
Updated September 2013

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Foreword

The Department is grateful to all the organisations and individuals who took the time and effort to respond to this consultation, and to those who attended the consultation events. Their valuable comments and suggestions have been considered and used to inform the development of the specification for the Essex Thameside Franchise. The Department has endeavoured, in good faith, to produce a summary of the responses to each of the 14 questions asked in the consultation document. Any significant omission or incorrect emphasis is entirely unintentional. Bidders for the franchise will have access to all consultation responses submitted.

Period between July 2012 and September 2013

This Stakeholder Briefing Document was sent out as an attachment to the Invitation to Tender issued to bidders in July 2012. Bidders returned their bids at the end of September 2012. In October 2012, the competition was paused following the issues identified with the Intercity West Coast competition and its subsequent cancellation. Following the Laidlaw Inquiry and the Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme, the competition was re-started in February 2013, with a remit to update the specification and Invitation to Tender (ITT).

This has necessitated a revision to this Stakeholder Briefing Document. In order to help stakeholders identify what has changed, this document is being published in the form of an update to the previously published document, with new sections included that set out where the proposition has changed from that previously identified. Where no update is provided, this means that no significant revisions have been made that affect the information given in the original text. This updated document is being published alongside the revised ITT.

The ITT issued to bidders has undergone some changes since the version published in July 2012. The specification is now clearly identified as constituting the Department's requirements, and the ITT highlights the evidence bidders must submit as part of their response. Finally, the revised Essex Thameside ITT includes a method for scoring additional quality offered by the bidders. Whilst bidders may choose to offer anything they consider will be greater quality, the Department has provided some examples in the ITT as to where additional points could be awarded as part of an overall high-quality bid. Where the Department is not looking for greater quality, but just for delivery of a requirement, this is clearly stated.

Other changes have been made to the specification in order to increase clarity or define more robustly what the Department is seeking in the competition.

One significant change from the previous competition is the requirement for the Franchisee to publish a Customer Report. This will require the operator to publish, at least once a year, a report to customers, identifying what they have done, what they intend to do in the future and how they have built on previous suggestions from customers.

Further changes have been made to the July 2012 proposition in relation to financial robustness and capital requirements. These changes are not discussed in this document, which focuses on those factors included in the Department's specification that directly relate to the services and facilities provided for passengers and customers. Further information on franchise reform can be found on the Department's website, including in the Department's response to the Brown Review which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-the-brown-review-of-the-rail-franchising-programme>

1. Background

- 1.1** The Essex Thameside Franchise Replacement Consultation was issued by the Department on 17 February 2012 and closed on 11 May 2012. The consultation outlined the proposed specification that will be provided to bidders for the franchise. It asked a number of questions seeking views on the proposed specification, the vision for the franchise and priorities for passengers.
- 1.2** The Department received 50 responses: a third were received from individuals and the remainder from rail industry stakeholders, local authorities, special interest groups and passenger interest groups. A list of the organisations who responded to the consultation can be found in Appendix A to this document.
- 1.3** During March 2012, consultation events were held in Grays and Westcliff-on-Sea and a web chat took place in April. The web chat can be found at: <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/web-chats/essex-thameside-rail-franchise-web-chat-transcript.pdf>.
- 1.4** The purpose of this Stakeholder Briefing Document is to provide stakeholders with a summary of the recent consultation process and responses. This document should be considered alongside the consultation document (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/essex-thameside-franchise-consultation>), the response to Reforming Rail Franchising, and the specification outlined in the Invitation to Tender (ITT).
- 1.5** Having considered the responses to the consultation and the views of the short listed bidders for the Essex Thameside franchise, the Department has now finalised the Train Service Requirement (TSR) which will be issued to bidders alongside the ITT. The Department will make all the responses available to the bidders for the new Essex Thameside franchise as part of the re-franchising process. Bidders are expected to reflect on the proposals and suggestions respondents have made as part of their bids. The successful Bidder will have a duty to continue to work with stakeholders throughout the duration of the franchise to facilitate the development and delivery of any changes.
- 1.6** Generally respondents were supportive of the Department's vision for the franchise but wanted to see more emphasis on supporting economic development of the Thames Gateway. In summary respondents wanted to ensure that the future requirements of rail freight were taken into account when developing passenger services, they wanted to see the Tilbury bus service continued and that the next franchisee accommodates future growth and manages crowding through improved

services. This document summarises the responses and sets out how the Department has accommodated these views within the specification.

