



Department
for Transport



The West Coast Partnership Stakeholder Briefing Document

The Route to High Speed Rail

March 2018



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for Transport

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Foreword

1 Foreword by the Transport Secretary

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

Secretary of State for Transport



Introduction

These are exciting days to be involved in the UK rail industry, a fact that is reflected nowhere better than our plans to create a brand new West Coast Partnership.

Record levels of Government and private sector investment are funding a renaissance of our railways which is unparalleled in Europe. As a consequence, we have seen the competition to operate the prestigious West Coast Partnership attract a world class field of companies; all of them determined to be at the forefront of the next era of intercity rail travel, and to prepare for the next generation of high speed services on HS2.

Last November I set out the conditions that will secure this new era for rail travel in the UK in my strategic vision for the future of the UK's railways – 'Connecting People: a strategic vision for rail'.

Across the country we are now fixing the operational divide between track and train so that both organisations share one imperative: putting the passenger first.

We are creating innovative new public-private partnerships for the delivery of vital rail services and infrastructure.

We are exploring plans to open up new lines and connect hitherto poorly served communities and business areas.

And we are investing in digital technology, introducing state of the art smart ticket options, faster Wi-Fi and improving redress for passengers when things go wrong.

All this is transforming the travel experience for UK passengers, and giving them the quality and value they quite rightly expect from a railway fit for the 21st Century.

West Coast Partnership

As we roll out this exciting new vision, I am delighted to be publishing today the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the West Coast Partnership, one of the first competitions under the reform agenda announced in my strategic vision for rail. The Partnership brings together the InterCity West Coast services and the design and introduction of the initial HS2 services.

The InterCity West Coast franchise has been very successful in recent years with high passenger satisfaction and substantial revenue growth. It is my intention that the new contract will build on this. There is already a close working relationship between Network Rail and the train operator.

The competition to operate the West Coast Partnership provides an exciting opportunity to bidders to transform the West Coast and modernise our railways for the passengers and the communities it serves, to be innovative and to challenge how things have been done and the services provided and to set standards not just for this country but for the rest of the world to aspire to.

The specification in the ITT has been informed by over 1,200 responses to the public consultation summarised in this publication. These responses have helped us design a specification that puts passengers firmly at the heart of decisions made by the WCP operator.

The consultation responses (Section 6) highlighted the importance of getting both the 'basics' right – providing high quality, frequent and reliable services – and developing a railway fit for the future. Passengers have also demanded: more space; enhanced Wi-Fi; improved accessibility measures; better integration across the different transport modes improving door-to-door journeys; more visible and proactive staff on trains and at stations; and reliable real time integrated journey information that is accurate and consistent. We will be asking all this and more from the new West Coast Partnership operator.



Foreword by the Transport Secretary

We also expect the West Coast Partnership to promote diversity and equality across the workforce, encouraging individuals from groups under-represented in the rail industry and to ensure 2.5% of the total number of Partnership employees are apprentices to encourage the younger generation to become part of the future of our railway.

HS2

As well as improving the service for passengers today, the West Coast Partnership is also the next critical step towards delivering the new HS2 services, which will be launched in 2026.

A strong economy demands strong connectivity. It's the thread that runs through the Government's Industrial Strategy, and rail services play a vital role: driving long-term economic prosperity by fostering clusters and connectivity across the UK's cities and towns.

Such connectivity is provided not only by intercity services, but also regional and local services. From 2026, it will also be provided by new high speed services on HS2. It is vital, therefore, that the next generation of high speed services are introduced in a manner that complements and enhances the established West Coast intercity services.

The West Coast Partnership, will deliver a smooth introduction of high speed services and passengers could also benefit from the early introduction of new technologies developed for HS2 ahead of its launch.

There was a strong interest in responses to the consultation about the interactions between intercity services and HS2, and the future of the intercity services after the arrival of high speed services on HS2 in 2026. There will be opportunities during the life of the Partnership for passengers, businesses, local authorities and communities to have a say in shaping the future HS2 services.

I believe that HS2 should be an integrated railway operation, in charge of both its infrastructure and its services. The Partnership will provide expertise to help HS2 evolve from being a construction management organisation, delivering one of the

biggest projects this country has ever seen, to being a mixed organisation that can run trains and deliver customer service as well as complete the construction of its network.

To enable my vision, the West Coast Partnership will operate the initial services on HS2 from 2026 to a government specification and in a management contract type arrangement. During this period, the operator will also work with the Department and HS2 to consider the options for the end state, including what would be required for fully integrated operations to be undertaken by an eventual combined organisation.

Conclusion

We are in the midst of one of the most exciting periods in the history of the UK's railways. Historic levels of Government and private funding are driving an unprecedented programme of investments which are creating more space and brand new trains across the North, South, East and West of the country. Other countries are now copying our model.

The publication today of the ITT for the ground breaking West Coast Partnership marks yet another step in that transformation programme, and one that will deliver a once-in-a-generation change for the people, the communities, the towns, the cities and the businesses along the length of one of Britain's most important railway.



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Introduction

2 What is this document for?

This document combines our commitment to:

Provide information about the West Coast Partnership (WCP). This includes:

- our vision and objectives for WCP;
- a summary of the specification;
- a summary of the benefits for passengers; and
- a summary of benefits for the rail industry.

Provide a summary of the public consultation and the responses received. This includes:

- a summary of the [consultation process](#);
- an outline of [your views and priorities](#) for the InterCity West Coast (ICWC) services
- [our response to your views](#), and how your thoughts have informed the specification for the new franchise;
- [the improvements](#) to train services, customer experience, stations, performance and ticketing that we have specified for the franchise in the Invitation to Tender (ITT) also published today; and
- our [plans to design the High Speed 2 \(HS2\) service](#) and for the integrated operation of the ICWC conventional and HS2 services post 2026.

We are extremely grateful to all those individuals and organisations that took the time and effort to respond, and to those that attended the consultation events. These comments and views have been carefully considered and have informed the development of our plans for your rail services under the new Partnership and to help inform the WCP bidders what areas are of particular importance to you.

Please note the information in this document is not intended to replace the ITT, and in the case of any inconsistencies the ITT takes precedence.





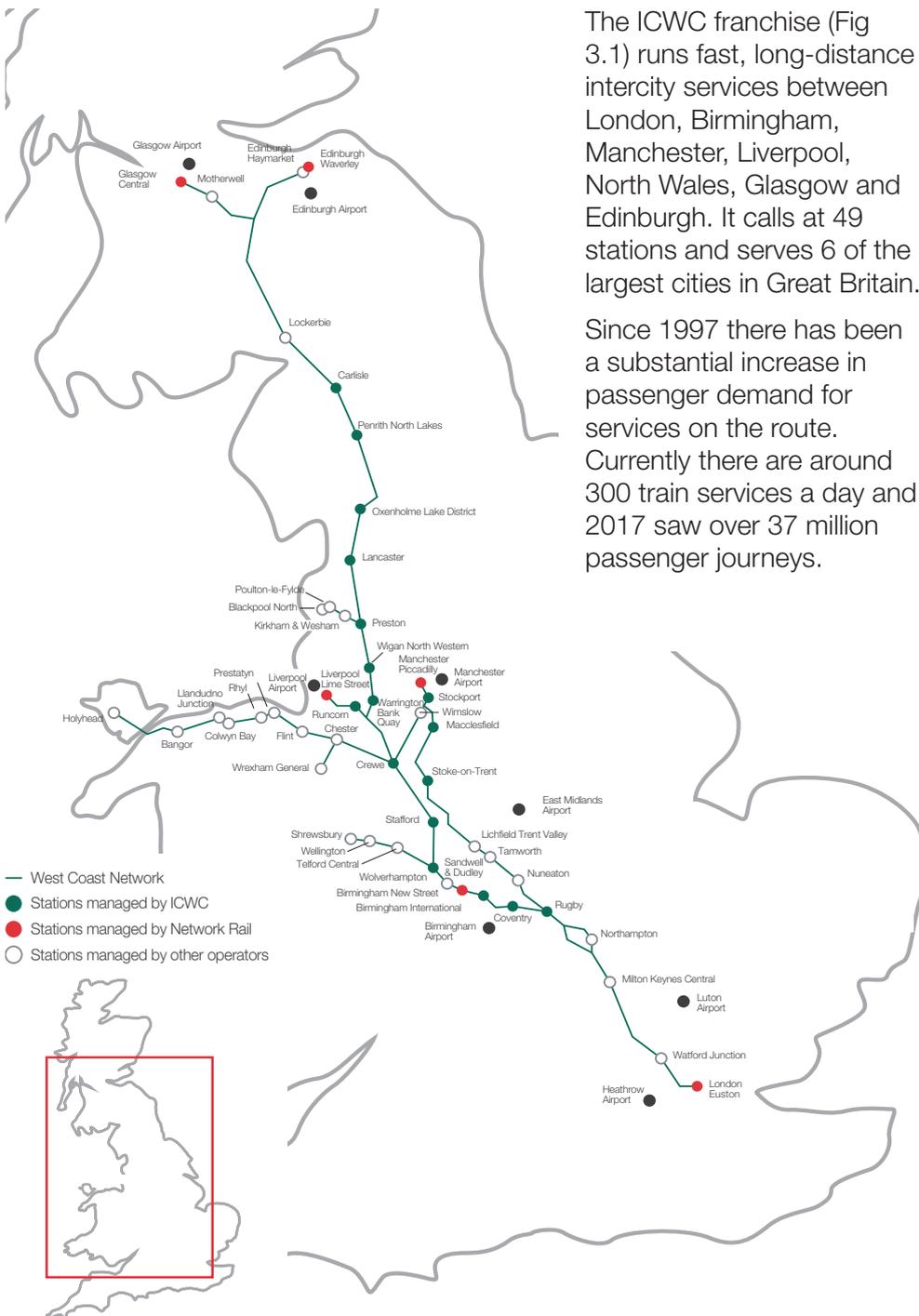
3

Background

3 The current ICWC service and HS2

The West Coast Main Line is one of Great Britain’s most important railway routes and has always been a pioneer. On 17 September 1838 the first train pulled out of London Euston bound for Birmingham Curzon Street on a new line built by the great engineer Robert Stephenson. It was the start of a rail revolution: the first long-distance train service on earth.

Figure 3.1: ICWC franchise route



The ICWC franchise (Fig 3.1) runs fast, long-distance intercity services between London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, North Wales, Glasgow and Edinburgh. It calls at 49 stations and serves 6 of the largest cities in Great Britain. Since 1997 there has been a substantial increase in passenger demand for services on the route. Currently there are around 300 train services a day and 2017 saw over 37 million passenger journeys.

In December 2008 the final phase of the West Coast Route Modernisation was completed – an infrastructure investment of £9 billion over 10 years and a new fleet of tilting high speed trains. This major project delivered an increased maximum line-speed of 125mph, faster journey times and additional capacity to serve more locations with frequent and faster train services

The majority of journeys made by passengers on the ICWC franchise are for leisure (66%) with some travelling – for business (23%) and a small number using the services to – commute (11%). It is vital that the new operator has an in-depth understanding of the markets served, and the alternative competing transport options available to the public and provides a high quality journey experience to both retain and grow the number of passengers travelling on the West Coast.