- 1.7** The proposed TSR for the Essex Thameside franchise sets out the minimum number of services to be provided during the operating day and is summarised as follows:
- 1 The minimum weekday/weekend number of station calls per hour per direction to be provided at each station served by the franchise. This hourly number of calls is higher than the minimum Passenger Service Requirement within the current franchise.
 - 2 The minimum number of direct services to be provided between each franchise station and Fenchurch Street/Liverpool Street Stations in the peaks
 - 3 First and last train times at weekdays/weekends in both directions.
- 1.8** Even though the TSR sets out a minimum number of services it should not be taken to imply any views that the Department may have on future passenger growth or the level of service to be provided above this minimum. The Department does not require specific rolling stock to be used on the franchise. Instead bidders are required to demonstrate how they will meet the Department's requirement to satisfy a Crowding Limit during the morning and evening peaks and to provide passengers with a seat at all other times. Bidders are also required to demonstrate how they will deliver appropriate levels of performance and meet agreed passenger satisfaction levels.
- 1.9** The Department is satisfied that a more flexible TSR should give bidders the opportunity to deliver a better premium for taxpayers and a better service for passengers located along the Essex Thameside franchise corridor. Operators are better placed to respond to the changing demands of their customers in the creation of train services and timetables than central Government.
- 1.10** The franchisee will be required to manage the business to achieve contracted levels of passenger satisfaction against measures encompassing stations, train services, trains facilities and customer services. The feedback from passengers used to assess performance against these measures will be weighted to reflect local priorities. The weighting will be revised during the franchise to reflect changing passenger priorities.
- 1.11** The franchisee will be required to manage the business to achieve contracted levels of passenger satisfaction against measures encompassing stations, train services, trains facilities and customer services. The feedback from passengers used to assess performance against these measures will be weighted to reflect local priorities. The weighting will be revised during the franchise to reflect changing passenger priorities.
- 1.12** Under this approach, the Department cannot know beforehand how bidders will choose to use the flexibility offered. Before awarding a

contract to operate the franchise the Department will consider the affordability, benefits and costs of the proposals put forward by bidders.

1.13 The new Essex Thameside franchise is expected to commence in May 2013. The Department for Transport announced the names of the following four short-listed bidders on 29 March 2012 and each of these organisations will receive an Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the new franchise:

- Abellio Essex Thameside Limited (NV Nederlands Spoorwegen)
- First Essex Thameside Limited (FirstGroup PLC)
- MTR Corporation (Essex Thameside) Limited (MTR Corporation Limited)
- NXET Trains Limited (National Express Group PLC).

1.14 The ITT sets out the bidding process and the specification for the franchise along with the scope of the issues bidders will need to consider when formulating their responses. Bidders are required to submit their final bids to the Department on 27 September 2012 and it is expected that the Department will make an announcement of the preferred bidder to operate the franchise in January 2013.

Update

The key messages in this overview of the proposition remain unchanged. There are three issues mentioned where the new position includes a change. Whilst the competition continues to allow freedom to bidders when selecting rolling stock, some minimum features for stock have been specified. Secondly, as explained in updates below, the specific design of the crowding limits used during bid assessment has been amended. Thirdly, the design of the passenger satisfaction targets contracted for the franchisee has been altered so that weightings are constant over the franchise term. This has been done to improve the clarity and focus of the contracted mechanism.

During the pause in the competition between October 2012 and February 2013, the above timescales have been revised. The Department's aim is for the new operator to commence operations on 14 September 2014.

2. Shortlisted bidder contact details

Abellio Essex Thameside Ltd

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MTR Corporation (Essex Thameside) Limited

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NXET Trains Limited

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3. Franchise objectives

The core starting point for the development of the franchise specification is the establishment of clear objectives. Four key objectives have been endorsed by the Secretary of State:

- support economic growth and in particular the development of the Thames Gateway through frequent train services of appropriate capacity. Use flexibility in the train service requirement to optimise services, delivering a balance of commercial and passenger benefit, while providing passengers with a broadly similar level of service as is currently timetabled;
- 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 inter-operable basis; improving accessibility (including disabled access) to stations and services; passenger security and improving the transparency of information about the franchise;
- ensure that train services perform to the highest practical reliability and punctuality standards, aiming 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;
- deliver services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible, and consider improving the alignment between Network Rail and the franchise in keeping with the recommendations of Sir Roy McNulty's Rail Value for Money study.

Update

There has been no change to the franchise objectives for the re-started competition.

4. Key issues raised in the responses to the consultation

- 4.1 This section summarises the consultation responses made to each of the 14 questions asked in the Essex Thameside Consultation Document.
- 4.2 A summary of the responses according to each question is presented along with how the Department has captured this in the TSR.

1. How does this vision align with stakeholders' view of the future Essex Thameside franchise?

Paragraph 1.6 of the consultation document sets out a vision for the future franchise.

Generally stakeholders were supportive of the vision set out in the document including the focus on maintaining performance and reliability, providing services which are differentiated to deal effectively with future demand and supporting local economic growth. Some thought there should be specific reference to supporting the development of the Thames Gateway because of the role transport has in ensuring economic benefits are materialised.

A key starting point for the development of the franchise specification is the establishment of clear objectives. Four key objectives have been endorsed by the Secretary of State which are presented in Section 4 of this document. The winning bidder would need to have demonstrated that their bid meets the Secretary of State's requirements as set out in the objectives. The objectives specifically reference supporting economic growth and in particular the development of the Thames Gateway.

Update

The objectives for this franchise competition have not changed. The ITT has identified very clear requirements that the bidders must demonstrate they have met within their bid. These requirements have been developed to support the delivery of the franchise objectives.

2. What increments or decrements to the specification would stakeholders wish to see and how would these be funded?

Stakeholders made a number of suggestions about increments to the franchise this included Barking Station redevelopment, an enhanced frequency on the Tilbury Loop and a new station at Beam Park station.

Some respondents did make suggestions about how the franchisee should accommodate future growth or improve the passenger experience in answer to other questions. Generally it was felt that these improvements would either be commercially viable or ones that a franchisee would be required to provide in order to deliver the franchise.

A respondent suggested that a mechanism between the franchisee and the Department should be put into place at the start of the franchise to allow for any increments to be introduced within the life of the franchise.