The current ICWC service and HS2

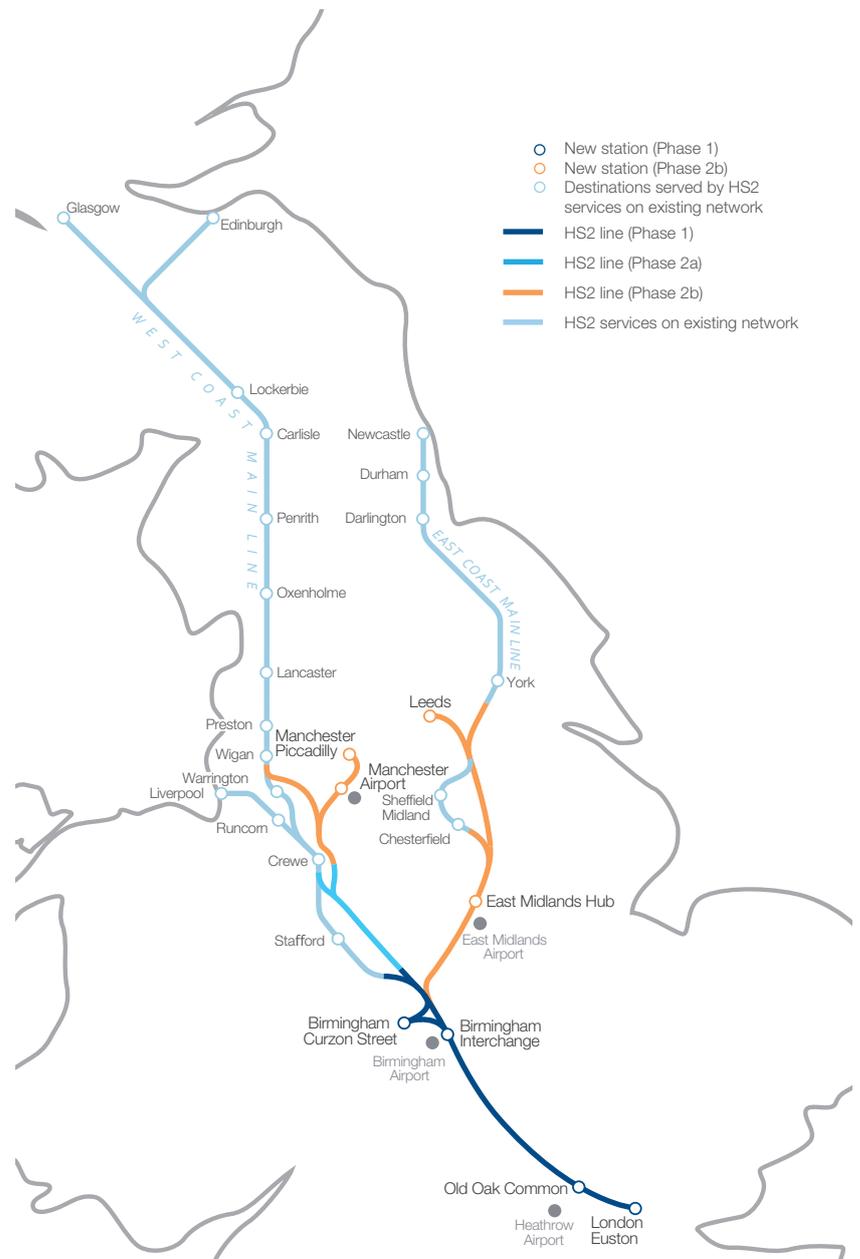


Figure 3.2: HS2 route map

Today the West Coast is on the brink of the biggest transformation of all: the construction and integration of a brand new high speed line – High Speed Two (HS2) (Fig 3.2). The new high speed train services will be launched by the WCP operator. Opening in 2026, Phase 1 will run from London Euston to Birmingham Curzon Street and near Lichfield with intermediate stations in West London (at Old Oak Common) and at Birmingham Airport. In 2027, Phase 2a will open, extending the line from the West Midlands to Crewe. Trains will run on segregated track to Birmingham and Crewe then on to Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow over the existing West Coast Main Line.

HS2 will become the new backbone of our national rail network: increasing capacity on our congested railways where we need it most; improving connections between our largest cities and regions; and generating jobs and economic growth to help build an economy that works for all.

There are significant benefits in bringing the ICWC and HS2 projects together to ensure the best outcomes for passengers, both before and after the start of the HS2 services. This led to the Government’s decision to form the new WCP which was announced on the 14 November 2016.





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Our Vision

4 WCP vision and objectives

Putting passengers and communities at the heart of WCP

From day one the new WCP **will put the passenger at the heart of their thinking.**

The WCP specification has been designed to be flexible to encourage the bidders to be creative and innovative, drawing on their expertise to submit exciting proposals to attract current and future passengers who expect a high quality journey experience and have other transport options to make their journeys.

The Partnership will have a **Corporate Social Responsibility** to meet the different needs of passengers, local communities and its employees, and to incorporate the rail industry's **Sustainable Development Principles**¹ in the way it runs the WCP.

The WCP will balance the needs of passengers and communities, developing services on the rail corridor between London, the Midlands, Scotland and North Wales and ensure the ICWC and HS2 services work in an integrated and coherent way. We require the Partnership to deliver improvements for passengers from day one – not to wait for the arrival of HS2 – and to continue to improve services across the life of the WCP. They will be incentivised through new passenger satisfaction targets on the ICWC services, with higher penalties should these targets be missed, and also through annual reviews, which includes considering the Partnership's collaborative working with passenger representative bodies.

On the conventional **ICWC services** the Partnership will:

- Continue to build on the current high levels of passenger satisfaction; by delivering a high quality passenger journey experience on board trains and at stations; by enhancing the station environment and making the facilities more accessible; and by making fares and ticketing simpler to understand and easy to access.
- Continue to improve the reliability and punctuality of the train services improving passengers' journeys and the connectivity between the towns and communities that the Partnership serves.
- Ensure both existing and any new train services they provide meet the needs of the passenger market, and are frequent enough to meet the growing passenger demand on the WCP.

In parallel with the above the WCP Partnership will be a **'Shadow Operator'** for the design and development of the new HS2 services.

As the Shadow Operator they will be responsible for working with all the organisations involved to ensure a smart and simple to use passenger railway experience:

- On the new HS2 trains and at stations.
- Developing options for a new fares system for the HS2 services with tickets that are integrated with the wider rail ticket system.
- With other modes of transport providing a simple to use system for passengers.

Link to Sustainable Development Principles

<https://www.rspb.co.uk/improving-industry-performance/sustainable-development/rail-sustainable-development-principles>

4 WCP vision and objectives

As new thinking and new technologies are developed for HS2 services there may be opportunities for these to be implemented ahead of HS2's launch improving the experience for passengers, on the West Coast and wider afield on the railway.

The consortia bidding for the WCP will need to demonstrate in their bids how they will consult with and listen to current and future passengers and stakeholders to understand their different needs on the ICWC and HS2 services and how they will not just meet but continue to improve on these across the life of the WCP.

ICWC services provide a wide range of socially and economically important services to **communities** across the region and will continue to do so under the new Partnership.

We want the WCP to increase the benefits of the Partnership for the local communities it serves. This will include:

- ▶ Improving engagement with local communities, Community Rail Partnerships and local businesses.
- ▶ Providing funding for Customer and Communities Improvement (CCI) schemes.
- ▶ Identifying redundant space at stations for possible use by the local community under their Station Social and Commercial Development Plan.
- ▶ Expanding opportunities for local retailers and businesses.
- ▶ Helping to make stations destinations in their own right.

The ICWC franchise currently employs over 3,000 staff. The new Partnership will continue to be a major employer first running the ICWC services and then HS2 and the redesigned ICWC services after 2026. It is vital the WCP invests in and provides the necessary support to help develop and protect the health and wellbeing of the Partnership **workforce** whose roles are essential to ensure the smooth day to day running of the Partnership. Their bids will need to demonstrate how they will:

- ▶ Promote a high level of engagement and recognition of good performance among their workforce.
- ▶ Develop opportunities to give employees a say in decision making to ensure they feel involved and invested in the Partnership and how it performs.

A service delivery partner championing passenger needs

On 29 November 2017 the Government published 'Connecting people: a strategic vision for rail'. This set out a clear path to greater partnership working to make the railway more reliable for passengers and ensure that it works as one to deliver for the customers. The WCP is a new approach that takes the well-established model of rail franchising and concessions in Great Britain to another level. The Partnership will:

- Act as a champion for the passenger.
- Develop the customer services and technologies of the future.
- Focus on the technical and operational work to get the route ready for the launch of Phase 1 HS2 services on the West Coast corridor in 2026.
- Help us take the next big step towards delivering HS2.

WCP vision
and objectives

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To accomplish this the Partnership will need to show real ambition, not be afraid to challenge the current ways of doing things on the railway, draw on lessons from the operation of the railway, bring their own skills and expertise and apply fresh thinking. We have asked bidders to demonstrate how they will:

2019 onwards

Improve ICWC services

- Provide an exemplary service by providing a visible, helpful and proactive customer-facing presence to passengers, improving information, enhancing the environment, facilities and their accessibility on trains and at stations.
- Bring innovation and leading edge technology into rail travel on an ongoing basis, such as improving communications and ticketing systems.
- Work side-by-side with HS2 Ltd, Network Rail and other train operators to deliver continuous improvements at stations and to minimise the impact of the HS2 construction works on passengers and their journey experience.
- Target train capacity to address crowding particularly around the busiest periods to provide comfortable and pleasant journeys.
- Reduce journey times and innovate to improve the ICWC services to existing destinations on the WCP and introduce services to new destinations.
- Improve and simplify door-to-door journeys through: enhanced accessibility to stations, better integration between different train operators, and other modes of transport (e.g. buses, trams, ferries) and information about connections and ticketing systems.
- Invest in the development and diversity of the workforce.

2019 onwards

Shadow Operator – designing HS2 services

- Use their experience as an operator of international high speed trains to help with the design of HS2, including the inside of the trains.
- Ensure that passengers are at the heart of the new HS2 services and reconfigured ICWC services, making sure that the customer services and fares and ticketing are world class.
- Develop a passenger-focused timetable making best use of the capacity and speed of the new infrastructure.
- Prepare for the launch of HS2 services and the smooth transition to the reconfigured ICWC services.
- Provide support, training and new and improved opportunities for staff during the major changes to the operation of the railway.
- Work with HS2 Ltd to test the new high speed infrastructure and trains, and to prepare for the launch of the initial HS2 services.

In order to:

2026 onwards

Integrate and operate HS2 and ICWC services

- Deliver the smooth launch of the HS2 services and the redesigned ICWC services that will run after HS2 is launched.
- Deliver ongoing improvements to ensure a world-class service is delivered to passengers.
- Advise on setting up the future structure for the next contract after the initial five years of HS2 operation.



WCP vision and objectives

The WCP will ensure the new HS2 line is fully integrated with the wider rail network.

Longer term and closer relationship between train and track companies

Closer alignment between track and train operations and delivery is a key Government requirement. Appointing the Partnership at this early stage in the HS2 project will help to build a longer term and closer relationship between the train and track companies. Working as one integrated team they will be committed to meeting the needs of the current passengers as they design and prepare for HS2 securing the best value for farepayers and taxpayers. They will improve operational performance helping to improve passenger satisfaction through an Alliance Agreement between the WCP and Network Rail.