Within the existing Franchise Agreement there is a mechanism which allows for any increments - for example, additional rolling stock to be introduced - within the franchise. Any proposed increment would need to have a value for money business case and be affordable and deliverable.

Following the consultation and also based on its analysis the Department has set out three Priced Options. By asking for these options the Department makes no commitment to buy. Part of the Department's consideration of whether it wishes to buy any option will be the extent to which bidders, where required, have secured appropriate contributions from stakeholders. These Priced Options are covered in more detail in Section 6 of this document.

Update

For clarity, incremental options which have, in previous franchise competitions, been proposed by bidders for consideration by the Department will not form part of this procurement. There will continue to be mechanisms that allow changes to be made to the contracted service within the franchise term, however.

The Department has reconsidered its position on Priced Options in order to simplify the procurement process. As a result, there will be no Priced Options for this franchise. The revised approach for Beam Park, Barking and Tilbury Loop is set out later in this updated document.

Quality credit is available to bidders who offer additional value in key areas, and this procurement methodology is intended to encourage bidders to propose deliverable and robust propositions for improvements such as the redevelopment of stations or other outcomes that offer a higher level of quality than is required. This is part of the wider development of quality in evaluation that has been implemented following the Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme.

3. Are there specific research findings, evidence or publications stakeholders wish to bring to the attention of the Department as part of this refranchising process?

Many respondents referred to previously published documents that they wished to bring to the Department's attention. A list of these will be made available to bidders.

The evidence can be summarised as falling into the following categories:

- evidence to support the benefits of improvements to stations, particularly Barking. Our response is set out in Section 6;
- proposal for a new station at Beam Park. Our response is set out in Section 6;
- evidence on future drivers of passenger demand and possible solutions. Our response is set out in Q7;
- Local Transport Plan documents setting out rail priorities for the areas they relate to; and
- evidence regarding future growth in rail freight.

Evidence was provided by Transport for London (TfL) about the business case for a new station at Beam Park which is located between Dagenham Dock and Rainham stations. The scheme has been developed to support access by existing communities in Rainham West and the proposed new development at Beam Park.

Network Rail stated that they are undertaking an outline feasibility study across the whole of the Essex Thameside route to identify the line speed restrictions and are also reviewing switches and crossovers to look at the possibility of removing points that are no longer required to remove the potential risk to performance.

The Department will make all the responses available to the bidders for the new Essex Thameside franchise as part of the re-franchising process. Bidders will be expected to reflect on any evidence or publications provided by respondents when developing their bids. In particular bidders will be asked to develop their own evidence based view of the level of future passenger demand and what will drive this, as well as providing credible solutions to accommodate this demand with particular regard to crowding limits.

Bidders will be expected to work with Network Rail when developing any timetabling solution to meet demand. We would expect that any agreed timetable would fit with the number of train paths available and that the requirements of the rail freight industry would also be accommodated.

Update

As set out above, consultation responses received by the Department have been made available to bidders, including information received in respect of the proposed development of Beam Park station. The Department considers that this provides valuable background for bidders, however the evaluation of the bids will be carried out in line with the criteria and processes set out in the ITT.

The Department has not provided to bidders a separate list summarising documents which respondents' referred to as part of their responses (as mentioned in the original text).

4. What improvements do stakeholders believe could be made to partnership working between Network Rail and the operator on the Essex Thameside franchise?

Those respondents who commented on the potential for stronger partnership working were generally supportive of the opportunity it could provide in improving efficiency and reducing cost.

Network Rail is committed to engaging with shortlisted bidders on the potential for an alliance and in their response identified potential areas for an alliance. This included depot arrangements, access planning, subcontracting some services, improved systems and asset information sharing.

Network Rail noted that there may be benefits and issues of letting a long-term concession for part of the infrastructure.

Passenger Focus suggested that any alliance should include targets to reduce the impact of any engineering works that support the maintenance, renewal and enhancement of the railway. It also considers that there should be an incentive for Network Rail and train operators to collaborate in planning engineering works and minimising disruption to passengers, whilst reducing the cost of the project.

London TravelWatch would like to see a similar alliancing arrangement as that created between South West Trains and Network Rail, which they consider would improve services to passengers particularly during times of disruption.

One respondent suggested that there may be potential benefits in having staff available to cover a range of duties for example, station staff who can undertake some maintenance work which could save time in responding to incidents and 'get the trains moving'.

TfL highlighted that any proposed alliance should protect the interests of other operators who use the Essex Thameside route.

DfT's Reforming our Railways: Putting the Customer First 'Command Paper'¹ commits the Department to exploring better partnership working in order to align incentives and improve outcomes in terms of performance, improving efficiency and reducing costs.

The franchisee will be required to use reasonable endeavours to work closely with Network Rail to develop an alliance arrangement.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reforming-our-railways>

Update

The overall policy aims are unchanged. The new proposition sets out a requirement that the successful operator must have effective proposals to work with industry stakeholders, including Network Rail, to achieve improvements in efficiency and long term value for the Department. The bidders may respond by including formal alliancing proposals - where these are agreed with Network Rail - and additional credit in bid will be considered for bidders that have strong and effective plans in this area.

5. Which aspects of the specification would stakeholders wish to see mandated and which aspects of the specification could be left to commercial discretion? What changes to services would stakeholders propose and why?