Working as an integrated team will enable solutions to be identified sooner and could provide the opportunity for early testing and, potentially, the introduction of the HS2 trains on the conventional railway prior to HS2's launch. This will help get the most out of HS2 investment for both HS2 and the conventional network.

Flexibility in approach

The Strategic Vision recognises that there is not a single solution to attracting bidders and the investment and benefits they bring for passengers while sensibly protecting taxpayers' investments. The approach needs to be tailored to get the balance right for different markets and circumstances.

Bidders for the WCP will be asked to demonstrate they are the best choice for passengers and taxpayers as the service delivery partner for the WCP. The successful bidder will be incentivised to deliver the right behaviours throughout the Partnership. They will include formal reviews to assess the operators' past performance in order to provide confidence in their ability to deliver HS2 services, while providing contractual flexibility for innovative solutions (e.g. in fares and ticketing) to be developed during the life of the WCP in partnership with Government.

The WCP train operator will not win the opportunity to commission and operate the inaugural HS2 services if they fail to pass the test of performing well as the operator of the West Coast route train services and being a good partner for Government and the infrastructure operator.

The objectives of the WCP

The new WCP will create the railway people want – fast, easy to use, flexible and innovative. It will lift ambitions with closer working with staff, better use of technology and making sure passengers get the good service they need every time.

Our vision is a world-class railway that delivers continuous improvements for passengers and maximises opportunities for people and businesses across the route.

Figure 4.1: WCP objectives

Drive growth in passenger numbers	Using the ICWC services to develop the market for intercity travel between the cities served by the franchise ahead of the introduction of HS2. In doing so, maximise passenger benefits and create the best foundation for the future of the ICWC and HS2 services.
Deliver a step change in customer experience for passengers	On the West Coast by minimising the impact of HS2 construction by delivering a new benchmark in passenger satisfaction and introduction of new technology in advance of HS2.
Deliver a transformation in customer experience	Take full advantage of a once in a lifetime opportunity transform the customer experience on HS2 and the existing network.
Act as a partner	For the Department for Transport (DfT), HS2 Ltd, Network Rail and other relevant bodies to support the development and delivery of the HS2 services to maximise the long-term benefits to passengers and deliver the wider socio- economic benefits associated with HS2.
Deliver the benefits of existing investment	In the ICWC business whilst developing and delivering the maximum long term sustainable benefits for passengers associated with HS2, integrating services with the rest of the rail network by optimising the use of available capacity across the whole geography while taking account of taxpayer interests.
Achieve whole industry benefits	Through continued investment in workforce and innovation and partnership working to deliver the services in a cost-effective manner.
Successfully deliver the service transition in 2026	Including the ability to respond quickly, in real time, to changes required once high speed and recast conventional services commence.



WCP vision and objectives

WCP Shortlisted Bidders

The following shortlisted bidding consortia are competing for this unique chance to redesign and develop the already successful ICWC services, and to design and implement the transformation of rail along the West Coast corridor for the new HS2 services and have proved they have the expertise in running conventional UK services, in introducing and operating high speed services and also have the technical ability to take on this challenge:

- ▶ **First Trenitalia West Coast Ltd**, a joint venture between First Rail Holdings Ltd and Trenitalia SpA.
- ▶ **MTR West Coast Partnership Ltd**, a joint venture between MTR Corporation (UK) Ltd and Guangshen Railway Company, with the following key sub-contractors:
 - Deloitte MCS Ltd
 - Panasonic Systems Europe
 - Snowfall AB
 - Trainline.com Ltd
 - WSP Parsons Brinkerhoff
- ▶ **West Coast Partnership Ltd** a joint venture between Stagecoach Group plc, Virgin Holdings Ltd and SNCF C3.



5

Summary

5 Benefits for passengers



Major investment to provide high quality Wi-Fi and mobile connectivity on all trains



Introduce Delay Repay compensation, for passengers whose journeys are delayed by 15 minutes or more



Smart modern ticketing options for leisure and business journeys and for season tickets for commuters



Better value for money fares for passengers travelling regularly but cheaper than paying for 5 days during their working week



Exemplary passenger satisfaction targets for trains, stations, customer services and dealing with delays



Investment to make improvements to the current rolling stock



£5.5m for Customer and Communities Improvement schemes to deliver non-commercial improvements in local station facilities and services in consultation with the local community such as improving seating, luggage or toilet facilities at stations or better car park facilities



£380k a year to fund projects proposed by Community Rail Partnerships



A new Accessibility Panel to help with the design of opportunities to increase the accessibility on trains and at stations



A new Safeguarding Strategy, developed with the British Transport Police, to protect the travelling public and railway staff at stations

Benefits for a sustainable railway



Benefits for the workforce

- Supporting diversity in the workplace by encouraging individuals from groups under-represented in the rail industry and encouraging the younger generation into the industry by ensuring 2.5% of the total number of franchise employees are apprenticeships. Based on current staff numbers for the ICWC this would be around 80 apprentices.
- Supporting the development of the franchise workforce including by investing in their training and developing their skills, supporting delivery of the Transport and Infrastructure Skills Strategy and the Rail Sector Skills Delivery Plan.



Benefits for local communities

- Working closely with local transport authorities, businesses and stakeholders to maximise economic growth and social improvement.
- Improving the environment through ambitious performance targets covering traction carbon emissions, energy usage, water usage and waste recycling.
- £120m Residual Value, enabling bidders to develop long-term investment proposals which would otherwise not be commercially viable during the life of the franchise.



Benefits for the rail industry

- A long-term planning partner working closely with HS2 Ltd, Network Rail, other operators sharing information and expertise. Developing new services and systems (e.g. fares, ticket retailing systems, information systems) integrated into the national transport system, not run in isolation and encouraging development across the wider rail network.

5 WCP Specification Summary

West Coast

The Department has developed the WCP specification to provide flexibility and to encourage innovation across the three goals set out under Section 4 the WCP Vision:

- Providing reliable, high quality rail services on the ICWC that meet the needs and expectations of passengers, who in turn will benefit from better customer experience, improved fares and ticketing, and better stations and facilities, all identified as important by respondents to this consultation.
- Supporting the development and design of HS2 operations and getting it ready for service.
- Running the initial HS2 services and the reconfigured ICWC services.

Length of the WCP

The WCP is planned to start in September 2019 and will operate for an initial 7 years of ICWC services followed by an additional 5 years of integrated operator for ICWC and HS2, with an option for the Secretary of State to extend the term by up to 3 years.

Train Services

We have developed a Train Service Requirement (TSR) attachment A of the ITT which sets out the minimum level of service that bidders should provide, which is largely based on current services.

Bidders will target train capacity to where it is needed most to minimise crowding – particularly around the busiest periods, seasonal demand and special events.

Transport plays a vital role in the public's life and passengers need their trains to run on time. We have set Operational Performance targets to incentivise the Partnership to do this and have set penalties if this is not achieved.

We have also challenged bidders to:

- Improve journey times between key destinations from today's level.

- Provide additional services (which could include Bank holiday services, or earlier first or later last trains).
- Enhance direct services between locations within the Partnership's geographic scope where the current direct service is limited.

Customer experience

Passengers expect their train to arrive on time, and to be compensated appropriately when it is not. They expect modern facilities at stations and on board trains, and for them to be maintained to a high standard.

The Partnership will deliver an exemplary customer service on trains and at stations, so that passenger satisfaction will improve to meet the National Rail Passenger Survey targets we have set in the Franchise Agreement and pay a penalty if they don't. We have asked them to make innovative proposals and deliver modern facilities to ensure passengers get the most out of their journeys.

We require them to provide a visible, helpful, proactive customer-facing presence on trains and at stations, working collaboratively with other train operators and Network Rail to ensure the welfare and comfort of passengers is maintained across the route.

The Partnership will continue to promote the safety and security of passengers and staff, including by reducing any anti-social behaviour.

Compensation for passengers if things go wrong will be simple quick and automated and they will be entitled to payment if their train is delayed by more than 15 minutes – compared to 30 minutes currently available.

High quality Wi-Fi will be provided on trains with bidders required to ensure that passengers are able to use email and browse the internet seamlessly during their journey.

In addition to providing accurate and timely information to passengers the Partnership will also provide a simple and accessible system for passengers to contact them to report any problems or faults so these can be addressed quickly by the operator.

Bidders will receive additional credit for:

- Initiatives to improve the boarding process at London Euston.
- Proposals, which could include trials, to introduce technology and innovations to significantly enhance the customer services.

Providing better stations

Your responses to the public consultation and Transport Focus' National Rail Passenger Survey data demonstrate that stations and their environment can have a significant effect on the passenger experience. We have set targets, based on the National Rail Passenger Survey data, for bidders to consistently improve the passenger satisfaction with facilities at stations over the course of the Partnership, with financial penalties for the Partnership if they fail to meet these.

The Partnership will be required to: enhance the station environment, ensure station facilities are accessible for all passengers (including those with physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairments), improve provisions for customers' physical comfort and protection from the elements, and provide high quality commercial, retail or entertainment facilities.

We have asked the Partnership to make better use of existing facilities by managing stations as long term assets and will develop schemes to explore the potential for space at stations to be either developed commercially or made available for use by local communities.

We listened to your responses regarding station access and interchange; bidders will be challenged to develop their proposals to improve access, wayfinding and interchange with other transport modes at stations.

Given that a number of responses concerned stations that are managed by Network Rail or other operators, bidders will be required to develop a strategy for working in partnership with Network Rail and other operators to deliver improvements at these stations.

Fares and ticketing

The consultation responses show that there are real opportunities for improving the passenger experience of fares and ticketing. Bidders are required to offer fares that are easy to understand, and ensure that information about fares and tickets is communicated clearly and transparently to customers so that they are able to choose the most appropriate fare for their journey.

Bidders will propose a strategy to improve the ticketing experience, including how they will develop and deploy smart ticketing technology, so that customers have widespread and easy access to the full range of tickets, with a range of ticket retail opportunities that meet their needs. The Partnership will be required to increase the uptake of smart tickets and introduce fare products to benefit passengers who work or commute part-time.

Bidders will be encouraged to make the best offer in:

- Expanding through-tickets on other modes of public transport for passengers to travel door to door seamlessly.
- Offering customers the same fares at the time of booking regardless of ticket retailing option (e.g. online, app or ticket office), for example by offering a price guarantee.

Workforce

The Partnership's workforce plays a key role across all aspects of the WCP. The Partnership will lead and manage its organisation to transform the passenger experience on the ICWC services, ensure the smooth launch of the HS2 Services, and deliver the WCP's objectives while minimising disruption to staff, passengers and services.

The WCP operator will invest in their workforce at all levels throughout the organisation. This will include: investing in training; employing people in fulfilling and contractually secure roles and creating new opportunities for employment and careers; promoting diversity and equality across all grades;



WCP Specification Summary

and attracting people who are new to the rail industry, particularly from under-represented groups.

The Department will also require the Partnership to plan and manage the transition to the Integrated Operations Contract when the HS2 services are launched.