Stakeholders were content that the current off-peak level of service provided by c2c would form the basis of the minimum requirement set out in the train service requirement. Generally respondents understood the rationale behind providing a more flexible specification. The exception is TfL who does not believe that a less prescriptive approach to franchise specification is appropriate for London and is concerned that this approach may lead to a worsening of the provision of suburban services.

There was concern among many of the respondents about whether a flexible approach to specification would ensure that there was sufficient capacity to meet demand during the peak. Some respondents, including TfL, wanted to see the franchisee operate services that link with the start and finish times of London Underground services.

Journey times for services along the route have increased over time as part of measures to improve performance and connectivity. Some respondents were concerned that if journey times were not mandated, there would be no incentive to reduce journey times.

TfL wanted to see the Department specify Boxing Day services on both the main line and Tilbury Loop offering connections to central London and Lakeside Shopping Centre (accessed by Chafford Hundred station).

Some respondents asked that they were consulted before any major changes to the service were made.

Government's view is that timetable development is an activity that should be managed by Train Operators with minimum interference from Central Government. In keeping with this policy it is not intended that any specific new obligations to provide particular services or stopping patterns will be placed on the franchisee. The Department is specifying minimum off peak and weekend station calls at broadly the same level as the current timetable with the expectation that a greater level of services is provided in order to meet the demand for peak services. The Department is also specifying the first and last train services.

Bidders shall propose in their own timetable, developments to meet their proposed demand and capacity requirements to satisfy the Department's Crowding Limit in the Peak and seated capacity at other times. It will be for bidders to decide on the most appropriate calling patterns for each individual train service. Similarly the Department is not specifying Boxing Day services.

Bidders for the franchise will be encouraged to consider the consultation responses and formulate their plans to develop their optimal service proposition and are likely to consider issues such as frequency, interconnectivity and journey times in developing their proposals. We would expect them, as part of

this work to consider whether there is a case to provide services on Boxing Day.

The new franchisee will be required to conduct appropriate public consultation when they propose timetable changes.

The Department has set out a series of Priced Options it wishes to buy in Section 6 of this document which includes an increase in the level of service on the Tilbury Loop.

Update

The specification in this area has changed since July 2012, but still takes account of the issues raised by stakeholders in their responses.

The Department continues to specify a Train Service Requirement (TSR) which reflects broadly the same level of contractually required service as today, with a degree of flexibility on timing, stopping patterns and service design. Changes to current services may therefore result as the operator uses this flexibility. Stakeholders should note that the current operator provides some services that are not mandatory and therefore above this minimum contracted level. Capacity issues are discussed below.

As set out elsewhere in this update, there will be no Priced Options included in this franchise proposition.

The responses to this consultation will be available to bidders to consider during development of their propositions, and the Department considers this will provide valuable information to bidders in balancing the demands of passengers as part of the overall train service. The evaluation of proposals will be done strictly on the basis of the criteria and process set out in the ITT.

6. What do stakeholders consider to be the drivers for service frequency on the Essex Thameside routes? What would be the opportunities created from increasing off-peak service frequencies and the impact of reducing off-peak service frequencies?

Passenger Focus research identified that the main passenger priorities for improvements to the franchise:

- providing a punctual and reliable service;
- providing sufficient capacity, both in terms of frequency of service and sufficient seating on the train;
- delivering value for money;
- effective management of any disruption, especially through information to passengers;
- making available accurate information about trains and platforms; and
- improving perception of personal security.

In Passenger Focus's 2009 route research, frequency of trains was the highest priority for improvement for mainline passengers and second for those on Tilbury Loop. Almost a third (31%) of c2c passengers identified frequency of the train service as being the main driver for satisfaction.

Some respondents, including TfL, Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch, would like to see a standard level of 4 trains per hour being provided in the off-peak period. Indeed, some considered that the current level of off-peak service, particularly on the Tilbury Loop, was the reason that demand for services was low.

Some respondents identified a number of key developments which would drive future peak and off peak demand and therefore frequencies. These included:

- Stratford City Development was a key driver for increasing off peak frequencies along with connections to the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) from Limehouse because of the access to leisure attractions in Greenwich; and
- regeneration plans for the Thames Gateway is likely to increase the local population and therefore increase future demand.

Bidders for the franchise will be encouraged to consider the consultation responses and formulate their plans to develop their optimal service proposition.

Bidders shall demonstrate that their service proposals are appropriate across all routes to accommodate seasonal variations, public holidays and any special events that might be expected to take place across the franchise area.

The Department is seeking a priced option for an increase in the frequency of services on the Tilbury Loop. More detail is set out in Section 6.

Update

The only change to the previous response is that there will be no Priced Options within this proposition. In line with the policy aims described in the original text, bidders are encouraged in the revised ITT to grow the franchise to utilise capacity more effectively in the off-peak.

7. How might better use be made of the capacity currently available? What are the future capacity requirements, what steps should bidders be expected to take to meet passenger demand and what are the most appropriate mechanisms for managing demand?

Stakeholders noted that planned developments in the Thames Gateway and generally across the route will potentially lead to crowding over the course of the franchise.

Passenger representatives noted that the ability to get a seat is important to passengers along with levels of crowding.

Some respondents recognised that changing service patterns by restructuring the timetable, reconfiguring the interior to provide more standing space and more flexible ticketing arrangements may be a more cost effective means of providing additional capacity to meet demand than procuring additional rolling stock.