Collaborating

Working in partnership is crucial. The WCP will enter into a Partnership Protocol with HS2 Ltd which will include the approach to joint and collaborative working to deliver effectively their responsibilities and an Alliance Agreement with Network Rail which will include improving passenger satisfaction, operational performance, preparatory work for the successful commencement of HS2 services.

Bidders will also be required to set out how they will engage with stakeholders on the future HS2 services including how they will capture and implement ideas for innovation from employees, passengers, communities and Industry Partners.

Shadow Operator

From the moment the successful bidder takes on the WCP in 2019, they will become the Shadow Operator for HS2. This involves acting as a customer for the new infrastructure and designing the future services, whilst also planning the reconfiguration of ICWC services. The WCP will ensure the passenger needs are placed at the heart of the design of the new railway and services. This is a unique opportunity to shape HS2 services before the line opens.

The Partnership will be central to developing plans to make the most of this once-in-a-generation opportunity and it will also help solve some of the conflicts and challenges inherent in any project of this scale. From 2019 onwards, they will work collaboratively with HS2 Ltd and the Government to shape the future of high speed services. To ensure that decisions are made with a passenger perspective and a focus on delivering the benefits of HS2, Government will manage this process closely and is setting incentive mechanisms for the WCP that are based on performance, including a readiness review before progression to the Integrated

Operations Contract stage.

This process will allow the Shadow Operator to focus on developing the best proposition for customers, including:

- Timetabling
- On train environment
- Fares structure
- Smart ticketing
- Customer friendly station facilities
- Passenger information on all aspects of the journey

Integrated Operator Contract

From 2026 onwards, the Partnership will move to running on an Integrated Operating Contract. At this point, the WCP will run the initial HS2 services on the new HS2 line, as well as the reconfigured services on the existing WCML route. In 2027, Phase 2a of HS2 will open, extending the high speed line as far as Crewe.

DfT will take cost and revenue risk and will manage the contract actively in-life to allow for responsive decision-making as high speed services are rolled out. The operation of HS2 services will be similar to a concession, such as the London Overground model for Transport for London (TfL).

There will be performance-based incentive mechanisms to ensure the Partnership focuses on delivering high-performing services and excellent customer service, continuing to improve through to the end of the Partnership.

This phase of the work will deliberately be kept at a length sufficient only to settle-in the new HS2 services, efficiently integrate them on the rail network and gather the information on passenger demand patterns and revenues to be able to design and compete the successor contract(s).

The post-2026 specification will be developed from the Shadow Operator design work. There will be opportunities during the life of the Partnership for passengers, businesses, local authorities and communities to have a say in shaping the future HS2 services. Throughout all this work the Government retains the right to take the final decisions.



6

Consultation
Responses

6 Consultation responses

The Department held a public consultation for the ICWC franchise which ran from 10 May to 2 August 2016. It provided background information about the current ICWC services and sought views on these services and options that stakeholders and the public wanted the Department to consider.

These views have been used to inform the development of the specification pre 2026. Post 2026 will be subject to another consultation.

The consultation was published on the GOV.UK website and announced on Twitter and publicised at all station served by the ICWC services. Consultation events were held for the public and stakeholders along the route.

More than 1,200 individual, community, local authority and other responses to the consultation were received, as documented in Tables 6.1 and 6.2. A list of respondent organisations is in Appendix 7. Over 400 emails campaigning in support of part-time season tickets were also received. Figure 6.1 displays the

excellent geographic coverage of responses, to the consultation across Great Britain.

The consultation offered the public and stakeholders an opportunity to comment on a wide range of issues, for example how to improve the passenger experience, how to improve train services, how the Partnership could better support communities and respect the environment and how the railway could be made more accessible and fares.

The final question provided an opportunity for respondents to raise any additional points. Many used this to ask about the interactions between intercity services and HS2 and the future of the intercity services after the arrival of high speed services on HS2 in 2026. These have helped our understanding about the areas that are of most interest to passengers and stakeholders. However people will still be consulted on HS2 services.

Table 6.1: Breakdown of consultation responses

Response category	Responses
Individuals	730
Local Authorities/ Devolved Administrations /Local Enterprise Partnerships/ Town and Community Councils	56
Rail Passenger Representatives/ Campaigners	47
Rail Industry	5
Other Industry	17
Rail Unions	3
Politicians	10
Campaign for part-time Season tickets	415
Rail Industry	35
Total	1,283

Table 6.2: Type of response

Response type	Number of responses
Email	666
Online Questionnaire	582
Letter	35
Total	1,283

This section follows the structure of the questions asked in the consultation.

Main themes

The consultation asked 11 questions, grouped into 8 categories:

A	Customer experience and satisfaction
B	Information
C	Train services
D	Supporting the community
E	Stations
F	Make the railway more accessible for all
G	Fares and ticketing
H	Other areas not addressed

Sub-sections A – H outline how your thoughts have informed the specification, structured in line with the themes above

Over 60% of respondents commented on every topic, with the highest numbers highlighting their priority for a seat on a train and about information across all areas including planning journeys and buying tickets, preferences in different scenarios and importance of the operator being joined up particularly during disruptions.

Respondents wanted current train service levels maintained and increased, improving connections with other train services as part of a long-distance journey and at weekends and in the evening to better match demand. There was opposition to any reductions.

6 Consultation responses

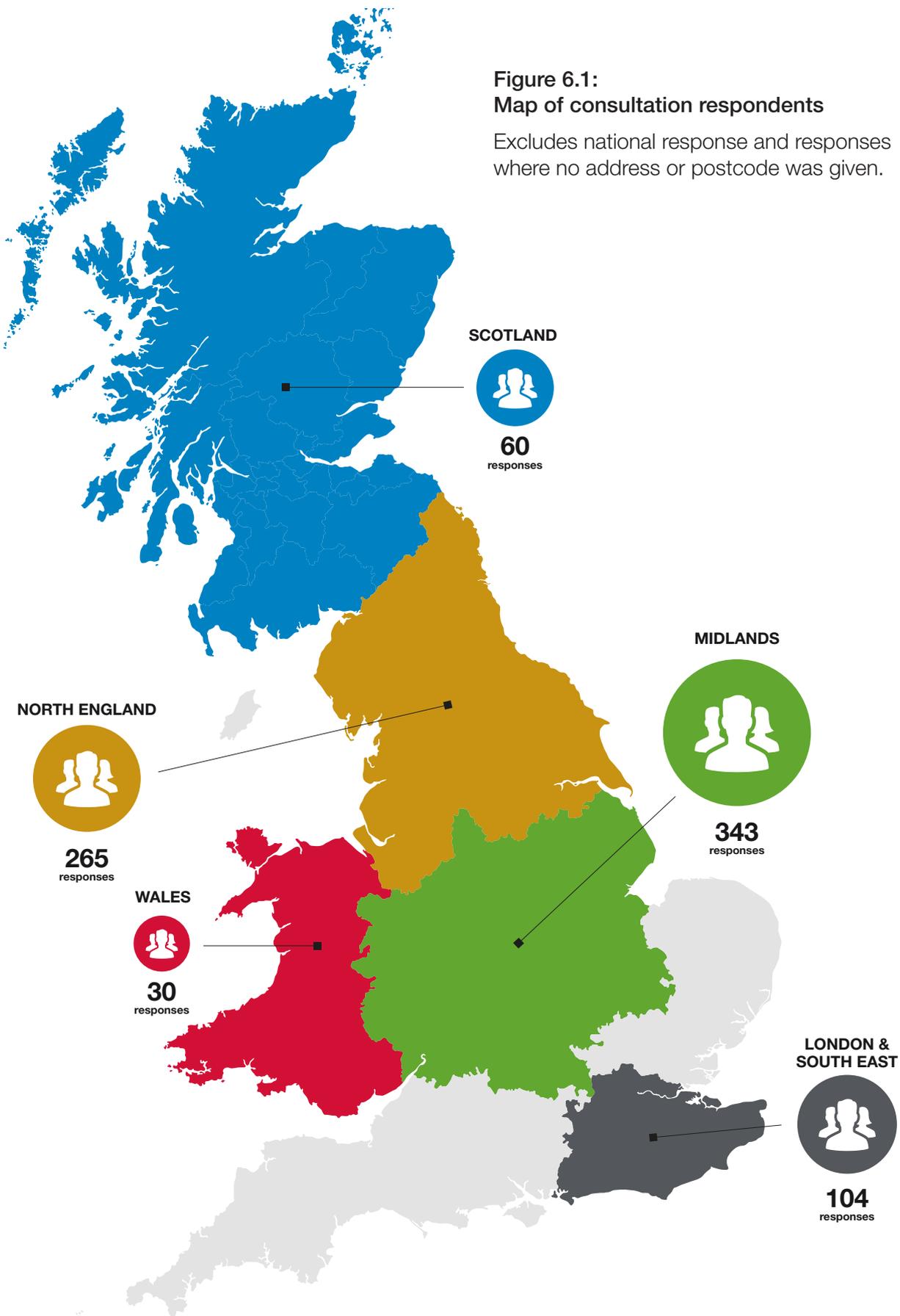


Figure 6.1:
Map of consultation respondents

Excludes national response and responses where no address or postcode was given.

A. Customer experience and satisfaction



1

- a. We listed examples of areas identified that customers would most like improved on their ICWC journey and asked you to rank your top 5? (1 - highest, 5 - lowest)

The response rate to this question was 91%.

- b. We also asked if there were any other areas respondees would like to see improved not included in the examples listed.

The response rate to this question was 51%.

Our thoughts

Customer satisfaction on ICWC services is high, with the Autumn 2017 National Rail Passenger Survey showing overall satisfaction at 91%. We want continuous improvement to the overall quality of services for ICWC customers on board trains and at stations and asked for views on which areas need particular improvement. Providing high quality Wi-Fi and improved mobile coverage is a priority for Government.



6 A. Customer experience and satisfaction

Your response

a. The top priority for improvement for passengers and stakeholders was **on-train capacity** with around 26% of respondents saying getting a seat was their top priority. This was the case regardless of the route, region or time of day of travel.

This was followed by **better communication of information during disruptions** with around 16% of respondents giving this their highest priority.

Respondents also identified more space for luggage, buggies, wheelchairs and cycles to support the larger leisure market on places served by the train services on the west coast.

b. In response to this question, **Communications in general** had the highest response rate for examples not listed in the consultation document, showing the importance customers place on this and the broad range of areas it applies to. **Other priorities** respondents mentioned included: provision of Wi-Fi services with a reliable signal, readily available power points and boosted phone signal at stations and on trains; improvements to seat reservation systems, waiting areas; and free parking for blue badge holders in station car parks.

Respondents Top Priorities

 **26%** say getting a seat is their top priority

16%  want to be kept informed about delays during disruptions

11% say toilet  facilities on trains are a priority

 **7%** of respondents have car parking facilities at train stations and space for luggage as their top priority

Four areas each had **5%** of respondents

 giving greater visibility of staff at stations and on trains

 a more proactive approach to customer service at train stations

 availability of seating at train stations

 getting between the train and station concourse

Three areas each had of **4%** respondents saying this was their top priority

 customer recognition and reward (e.g. loyalty schemes)

 access to catering and refreshments on board

 overall satisfaction with the station and its cleanliness

A. Customer experience and satisfaction



Our plans for ICWC pre HS2 launch

We have specified in the ITT that passengers should be able to see improvements in customer service from the start of the Partnership. Passengers should feel they are genuine customers whose patronage is not taken for granted in the run-up to HS2 opening. These requirements will be reinforced by the passenger market on the WCP who expect a high quality journey experience and have competing transport options to make their journeys which means the Partnership has a strong incentive to improve the passenger proposition.