It was noted that in some circumstances there may be a case for selectively lengthening some 8 car services to 12 car, utilising the platforms that have already been lengthened during CP4.

Passenger Focus noted that as the majority of passengers use this service for commuting there is very little opportunity for users to vary their travel patterns significantly enough to avoid travelling in the peak and therefore reduce crowding.

Some respondents felt that there are opportunities to grow the off peak market because of proposed and recent developments on the corridor for example, Thames Gateway and Westfield Shopping Centre at Stratford.

Other respondents discussed how fares and ticketing strategies could be used to manage passenger demand. These responses will be captured in Question 9.

The Department requires bidders to set out their bids on the understanding that they have to provide sufficient capacity to meet their own evidence based view of how demand for rail services will develop over the course of the franchise. Bidders will need to forecast demand while staying within the Department's capacity requirements.

Bidders shall provide evidence to demonstrate that their forecasts are robust and realistic. The Department will consider, as part of its deliverability assessment, the alignment of the proposed capacity to meet the bidder's proposed level of demand, and particularly whether bidders' peak demand forecasts are realistic.

The Train Service Requirement sets out a number of calls per hour per direction for each station. Although, bidders will be expected to achieve a sensible balance of services each way, the station calls are not linked to particular train services and bidders are free to decide on the optimum timetabling solution.

Bidders are required to provide sufficient capacity to meet their forecast demand while meeting the Department's crowding limit. This crowding limit sets a ceiling of 4.5% of passengers travelling in excess of capacity in the morning and evening peaks and an overall in excess aggregate across the two peaks of 3%. Passengers travelling in excess of capacity is calculated based on (i) passengers standing for a maximum of 20 minutes and (ii) passengers travelling at any time in excess of the train's capacity. In developing their bid for the Essex Thameside franchise, bidders shall take into consideration that with Metro-style configuration, the Department will accept proposals to increase rolling stock capacity that adopt a capacity standard of 0.25m² per passenger. It is anticipated that bidders may propose Metro-style interiors where they consider this to be an appropriate solution for conveying peak passengers on those services where a significant proportion of passengers are travelling for less than 20 minutes.

Update

This area of the specification has been amended in order to make bid evaluation clearer. Stakeholder responses have been considered in these changes.

The information about the Train Service Requirement above remains the same as for July 2012.

The overall approach to capacity in the new proposition also remains the same as before, in that bids must include plans which DfT considers provide sufficient capacity to meet the crowding tests set within the ITT. The definition of crowding used for the purposes of assessing bids has been altered however, in order to improve clarity during procurement and to include some franchise specific requirements.

Bidders will have to demonstrate that, for the demand they predict (which must as a minimum comply with exogenous factors provided by DfT):

- all passengers travelling between Shoeburyness and Laindon/Grays have a seat in the peak, subject to percentages of allowable standing that have been published in the ITT. These allowances vary between 0 and 5%
- West of Barking, the percentage of allowable standing in the peak is between 3% and 5%.
- Off-peak, all passengers have a seat travelling between Shoeburyness and Barking in both directions.

The specific percentages for allowable standing depend on franchise year and location, and have been set to represent a reasonable balance between costs and capacity. They also reflect - in the case of travel West of Barking - the availability of other transport choices in the areas served by the franchise, including London Underground and Overground.

As was the case with the previous proposition, meeting these Crowding Limits is a requirement applied at bid, where its purpose is to ensure the successful franchisee has sufficient train fleet capacity to meet the demand that is reasonably expected during the franchise period. Once the fleet is contracted, the franchisee is required to use the fleet effectively to minimise crowding and, as far as reasonably practicable, to provide a seat for journeys over 20 minutes in the peak and on boarding in the off peak.

As described in the response for July 2012, bidders will be able to propose metro-style rolling stock where this can be done in a way which meets the seating requirements summarised in this update.

8. Should the bus service between Tilbury Town and Tilbury Riverside be retained in the new franchise?

Responses to this question tended to originate from either local residents or businesses located in the area.

All of those who responded to this question considered that the bus service should be maintained and the majority felt it should continue to operate at broadly the same frequency.

Some felt that there was an opportunity to increase passenger demand for the service through improved marketing and also better integration with ferries and riverboat passenger services.

Currently a bus service is specified which operates twice hourly between Tilbury Town station and Tilbury Riverside, allowing connections to ferry services and cruise ships. Bidders will be required to continue an equivalent bus connection service within the Franchise.

Bidders for the franchise will be encouraged to consider the consultation responses and engage with the relevant local stakeholders in preparing their proposal.

9. What improvements do stakeholders believe could be made to fares and ticketing for the Essex Thameside franchise?

The main issues identified by respondents relate to the value for money of fares, the complexity of tickets the lack of transparency in ticket pricing and a resultant lack of trust in current fares and ticketing arrangements.

Whilst respondents understood that a more flexible approach to ticketing can help alleviate crowding by encouraging passengers to travel on less busy services, they were concerned that this may mean fare levels would increase on peak services. It was generally felt that any pricing mechanism should reduce off peak fares rather than increase peak fares. Some felt that the ability to actually travel on different services was constrained because people mainly use the franchise to travel to work.

Some respondents considered that there should be more information available to passengers about the types of tickets that are available so they can be confident they have purchased the cheapest and most appropriate ticket for their journey.