Bidders will be required to set out how they will [provide an exemplary service to all passengers \(including people with physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairments\)](#) including by:

- Continually developing their customer-facing staff.
- Providing a highly visible and proactive customer-facing presence at stations and on trains.
- Improving assistance and information for all stages of a customers' journey particularly when there are disruptions.
- Enhancing the environment and improving facilities at stations.
- Introducing an Accessibility Panel to identify and implement opportunities to increase the accessibility of the WCP generally.
- Improving the safety and security on trains and at stations.
- Dealing with passenger complaints in a way that satisfies passengers.
- Collaborating with industry partners to minimise potential disruption of HS2 construction works on passengers.

Bidders will also be required to say how they will [provide trains with interior layouts and seating configurations that meets the needs of InterCity passengers](#), such as luggage storage and bicycle spaces. They will also set out how they will provide [high quality Wi-Fi on trains](#). This will enable leisure, business and commuting passengers to use email and browse the internet seamlessly on their journey.

Under the Partnership, [compensation will be improved and paid if passengers' journeys are delayed by more than 15 minutes](#) – down from the current 30 minutes Delay Repay scheme – ensuring that customers are better compensated if they are inconvenienced, and incentivising the Partnership to improve performance.



A. Customer experience and satisfaction

Our customer experience plans post-HS2 launch

We want the introduction of HS2 services to herald a new benchmark for passenger experience. As well as building on the work that will be done by the Partnership on the existing ICWC services, the introduction of new HS2 services will provide the WCP with an opportunity for innovation and a step-change in customer service and modern facilities.

In the run-up to HS2 launch, the WCP will be responsible for designing a new approach to customer experience, to define how customers are served on trains and at stations, how assistance and information will be provided, before, during and after their journeys. This provides a fantastic chance for the Partnership to engage fully with both customers, stakeholders and the design community to test new and innovative customer offers, helping to ensure the eventual passenger proposition on the new HS2 services is world class.

The existing ICWC services will also be redeveloped, resulting in a joined up customer service offer across both sets of services.

In this design work, the Partnership will be challenged to live up to, and exceed, rising customer expectations, and should be focused on building meaningful customer relationships based on trust, commitment, recognition and reward.

B. Information

6

2

What type/method of communication do you find most effective in the scenarios below (This could include, but is not limited to, talking to customer services, notices at stations, leaflets, voice announcements, information on websites or social media. Where possible please provide reasons for your answers).

- Enable you to plan your end to end train journey and;
- Be informed in advance about known disruptions such as planned engineering works?
- Be informed during unplanned disruptions both before you travel and during the journey.

The response rate to this question was 94%.

Our thoughts

The Department recognises the importance of accurate and timely information for passengers – whether they are planning or making a journey or purchasing a ticket - and the need for clear, concise and consistent information, without jargon, to make an informed choice.

There are a lot of ways information can be provided, such as via technology or customer-facing staff, and we wanted to know what you found helpful and how it could be improved, particularly during disruptions.



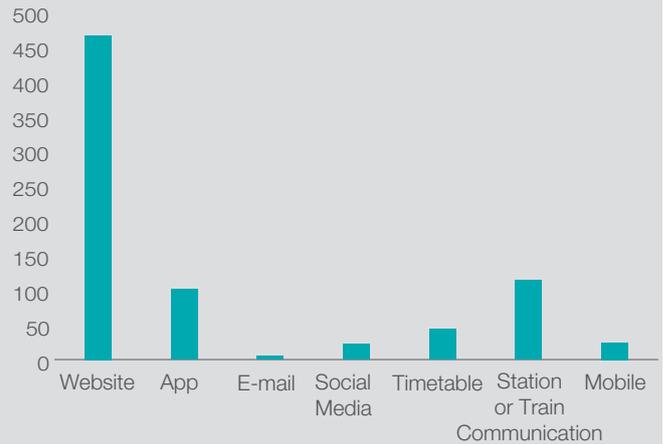
6 B. Information

Your response

For planning end to end journeys

The majority of respondents said they used websites or apps to plan journeys and purchase tickets. Some said it was important to retain printed timetables, paper notices and staff availability, for those with little or no internet access.

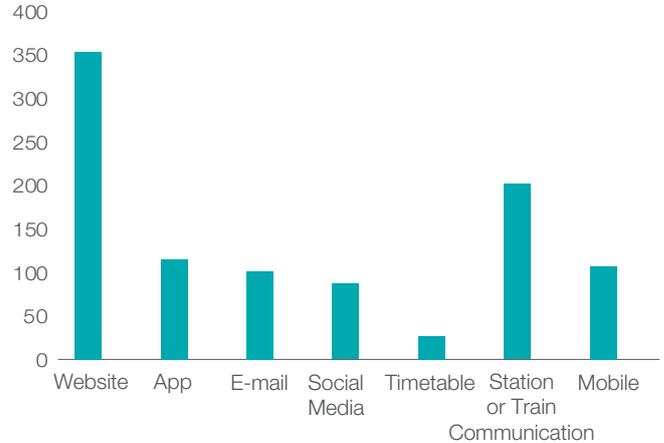
Figure 6.2: Preferred method of communication to plan end to end journey



Being informed in advance about known disruptions

Respondents wanted the operator to work closely with stakeholders and other transport operators to minimise disruptions and provide advance information to local major employers and universities to help communicate this to the public. Respondents asked for the use of rail replacement buses to be minimised. When they are necessary they wanted the operator to provide adequate storage space for cycles, buggies and wheelchairs.

Figure 6.3: Informed in advance about known disruptions

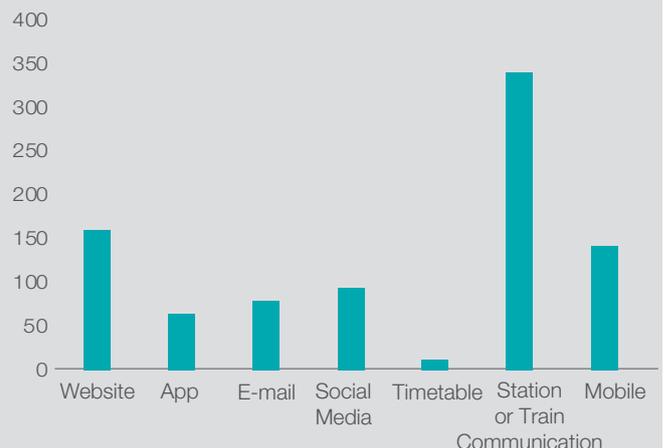


Information communicated during unplanned disruptions

Respondents wanted well-informed staff to be available during periods of unplanned disruption, providing relevant announcements and alternative route information on trains and at stations, and the removal of ticket restrictions.

Some stakeholders requested that accurate audio-visual information be provided in Welsh and English

Figure 6.4: Method of communication during unplanned disruptions



B. Information

6

Our plans for West Coast pre HS2 launch

Good communication is essential, whether planning or taking a rail journey, at stations and on trains. We have specified a number of improvements within the ITT to transform this for all customers including people with physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairments.

Technology

We want innovative and new technology from the Partnership to provide accurate, timely and consistent information for passengers across the different methods of communication. This should be simple to access and understand and include details of other transport modes (e.g. buses and ferries) to enable easier end-to-end journeys. It will also include high quality Wi-Fi on trains.

Fares and ticketing

We recognise this is a complex area and will require the Partnership to communicate information about fares and tickets in a clear and transparent way, providing consistent information across all ticket retail options. We have also challenged the bidders to propose significant enhancements to ticket vending machines.

Customer-facing staff

We require the Partnership to provide a more visible, and proactive customer-facing presence on trains and at stations and through other channels of support (e.g. help points, call centres and social media). The Partnership will provide their workforce with training and technology to support them in the vital roles they perform.

Additional credit will be given for proposals to implement Welsh language announcements on cross-border services to and from Wales.

HS2 information

Respondents have made it clear this is of particular interest. We require the WCP operator to make sure customers are kept aware of the latest developments in the HS2 project, and that changes and improvements are clearly communicated.

Collaboration

There will be a culture of partnership and collaboration across the WCP including working with other train operators and transport providers, and an Alliance Agreement with Network Rail, to share accurate and up to date information with passengers and stakeholders on delays and disruptions.

6 B. Information

Developing our passenger information plans post-HS2 launch

The WCP will build on their passenger information plans introduced early on in the Partnership to design how high quality information can be provided to passengers for the new high speed services.

The customer information requirements for HS2 will be developed during the life of the Partnership, with full engagement with the public and the design and information communities. HS2 services will benefit from the latest innovations in customer communications with modern integrated communication facilities, allowing customers to keep up to date with any developments along the various stages of their journey.



3

Are there any direct journeys currently provided by ICWC that you would want to see protected at a minimum level?

The response rate to this question was 75%.

4

Please indicate your priority for potential changes you would like to see to ICWC train services listing your top 5 priorities? (1 - highest, 5 - lowest).

- a. Speed up service for long-distance passengers for example by changing stops at low-use stations.
- b. Introduce new stops to provide services to destinations not currently directly served by the ICWC franchise.
- c. Swap an existing stop for another to increase destinations not currently directly served by the ICWC franchise.
- d. Adjust the level of service (e.g. evening, weekend) to better match demand.
- e. Better support the economic development of the towns and cities served by the franchise for example by increasing/reducing services for seasonal travel (e.g. tourism, holidays) or for a major event (e.g. concert or sporting event).
- f. Improve/connections with other trains services as part of longer-distance journeys.
- g. Holding trains at stations for connecting trains.

The response rate to this question was 86%.

5

Based on your journey, please could you state whether you consider any priority should be placed on either option below (where possible, please provide reasons for your answer?)

- a. Protecting long distance capacity on trains; or
- b. Providing maximum choice of operator over short distance journeys

The response rate to this question was 79%.

6

What methods do you think could enable more people to travel and improve the railway's ability to cater for passenger growth?

The response rate to this question was 76%.



Our thoughts

The number of passenger journeys on the ICWC has more than doubled since the early 2000s to over 37m in 2017 and demand continues to rise. The increase is due to a variety of reasons including population growth (in particular around Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire), substantial and effective marketing, GDP growth and a growing market of passengers using advance tickets in lieu of off-peak tickets to travel.

There has been major investment in the railway by the Government and other bodies, with the West Coast Route Modernisation, new trains, and a new timetable in 2008 which increased frequencies (in particular to Manchester and Birmingham) and reduced journey times. However, there are capacity constraints on the West Coast Main Line with some instances of overcrowding and calls for additional capacity from freight operators. Operating the rail network at this level increases opportunities for delays, which can in turn impact on connections and make it harder to timetable additional train services. HS2 will bring a transformation to rail travel in the West Coast corridor, providing substantial additional capacity, enhancing connectivity and reducing journey times as part of a 21st century integrated transport system.