Respondents are supportive of the introduction of smartcard ticketing on this franchise and consider that because of the self contained nature of the route it would be a good location for any future pilot project of new technology or ticketing products.

In developing their bids, bidders are advised that ITSO compliant ticketing for all ticket types shall be required throughout the franchise area no later than May

2018 and that Oyster equipment on the TfL network will be capable of reading ITSO based products in the early stages of the new franchise.

Bidders are expected to set out how they will work with TfL and local authorities within the franchise area who may wish to implement smart rail or multi-modal ticketing schemes.

The Department is currently conducting a review of rail fares and ticketing including a public consultation which closed on 28 June 2012. One of the main issues the review will consider is how smart ticketing technology could be used to allow train operators to manage demand more effectively and provide a better service to passengers. In parallel this ITT asks bidders to set out the measures they will use to promote demand management and passenger benefits by participating in the South East Flexible Ticketing programme and implementing common smart products developed as part of that programme, and by making proposals for new smart/flexible ticketing products. However, we cannot rule out future changes to this and other franchises in the light of the fares review which is expected to conclude in May 2013.

Update

The outcome of the fares and ticketing review is likely to be published shortly. The ITT describes how bidders will be required to incorporate any changes made to the Department's fares policy during the bidding phase.

During the pause, the incumbent operator has agreed that it will implement South East Flexible Ticketing (SEFT) during the period to September 2014. Therefore the specification has been altered to enable this pilot to be continued in the new franchise. Bidders will be asked to provide evidence of how they will co-operate with other industry partners and stakeholders in the development of ticket retailing standards; continue to accept Oyster and work in partnership with Local Authorities within the franchise area who wish to implement rail and/or multimodal ticketing. These new requirements have replaced the ITSO requirement set out in the original text.

Bidders are required to set out how they will ensure that information about ticketing is clear and helpful for their passengers. The quality of bidders' ticketing and retail proposals will be assessed.

10. What local considerations do stakeholders feel need to be taken into account with providing passenger information?

Respondents, including TfL and Passenger representatives, reported that they wanted to see improvements in information provided to passengers during planned and unplanned service disruption. Research provided by Passenger Focus and supported by TfL highlighted that passenger information initiatives such as display of network maps, onward journey information, London-wide engineering works and integrated information on fares and ticketing should be clearly displayed at stations.

Respondents wanted to see more real time information provided at railway stations about other public transport modes for example, the departure times of buses which stop outside of stations or the status (including delays and closure) of London Underground services, DLR and London Overground services.

TfL wanted the franchisee to continue to co-operate with TfL on the development and display of new public transport maps.

Respondents highlighted that during planned and unplanned engineering work, rail replacement bus services should only arise when there is no alternative solution.

Some respondents noted that staff have an important role in communicating with passengers and therefore the presence and visibility of staff is important to passengers.

Bidders are expected to provide details of how they will maintain and improve information provision with support from well informed staff. Bidders are encouraged in their response to the ITT to propose new ways in which they will communicate with passengers building on good practice and working with stakeholders such as TfL, Local Authorities, passenger interest groups and representatives such as Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch. They are also required to demonstrate how they will communicate with passengers during times of unplanned disruption. The future franchisee will be required to adopt an industry code of practice on Passenger Information During Disruption.

The Department expects bidders to demonstrate how they will work together with Network Rail and other passenger and freight operators to minimise inconvenience to passenger journeys and to minimise the use of rail replacement bus services. Where road services are unavoidable the Department expects bidders to demonstrate how frequent, high-quality, accessible and well-managed rail replacement services are to be provided.

Update

Bidders' proposals to help passengers access accurate information and plan their journeys more effectively will form part of the evaluation of quality in this competition. This will require consideration of the range of issues mentioned in the original text above, including bidders' plans to minimise disruption for passengers.

Bidders are also asked to develop effective plans for communicating with passengers and involving them in decisions that affect the franchise. As a minimum, the future franchisee must produce an annual report which sets out key commitments to its customers, including those relating to day-to-day services, how it will act to address problems and how it intends to improve services and /or facilities. This is intended to allow customers to assess and understand the performance of the franchise, and hold the operator to account.

11. What's important to stakeholders in the future use and improvement of Fenchurch Street and other stations?

Generally, stakeholders were supportive of proposals to improve facilities at Fenchurch Street and expected improvements to be delivered early in the franchise. There is an expectation that all Essex Thameside stations will be maintained and cleaned to a high standard. There was widespread support for the development and implementation of travel plan initiatives across the franchise, with the objective of improving access by all modes, but particularly public transport, walking and cycling. The National Passenger Survey (NPS) highlighted that important areas for improvement at stations include toilets, the availability of staff and the quality of the information provided during unplanned disruption.

Barking and Dagenham Council together with London Thames Gateway Corporation have commissioned a Barking Station 'Masterplan' to improve the service and commercial potential offered by the station. Barking Station provides interchange between services on Essex Thameside, London Underground and London Overground and many London Bus routes. The station fronts onto Station Parade, an overpass connecting the centre with the north of the town. Many respondents wanted to see improvements to this station.

TfL highlighted that there were issues at Limehouse about passenger access between Network Rail and DLR during the off peak which they would like the franchisee to address.

There was concern expressed by TfL regarding proposals to make greater use of Liverpool Street because of the impact on future Crossrail services and capacity constraints which could impact on the timetabling of London Overground services from Barking. This was supported by London TravelWatch who thought that the preferred destination for passengers was Fenchurch Street because of access to the City of London. Whilst others thought that Liverpool Street station provided better access to the London Underground network and so there may be a case for more services to be routed there.

Bidders are required to set out their plans for wider transport integration with all modes and their approach to engaging with local authorities and other stakeholders to improve the journey opportunities and experience for passengers at all stations. They are also required to set out how they plan to engage with stakeholders on future schemes and their approach to the development and implementation of Station Travel Plans.

The Department believes that a more flexible TSR should provide bidders with the opportunity to deliver a better service for passengers. It considers that by providing bidders with an option to make greater use of Liverpool Street there may be an opportunity to develop certain markets for example, off-peak services to Westfield at Stratford City. Any proposals to make greater use of Liverpool Street should take account of its future use and capacity constraints.

Bidders are encouraged to consider ways in which they would improve the quality and ease of access to their services, as well as connections to services

from other modes into Essex to the north and, as possible, cross-river to the south. Bidders are encouraged to hold discussions with key stakeholders in preparing their proposals.

Bidders proposals should also adhere to, as a minimum, the standards set out in the 'Better Rail Stations' report (November 2009).

The new Franchisee is expected to be the Station Facility Owner (SFO) for 25 stations including Fenchurch Street station, leased from Network Rail under a 99 year Full Repair and Insure lease.

The Department is seeking a series of Priced Options which includes one for the redevelopment of Barking Station. More detail is provided in Section 6.

Update

The response above has not changed, except in two respects.

Firstly, bidders are not required to meet the station standards for facilities in the Better Rail Stations report. However, in assessing responses, the Department will take into account the quality and credibility of the plans as a whole in meeting the requirements on station quality, including the requirements to meet passenger satisfaction targets in respect of stations. Bidders who improve stations as part of a good overall proposition for passengers can receive quality credit in bid evaluation. Bidders will continue to be required to set out how they will engage with partners to improve access to stations, including through developing Station Travel Plans with local partners.

As discussed elsewhere, Priced Options are no longer being specified for this franchise.

Stakeholders should note the Franchisee will be SFO for 26 stations, not 25 as previously stated.

12. What do stakeholders see as the most important factors in improving security (actual or perceived and addressing any gap between the two)?

There are concerns, both perceived and actual, about security on the Essex Thameside route. It was generally recognised that this is a wider social issue rather than one that is strictly confined to the railway.

There is support for stations to continue to have Secure Stations Accreditation. Some respondents considered that greater visibility of staff, secure car and cycle parking, good levels of lighting and CCTV all contribute to improving perceptions of security.

The Department is looking to ensure that the rail network provides a safe and secure environment for passengers and staff. Bidders are expected to consider the findings in Passenger Focus's "Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railways" report and consider how best to address them within their plans.

The Essex Thameside Franchisee will be responsible for security on board its trains and at the stations it operates. Bidders are expected to set out their approach to assessing security and crime risk on trains and at stations and to work closely with the British Transport Police (BTP). They are asked to set out how they plan to provide security at stations including on stations car parks and in cycle storage area. Bidders are expected to support accreditations such as the Park Mark award and will maintain the current delivery of Secure Station Accreditation (SSA) for the duration of the franchise period.

Update

Bidders are required not only to maintain the existing Secure Station Accreditation, but also achieve Secure Car Park Accreditation for all car parks within the first two years. Additionally, the bid evaluation will consider whether Bidders' plans, overall, will improve passenger security and help passengers feel more secure, for instance through additional staffing.

13. What local accessibility and mobility issues do stakeholders see and how might they be addressed?

Stakeholders, particularly TfL, Local Authorities and Passenger Representative Groups would like to see all stations on the network obtain and maintain 'step free' status. Suggestions were made about improving access at Barking, Chalkwell and Southend East.

The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee is content with the requirements set out in the consultation document and the reference to the Disabled Persons Protection Policy (DPPP).

The Department will expect bidders to ensure that their proposals comply with equalities and discrimination legislation, and include the production of a DPPP, which sets out accessibility and service levels that disabled people should expect. In particular, bidders will be requested to describe in detail their compliance strategies applicable to services, stations and trains.

Bidders will also need to detail how they will consult with relevant groups to ensure that the reasonable needs of all passengers are identified and addressed, both within existing facilities and where enhancements are planned. Bidders will also need to outline their plans for staff awareness training and detail their procedures for the sale of tickets, including the provision of a free assisted person's helpline.

Bidders will be aware of the date (31 December 2019) by which all trains must be accessible to persons with reduced mobility. As this franchise extends beyond that date, it is required that bidders should work with rolling stock leasing companies to identify, in their bid, opportunities during the franchise for any corrective works to take place to enable applicable fleets to operate past 2019.

Update

Requirements in this area are significantly greater than with the competition run in 2012. Dagenham Dock station is required to become fully step-free, with the commissioning of the final lift. Additional marks would be available, for example, for making access to all platforms on the franchise step-free.

Bidders will be required to set out how access for relevant groups is being addressed overall, through a wide range of actions. Operators will also be required, through the franchise agreement and Operating Licence, to consult with relevant passenger groups (as set out in the original text), produce a DPPP and comply with PRM-TSI legislation.