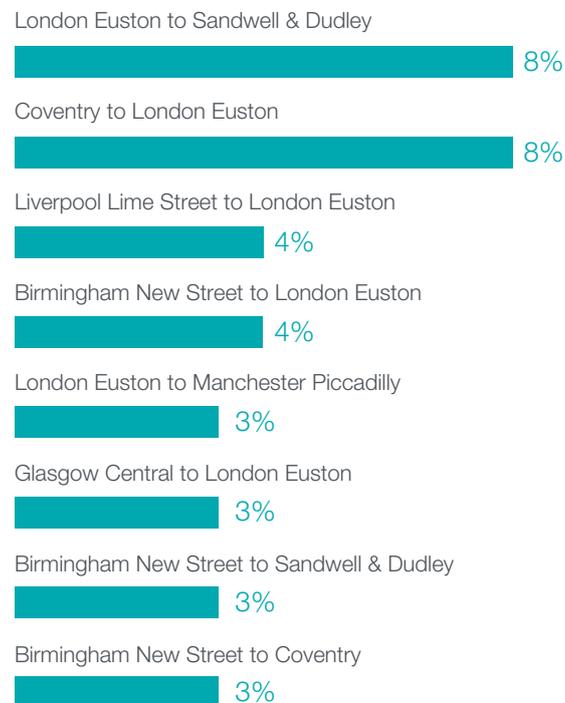
Your response

Train Services

There was a strong recognition from respondents that current train services generally met expectations. Most wanted current services retained with capacity on the route optimised to support economic growth and the large leisure and tourist market, and to help address overcrowding. There were suggestions for direct services between existing locations (e.g. Liverpool and Milton Keynes) and to new destinations to improve connectivity (e.g. Bolton and Barrow in Furness).

Figure 6.5 below shows the most requested protected routes by respondents.

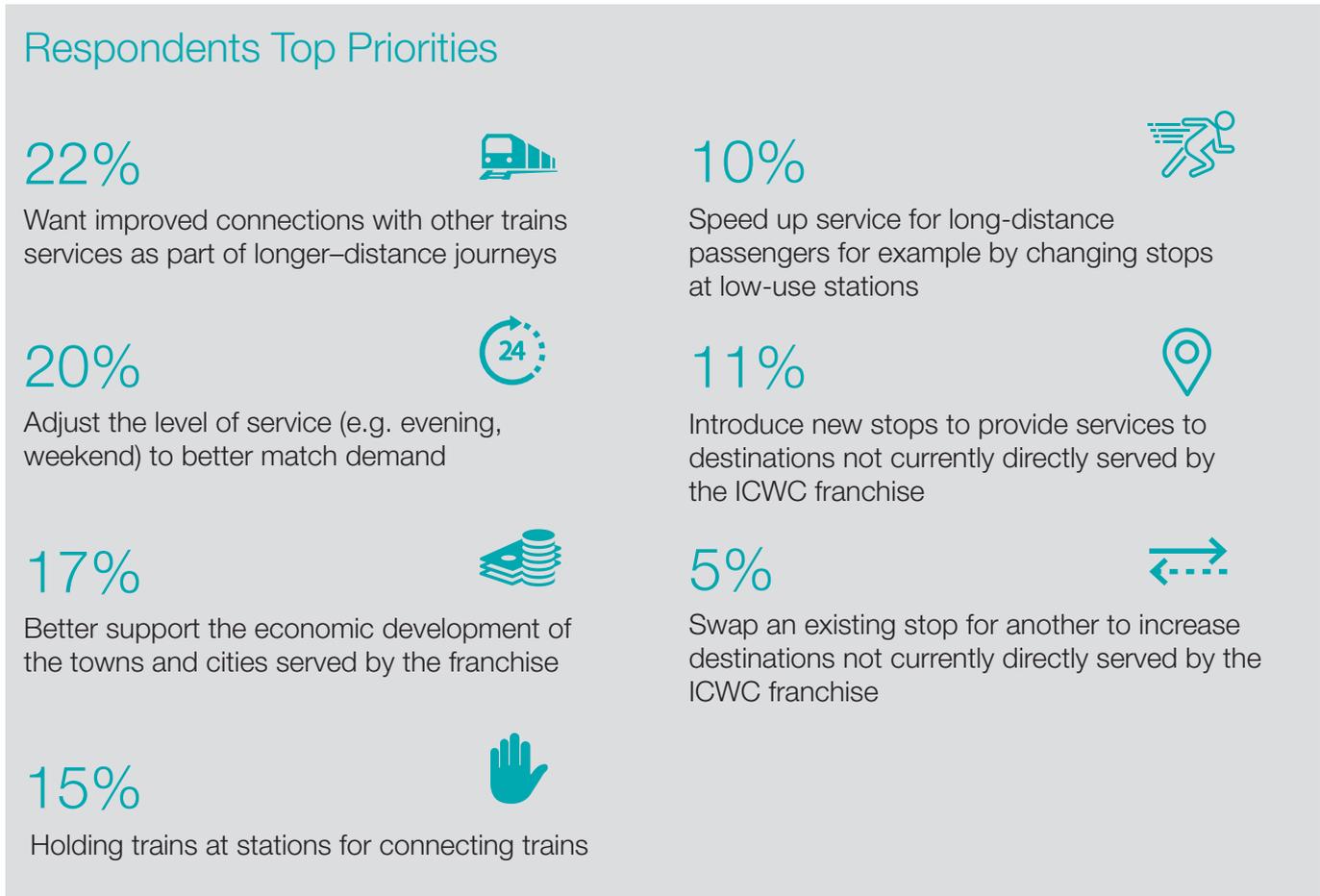
Figure 6.5: Requested protected routes



Percentage of Responses

6 C. Train services

Increased local connectivity and reduced journey times are both considered important across the English regions with a slightly higher value placed on connectivity in Northern England. In Wales the emphasis on connectivity was much higher while Scottish stakeholders tended to value lower journey times - seen by many as key to improving cross-border connectivity.



Priority between long-distance capacity and maximum choice of operators over short-distance

For Wales, Scotland, North of England and London and the South East respondents prioritised protecting long-distance capacity with Midlands respondents supporting a greater choice of operators over short-distances.

Improvements to enable and improve travel

The majority of respondents commented about capacity on trains which aligns the top priority for Q1 for passengers to have a seat on the train. Suggestions included increasing the number of carriages to 11, increasing the ratio of standard class seating from first class and reviewing ticket prices to spread demand across the day.

Our plans for ICWC pre HS2 launch

The Department recognises respondents' strong desire to [retain existing services on the ICWC](#) and has largely based the minimum train services for the Partnership on current services.

Recognising respondents' aspirations for improved train services, we have [provided bidders with flexibility in the specification to enable them to innovate to deliver improvements](#), rather than waiting for HS2. Flexibility will be provided through:

- Setting maximum journey times at levels which enable bidders to improve connectivity.
- A flexible Train Service Requirement (TSR) structure enabling bidders to develop new stopping patterns.

Bidders will be required to [deliver fast end to end journey times](#) and challenged to work towards aspirational headline journey times in preparation for HS2.

We are also challenging bidders to [address instances of crowding](#) highlighted by respondents (such as peak times, special events) through their approach to timetabling, trains and fares.

Bidders will be [incentivised to serve new destinations](#), along with improving the existing level of train service where it is limited.

Developing our plans for new high speed train services

HS2 will deliver a massive expansion in connectivity, capacity and services, representing a doubling of the capacity out of London Euston during the life of this Partnership.

The new high speed trains will be up to 400m long, with almost double the number of seats as the longest Pendolino (11 car) in operation today. HS2 will also play an important role in improving access to major and regional airports across the UK including Heathrow, Manchester and Birmingham.

The WCP will have the crucial role of developing customer-focused train service options for both the high speed and recast conventional services, making best use of the new opportunities created by HS2 and the capacity freed up on the existing network.

There will be a public consultation on these options during the WCP to allow the public, passengers, user groups, the rail industry and local and community stakeholders to have their say. This will help shape Government's views on the future services on ICWC and HS2.



D. Supporting the community

7

Based on your knowledge of your local area/station, how could the new ICWC train operator:

- a. Improve rail services (including all the support functions it needs) in a way that respects and helps to maintain the environment? **52%**
- b. Better support the economic growth of the areas it serves? **54%**
- c. Improve its support and development of its workforce? **34%**
- d. Play a greater role in supporting and improving the community it serves, the heritage of the railway and help develop their stations into hubs for the community? **43%**
- e. Improve the services offered to reduce discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for people from protected groups (these include: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation)? **36%**

The response rates to these questions are above.

Our thoughts

The Department recognises the wide range of socially and economically important functions the current franchise performs in communities across Great Britain and the crucial role that the WCP will play in:

- Building and developing relations with local stakeholders and communities to develop their stations into hubs for the community, supporting socio-economic development in the localities served.
- Develop rail services in a sustainable way and being considerate of the environment, social and economic impacts; and the equality and wellbeing of its workforce.

We also recognise the importance of advancing equality and inclusivity both for customers using and travelling on the railway and for workforce on the West Coast who play a crucial role in helping to run the rail services on this route.

Your response

- a. **Environment** – The most common response was for electric bi-mode trains to be used instead of diesel trains on electrified sections of the route. Respondents also called for modal shift from road to rail to be encouraged, such as by improving integration with other modes of public transport, better access to stations, faster journey times and promoting rail's environmental benefits, and for cycle facilities on trains and at stations to be improved.
- b. **Growth** – For bidders to work with local transport authorities and businesses to understand regional transportation needs (e.g. frequency of trains and new services) to expand access to areas of employment.
- c. **The Workforce** – Visibility and availability of staff was important for respondents with a strong interest in retaining the current levels at stations and on trains, for staff to be given more authority to respond to situations and rewarded for good performance.

For the Partnership to employ local people and embrace apprenticeship schemes. Some Scottish stakeholders asked that a proportion of apprenticeships be based in Scotland. For staff to be encouraged to learn other languages to support tourism, particularly to speak Welsh as well as English in Wales.

D. Supporting the community



Your response

- d. **Supporting & improving Community & Railway Heritage & stations as hubs for the community** – Respondents suggestions included: unused spaces at stations used for local community projects; community art displayed around the station; spaces for local businesses and non-chain food outlets and use of locally based produce.
- e. **Advancing equality** - Accessibility was a dominant theme covering physical and non-physical needs and better access to communication channels. Respondents wanted:
- Appropriate access for people with reduced mobility at **stations** with staff providing assistance to passengers with disabilities and a visible presence for customers to feel safe.
 - Improved access for wheelchair users boarding/alighting **trains**, greater staff awareness of passengers requiring assistance; and more seating capacity on trains for the elderly and those with limited mobility.
 - **PassengerAssist system** - assistance across journeys with multiple changes and requests linked to the passenger's original booking.
 - **Information** - sent directly to customers who have provided contact details and in an appropriate form for those with visual or hearing impairments, including the British Sign Language.
 - **Greater representation of women and minority groups** in the WCP workforce.

Some respondents asked for **bi-lingual staff and bi-lingual announcements** for stations in North Wales and trains travelling to/from North Wales.

Our plans for ICWC pre HS2 launch

a. Environment

Bidders will be challenged to deliver a more environmentally sustainable service. The environmental performance of the train fleet and of stations will be improved and measured against ambitious environmental performance targets. Modal shift will be encouraged with improvements to access and interchanges with other modes of transport at stations, with a particular focus on sustainable modes, including: bus/rail interchanges; parking provision and cycle access and storage.

b. Growth and d. Supporting & improving Community & Railway Heritage & stations as hubs for the community

The WCP will forge partnerships and develop joint marketing strategies with local businesses, tourism industries and heritage railways to promote travel to the regions to support local communities' economic development.

The Partnership will develop a **Social and Commercial Development Plan** to identify and develop schemes to refurbish redundant space at stations for use by the community or for commercial purposes.

They will consult with communities and Stakeholders to deliver non-commercial improvements to local station facilities and services through new **Customer and Communities Improvement (CCI)** schemes.

6 D. Supporting the community

c. The Workforce

Bidders will demonstrate how: their proposed timetables and passenger services for the Partnership will be run with the number of employees proposed in their bid. The Partnership will attract individuals from groups that are under-represented in the rail industry to their workforce, including through apprenticeships; will promote health and well-being among their employees and will invest in the development of their employees' skills and capabilities to support delivery of a high quality service.

e. Advancing equality

It is vital the Partnership provides a high-quality experience for all passengers including those with physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairments, so they can travel on the West Coast with confidence and in comfort.

The Partnership will be required to: provide a visible and proactive customer-facing presence at stations and on trains, develop a **Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy** to identify opportunities for improving customer services and facilities; improving the accessibility to stations and station facilities, and establish an Accessibility Panel to inform further improvements over the life of the Partnership. Bidders will be challenged to develop schemes that increase the accessibility of rail to vulnerable groups, rural communities and those with limited access to private transport.

The Partnership will improve safety and the perception of security at stations and on trains by working with stakeholders (particularly the British Transport Police) and through the use of innovative or trial technologies to promote a safe environment for all.

The Partnership will promote diversity and equality across the workforce and support the Government's apprenticeship targets including the number of BAME candidates by ensuring 2.5% of the total number of Partnership employees are apprenticeships.

Developing our sustainability plans post-HS2 launch

The Partnership will continue to support communities after the launch of HS2 services and will have ambitious environmental targets to pursue. Environmental awareness and social responsibility will continue to be embedded throughout the Partnership and its work with customers, passengers, employees and the local community.

Environmental sustainability will be embedded in the design and running of HS2. New sustainable development plans will be drawn up by the Partnership to ensure that the new HS2 services are operated in an environmentally sustainable way, supporting HS2 Ltd in the delivery of its environmental obligations. These will continue to encourage mode shift from car travel and from air services to the new HS2 and redesigned conventional train services.

The new HS2 fleet to be designed to and measured against the latest environmental standards.

During construction, HS2 will create 25,000 jobs (including 2,000 apprenticeships) and will help train a new generation of skilled workers, including through the new National College for High Speed Rail. Over 3,000 permanent jobs will be created by the operation and maintenance of the HS2 railway and train fleet, and 70% of jobs supported by HS2 will be outside of London.

8

Please list, in priority order, the top five facilities you would like to see either improved or introduced at the station(s) served by the ICWC Franchise: a) you use; or b) as a non-user would encourage you to use the rail network. Please provide the name of the station(s) and why you think these improvements are needed.

The response rate to this question was 74%.

Our thoughts

The consultation noted that railway stations are an essential part of the rail network and the communities they serve. It outlined the significant investments that have already taken place at stations on the West Coast such as Birmingham New Street and Manchester Piccadilly.

We recognise there is scope for further work at both small and large stations to improve their environment, to increase accessibility, to enhance the commercial offering and for further integration with the communities served. We want to understand which additional or improved facilities would make the biggest difference to you at small and large stations.

Your response

In general respondents wanted facilities to be consistent across all West Coast stations.

Information/signage

Stations' signage should be clear and easy to follow, display screens should be improved (e.g. show the location of available seats on trains). Announcements about service disruptions should be provided in print, made verbally and be clear.

Station seating

Increased and clearly signposted for people with limited mobility with easy visibility of departure displays.

Sheltered areas

Ideally covering the full length on all platforms to stop passengers crowding during adverse weather conditions.

Facilities

Toilets on all platforms to cater for those with limited mobility, available during station operating hours and free of charge past ticket barriers. Increased retail facilities such as post offices, small supermarkets and ATMs. Lost luggage facilities at larger stations.

Accessibility/interchanging

All stations to be step free, lifts maintained and serviced regularly. Improved interchanges with other modes of transport and improved communication about local transport connections and attractions along the route.

Car parking

More parking at stations with charges reduced. Joint rail and parking tickets and innovative technologies to allow customers to check the number of available spaces before travelling to the station.

Increased staff visibility

Especially during times of disruption.



E. Stations

Our plans for ICWC pre HS2 launch

Our proposals seek to deliver a range of improvements to the station environments and facilities, including improving the accessibility of station facilities so all passengers, including those with physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairments, can use station facilities with confidence and in comfort.

Bidders will be required to develop schemes to make stations more pleasant to use and to improve station facilities to provide a high quality passenger experience in order to meet the new Station targets in the National Rail Passenger Surveys. This will include developing schemes to improve access, wayfinding and interchange with other modes, particularly sustainable modes, at stations.

We recognise the important role that stations play in the communities they serve and **bidders will be required to set out how they will promote links with and provide opportunities for communities at stations** while improving retail and catering provisions to make stations destinations in their own right.

Journey information improvements are provided under Sub-section 6B Passenger Information.

Bidders will receive additional credit for initiatives to improve the boarding process at London Euston.

Developing our plans for HS2 services

The Phase 1 and 2a projects of HS2 will build four new stations:

- Two in London; at Euston and Old Oak Common.
- Two in Birmingham; at Birmingham Curzon Street and Birmingham Interchange station, near Solihull.

These new stations provide a fantastic opportunity for a new approach. The HS2 stations will challenge the conventional design and way of doing things in traditional stations. They will have high quality facilities, good integration with other modes of transport and will act as regional hubs.

These newly built stations will take advantage of the latest technologies to dramatically improve the station offerings by increasing accessibility, improving wayfinding, promoting safety and security and promoting high quality station facilities. The WCP will design the customer-facing facilities and will also ensure that facilities at existing intercity stations are enhanced.

The WCP will also work closely with HS2 Ltd, DfT, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and local authorities to ensure that these new stations can support local growth through complementary developments. The creation of these new stations offers considerable opportunities for development and regeneration in and around the station sites, supporting jobs and housing. Finally, an integrated transport approach will ensure the new HS2 services are part of a co-ordinated national transport system, showing that Great Britain can lead the way in transport services.

F. Make the railway more accessible for all



9

Thinking of the journeys you make or have made on the ICWC, or a journey you could make by the ICWC but where you decide to use an alternative transport mode instead:

- What specific changes could be made to make the railway easier to access and therefore more attractive to use?
- Why do you think these changes would help?

The response rate to this question was 55%.

Our thoughts

A key priority for the Department is to provide a railway for customers that is more accessible and attractive to all members of society across the whole journey experience, this includes planning and making a journey from starting point to arrival at the final destination.



6 F. Make the railway more accessible for all

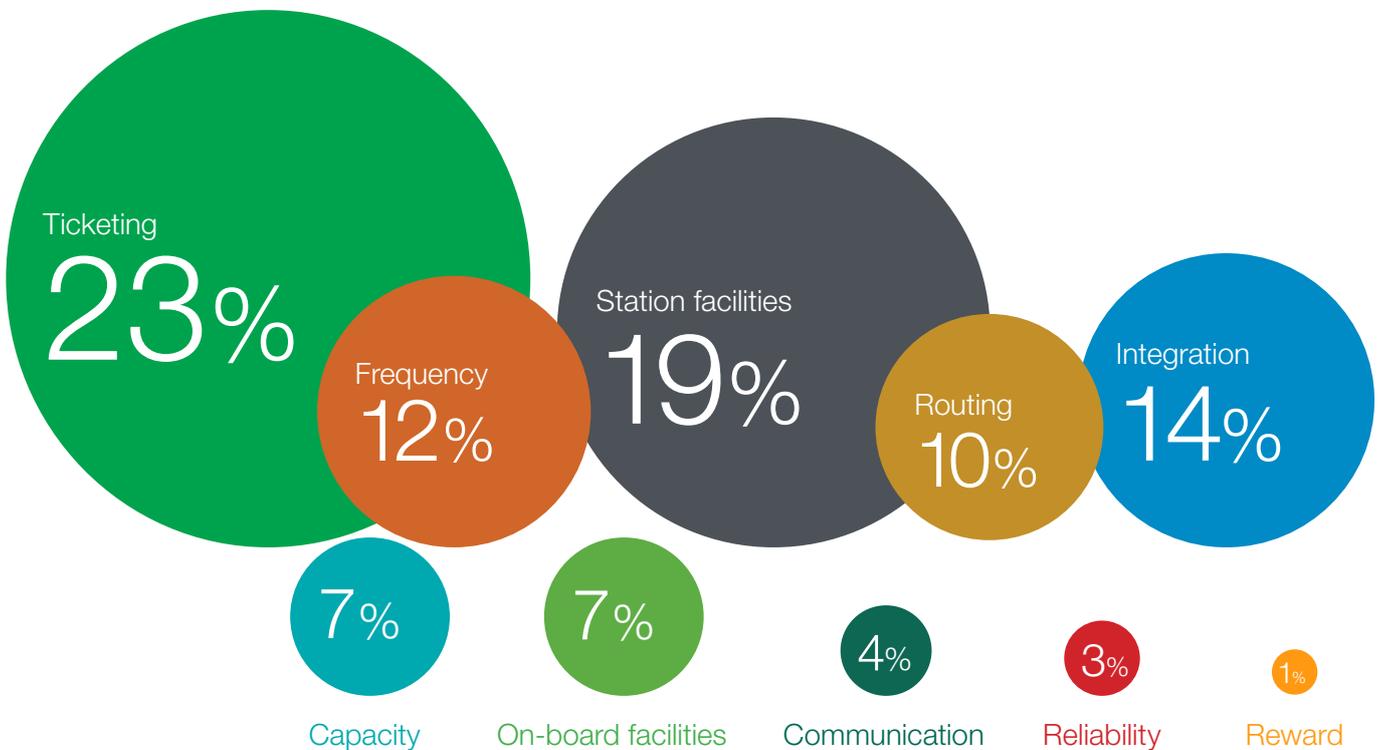
Your response

Figure 6.6 illustrates the variety of themes respondents identified. The most common suggestion for making rail more attractive was around **ticketing** (23%). Comments included reducing ticket prices, simplifying the fare structure, using pricing to tackle overcrowding before and after peak periods and extending group railcard schemes.

This was closely followed by **station facilities** (19%), with around half of these comments about station car parks requesting more parking and for parking charges to be reduced.

Improved integration (14%), particularly focused on other transport modes such as working with bus operators to arrange for buses to stop close to station entrances and to align stopping times with train services, particularly in the evening at rural stations where bus services may end for the day before the last train, leaving passengers with no public transport alternatives.

Figure 6.6: Response themes to make the railway easier to access



F. Make the railway more accessible for all



Our plans for ICWC pre HS2 launch

Many of the points identified by the consultation responses were also raised in response to previous questions indicating the importance of accessibility to the public and stakeholders. We want the Partnership to provide a high quality attractive experience for all passengers.