14. What environmental targets would stakeholders like to see within the franchise specification?

Respondents were supportive of the need for environmental targets to be established in the franchise and for these to be monitored and reported on regularly. Suggestions for targets focused on reducing carbon emissions, water to land-fill and water use. It was felt that bidders should be expected to seek to be accredited to a recognised Environmental Management System.

The Department will expect bidders for this franchise to set out plans for measuring, monitoring and reducing the environmental impact of their rail activities. As part of this process, bidders are expected to set annual targets to improve the environmental performance of the franchise and to ensure they have appropriate environmental management systems. As a minimum bidders will be expected to define targets for:

- reductions in energy consumption from rail traction and non-traction operations;
- reductions in CO₂ emissions from rail traction and non-traction operations;
- reductions in water use; and
- reductions in total waste to landfill.

Bidders are expected to indicate how they will monitor and publish the overall environmental performance of the franchise as an annual progress statement and comply with the carbon management framework being developed by the Sustainable Rail Programme, in particular with regards to reporting energy consumption.

Bidders should explain how environmental issues will be managed within the franchise, including introducing ISO14001 accreditation or an equivalent environment management system.

Bidders are asked to set out plans for raising awareness of environmental issues among staff and customers and for encouraging and implementing ideas for reducing environmental impacts.

The Department expects bidders to demonstrate an awareness of the environmental impact of the goods and services they procure to support their franchise operation and to submit their sustainable procurement policy. The department asks bidders to consider applying the relevant British Standard BS 8903.

All initiatives should be considered on a whole-life, whole-system cost basis.

Update

The environmental requirements remain similar to those described in the original document. In addition, bidders are required to have systems for reviewing and prioritising environmental issues, risks and targets through the

Franchise Term. They are also required to ensure that environmental impacts are an important consideration in the running of the business, and in major investment, procurement and business development decisions. Consideration of how far the bidders' proposals generate whole-life, whole-system benefits will be considered in evaluating environmental proposals.

5. Priced Options

Following evidence presented by respondents to the consultation and based on analysis undertaken by the Department in developing the Train Service Requirement, the Department is seeking three Priced Options. As set out in the Consultation Document any proposed Priced Options must:

- comply with the objectives of the franchise;
- be operationally robust;
- 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 written guarantees of funding).

The Priced Options are:

- 1 **Beam Park Station.** The London Boroughs of Havering and Barking & Dagenham have been developing plans for a new station between Dagenham Dock and Rainham stations. The Department expects bidders to work with scheme promoters to develop a Priced Option for providing the rail services to the station once it has been constructed. Bidders will be required to demonstrate in their response how it meets the requirements of the Department as set out above. The scheme promoters will need to fund the development and construction of the scheme and, in line with the Department's policy on third party funded schemes, the additional subsidy requirements that arise from the provision of the new service for the at least the first three years of operation.
- 2 **Tilbury Loop.** The Department is seeking a Priced Option from bidders to increase the off peak train service on the Tilbury Loop from the two trains per hour which is included in the TSR. The Bidder will be expected to identify the increase in frequency and hours of operation. Any proposal will need to take account of the increasing demand for freight paths as forecast by the Strategic Freight Network.
- 3 **Barking Station.** The Department is seeking a priced option from bidders for the redevelopment of Barking Station. Bidders are expected to engage with local stakeholders and within the scope of the overall planned redevelopment, propose their approach for taking responsibility to deliver the redevelopment of the station. This would be accompanied by a clear plan setting out actions, investments, programmes, delivery frameworks and funding arrangements. Proposals previously developed for the site and provided to the

Department as part of the consultation process will be made available to bidders.

For further information, please see Conditions Relating to the Funding of new or Enhanced Services Promoted by Local Bodies.

Update

The Department has reviewed the previously proposed Priced Options and have, where possible, incorporated them into the base specification.

Specifically:

- The ITT includes a requirement for the operator to work efficiently with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and other stakeholders to improve Barking Station for customers;
- Tilbury Loop increase is not incorporated into the TSR. However, there is a requirement for bidders to increase revenue outside of the peak which is designed to encourage bidders to consider proposals for off-peak improvements; and
- The ITT requires provision of all reasonable co-operation to the Department and others responsible for the development of Beam Park and make sure nothing is done that will prejudice the development.

Appendix: List of respondents

Rail Industry Stakeholders

- Network Rail
- Transport for London
- Sustainable Development Steering Group
- Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers & Firemen (ASLEF)
- National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers

Freight Interest Group

- Freight Transport Association
- Rail Freight Group
- Freightliner Group Limited

Local Authority

- London Borough of Barking & Dagenham
- Essex County Council
- Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Gravesham Borough Council
- Castle Point Borough Council
- Thames Gateway South Essex
- Leigh-on-Sea Town Council
- Kent County Council
- London Borough of Havering
- Rochford & Southend East Council
- East & South East London Transport Partnership (ESEL)
- Thurrock Council
- Barking and Dagenham Chamber of Commerce
- Basildon Council

Passenger Interest Group

- Tilbury Community Forum

- Passenger Focus
- Southend Rail Travellers' Association
- London TravelWatch
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

Special Interest Group

- Tilbury Riverside Project
- Campaign for Better Transport
- Rail Future
- London Cruise Terminal
- Southend Association of Voluntary Services

In addition the Department received a number of responses from individuals.