Fares

The Partnership will be required to make rail fares easier to understand and better suited to customers' needs. Further detail regarding what we have asked bidders to provide is under Sub-section 6G.

Communities

We have asked bidders to develop proposals to improve links with the communities served and to increase the accessibility of the WCP to vulnerable groups, including those with limited access to private transport, rural communities and those seeking or recently returned to work.

Accessibility

Bidders will develop schemes to improve the accessibility of station facilities so all passengers, including those with physical, mental, sensory or cognitive impairments, can use station facilities, find their train and interchange with other modes of transport effectively. They will be incentivised to develop proposals that would enable such passengers to use stations and station facilities confidently and independently, should they choose to.

The Partnership will introduce an Accessibility Panel to identify and implement opportunities to further increase the accessibility of the WCP over the life of the Partnership.

Information

They will improve communication, a vital part of every rail journey, using technology to provide both real time and integrated journey information that is accurate, timely, and clear for customers to ensure their experience of rail is made simple and straightforward.

Train services

There are limited opportunities for improving the frequency of services, however bidders will be incentivised to provide new destinations along with improving the existing level of train service where it is limited.

Developing our plans for HS2 services

It is important to us that the design of the post-HS2 passenger proposition considers all these issues, including equality and accessibility. To this end, the WCP will be required to involve the Accessibility Panel in the design of all customer-facing facilities.



G. Fares and ticketing

10

What do you think the future ICWC train operator could do to modernise and improve the ticketing experience for customers? Please include your views on the elements or parts of service the train operator should consider when developing their ticketing and ticket retailing plans?

The response rate to this question was 74%.

Our thoughts

We want customers to feel they are valued and being treated fairly. We understand there is confusion about fares with customers sometimes feeling they have not get the best fare for their journey. The consultation document explained our expectations for the future operator including simplifying information about fares, improving compensation arrangements, making greater use of technology for people to pay for journeys, increased use of smart and digital ticketing and a seamless experience where journeys interact with services run by other operators.

G. Fares and ticketing

6

Your response

Responses to this question were grouped into the following seven themes:

Pricing

Cost of tickets, concerns about the transparency of the pricing structure e.g. difficulty finding the cheapest tickets.

287

Form of ticket

Smart ticketing, mobile, paper etc.

268

Booking process

All parts of the booking system e.g. the ease of online ticket purchase, seat reservation, cycle booking.

113

Ticketing schemes

Railcards, group tickets, rover tickets.

72

Ticketing machines

Improvements to accessibility/ease of use.

70

Ticketing office

Such as lengthening opening hours.

49

Barriers

Requests for more/fewer barriers and comments on queuing levels at barriers.

27

The most common comments were about the **complexity of the fare structure**. Respondents asked for fewer types of ticket with fewer restrictions and for it to be easier to find the cheapest fare on websites and at ticket machines. Over 400 campaign respondents asked for part-time season tickets to support part-time commuters.

Requests for **smart ticketing and contactless payments** were common. Some asked for paper tickets to be retained to provide an option for passengers who prefer non-technological options.

As well as general comments to reduce ticket prices, a number of respondents discussed the difference between peak and off-peak pricing and its effect on crowding on some services. Suggestions to combat this included staggering prices in the periods immediately before and after the morning and evening peaks and lower price peak ticket options.

Respondents wanted the operator to work with regional transport authorities and operators to ensure **integration** with their respective ticket systems putting appropriate infrastructure in place to facilitate developments.

The majority of statements relating to booking processes were about improving the online and on board seat reservations (and providing consistent ticket prices and offers across sales channels. (e.g. online, at ticket offices, at ticket machines).

Respondents with a disability wanted to be able to reserve seats, through the same channels as non-disabled passengers. There was also support for ticket booking to be linked to travel assistance requests (e.g. Passenger Assist) including for journeys requiring multiple changes.

6 G. Fares and ticketing

Our plans for ICWC pre HS2 launch

The Department understands passengers do not want their custom taken for granted and want to feel they have the best price for their rail journey. Bidders will need to think about ways in which new technology can make this process simpler from the outset.

Easier, simpler fares

Bidders will be required to make rail fares easier to understand, and better suited to passengers' needs. This will include a product which offers customers that travel regularly – but not five days-a-week – a better value for money option than purchasing multiple return tickets (such as a carnet system).

Information on ticket types and restrictions must be consistent and easily accessible, allowing passengers to select the most appropriate ticket for their journey. Bidders are encouraged to offer customers a price-guarantee that they will always be offered the same fares across all retail methods.

Improved ticket retailing

Bidders will deliver a high quality standard of ticket retailing providing customers with widespread and easy access to the full range of fares that meet their needs, including customers without access to technology and adopt industry Design Guidelines to improve the customer experience at ticket vending machines.

Modern ticketing

Bidders will be ambitious in their targets to implement modern ticketing systems which offers passengers easier, more attractive ways to purchase tickets. This will include all season tickets to be available online and at ticket offices through smart ticketing schemes within 8 months and at least half of passenger journeys on the WCP route to be made using smart ticketing options within 15 months of the WCP start date.

G. Fares and ticketing



Developing our fares and ticketing plans for post-HS2 launch

The WCP will be tasked with developing a fares strategy for HS2 services that works for passengers and taxpayers, in encouraging use of the new high speed services, spreads the benefits equitably and delivers the financial returns planned. We are encouraging bidders to develop fresh innovative approaches that avoid the anomalies of the existing fares system and if necessary, we will consider changes to the current fares regulations if that will deliver better outcomes for passengers.

The fares strategy for HS2 services will need to work alongside the fare system for conventional services. This could identify the need for wider changes to the fares system or to fares regulation.

Retailing and ticketing proposals for HS2 services will also be developed in-life with full engagement from the customer community.

HS2 will most likely bring new technologies which may also be rolled out across the ICWC services during the life of the Partnership. The Partnership will look at how new technology can make travel simpler and better value for passengers before the start of HS2 services.

The ticket system needs to be integrated with other parts of the transport system, including but not limited to rail, to make travel as simple as possible. We will expect bidders to make the most of technology, including delivering ambitious plans to support the development of the digital rail programme alongside Network Rail.



H. Other areas not addressed by the consultation questions

11

If there are any additional areas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been addressed in this consultation please explain them here?

The response rate to this question was 56%.

Our thoughts

We wanted to give the public and stakeholders the opportunity to raise any additional points they felt had not been addressed already by the consultation.

Your response

Some respondents took the opportunity to repeat points made earlier in the consultation response.

HS2 was a dominant theme with questions asked about the management of disruption during its construction, the future connectivity between high speed and conventional services, and whether the length of the ICWC franchise period should continue beyond the commencement of HS2 operations.

There was also a strong theme of integration, requesting the future operator to consider local plans and initiatives as part of their own planning for ICWC services.

Our response

We recognised the concerns raised by respondents and the significant benefits of bringing the operation of the ICWC and HS2 services together. In November 2016 the Government announced they would be combined creating the new WCP.

The WCP will deliver a world class customer experience for passengers, putting them first and foremost in every decision, both on the conventional ICWC services and when designing for the future. They will provide a coordinated and integrated response to the challenges in the run up to HS2's launch.

Bidders will be required to set out their plans for working with Network Rail and HS2 Ltd to minimise impacts of construction on passengers including how they will ensure that passengers receive consistent and accurate information.

We have been absolutely clear that we require the new WCP operator to work collaboratively with the Government, industry and stakeholders for the benefit of passengers, and local communities.



7

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List of stakeholder respondents

Local Authorities / Devolved Administrations / Local Enterprise Partnerships / Town/Community Councils

Birmingham City Council	Liverpool City Region
Blackpool Council	Local Government Association Public Transport Consortium
Bolton Council	Local Government Ombudsman
Carlisle City Council	Milton Keynes Council
Cheshire and Warrington Local Transport Body (LTB)	Neston Town Council
Cheshire East Council	North Yorkshire County Council
Cheshire West and Chester and the Ellesmere Port Development Board	Northamptonshire County Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council	Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
City of Edinburgh Council	Rail North Ltd
Clydesdale East Ward, South Lanarkshire Council	Salford City Council
Coedpoeth Community Council	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Copeland Borough Council	South West of Scotland Transport Partnership
Coventry City Council	Staffordshire County Council
Crewe Town Council	Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Cumbria County Council	Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)
Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	Telford Wrekin Council
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	The Statutory Regional Transport Partnership for SE Scotland (SEStran)
Eden District Council	Transport for Greater Manchester
Flint Town Council	Transport for London
Glasgow City Council	Transport Scotland
Halton Borough Council	Warwickshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council	Welsh Government
Kendal Town Council	West Midlands Combined Authority
Lancashire County Council	West Midlands Rail Limited
Lancashire Enterprise Partnership	Windermere Town Council
Lancaster City Council	Worcestershire County Council
Leicestershire County Council	Wrexham Borough Council
Lichfield District Council	



List of stakeholder respondents

Rail Passenger Representatives / Campaigners

Association of Community Rail Partnerships	Marches Strategic Rail Group
Bring Back British Rail	Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership
Campaign For Rail	Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership
Community Rail Cumbria	Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association
Community Rail Lancashire	Milton Keynes Transport Partnership Public Transport Group
Copeland Rail Users Group	Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland
Coventry Rail Action Group	North Cheshire Rail Users' Group
Disability Agenda Scotland	North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	North Staffs Rail Promotion Group
English Regional Transport Association (ERTA)	North Wales and Mersey Dee Cross Border Rail Taskforce
Friends of the Settle Carlisle Line	Railfuture
Friends of the West Highland Lines	Riding for the Disabled North Wales Region
Furness Line Action Group	Rugby Rail Users Group
Furness Line Community Rail Partnership	Save East Coast Rewards
Heritage Railway Association	Scottish Association for Public Transport (SAPT)
Highways England	Transport Focus
Historic England	Transform Scotland
Hope Mountain Riding for the Disabled	TravelWatch NorthWest
Lakes Line Community Rail Partnership	Tyne Valley Community Rail Partnership
Lakes Line Rail User Group	West Bromwich Youth Council
Lancashire Campaign for Better Transport	West Coast Rail 250
Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership	Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users' Association
Lichfield Rail Alliance	
Lichfield Rail Promotion Group	
London TravelWatch	

Rail Unions

Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Fireman (ASLEF)

National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT)

Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA)

List of stakeholder respondents

Rail Industry

Chiltern Railways
CrossCountry
Freightliner Group Ltd
Rail Delivery Group
Rail Freight Group

Politicians

Cllr Bally Singh
Craig Tracey MP
Glyn Davies MP
Iain Stewart MP
Ian Lucas MP
Mark Pawsey MP
Oliver Mundell MSP
Rugby Green Party
Susan Elan Jones MP
The Rt Hon Owen Paterson

Other

Bangor University
BFC Networks
Birmingham Airport
Chester Growth Partnership
Furness Economic Development Forum
Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
Glenfinnan Station Museum
Jaguar Land Rover
Liberty Industries Group
Liverpool and Sefton Chambers of Commerce
Mid Cheshire Development Board
North Wales Economic Ambition Board
North West Business Leadership Team
Scottish Council for Development and Industry
The NEC Group
University of Cumbria
West Cumbria branch of the Federation of Small Businesses

