# Williams Rail Review

# Call for evidence

Objectives and assessment criteria

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March 2019

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# Contents

# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Rail Review launched a public call for evidence in December 2018. Since then we have run an extensive programme of engagement with interested parties.

1.2 To date, the Review has met with over 130 stakeholder groups and organisations, across all regions of Great Britain, and over 200 submissions have been received to the Review's call for evidence.

1.3 These responses have been used to inform the evidence papers the Review is publishing. They have also helped us to more clearly diagnose the current problems with the railway and identify potential priorities for reform.

1.4 The purpose of this paper is to initiate the next phase of the call for evidence process. It covers three key issues:

  1. The overarching objectives for the Review.

  2. A short statement of the high-level problems we have identified in the rail sector that successful reform will need to tackle.

  3. The high-level assessment criteria that the Review will use to drive the subsequent phases of its work and use as a basis for trade-offs as described below.

1.5 This paper seeks views from interested parties on these three issues, and whether there is any further important evidence that should be considered as part of our work beyond the themes covered in the evidence papers. We are keen to test our thinking to ensure we are focussing on the right areas as we move into developing and appraising models for reform of the railway.

1.6 We are seeking responses on these issues by 30 April 2019 (see Chapter 4). Please note that, as we set out in December, the wider call for evidence will remain open until 31 May 2019 and all responses will be considered by the team.

## The evidence paper process

1.7 The Review is publishing a series of evidence papers, supported by a further paper summarising the key numbers behind the rail sector. The papers cover the role of the railway in Great Britain; the experience of

railway users (both passengers and freight); and, the organisation of the railway in Great Britain and other countries.

1.8 The approach of these papers has been to summarise evidence and information on the key issues and themes on which the Review will draw; they are not exhaustive of the full evidence base which will be used by the Review team. Nor do they set out options for reform or potential future operating models.

## The need for trade-offs

1.9 Any future operating model for the railway must balance competing objectives. No model will be able to simultaneously achieve everything that everyone wants from the railway. Trade-offs will always be required – for example between the cost of running the railway and the quality of the services it provides, and day-to-day reliability for passengers versus ambitions for running more trains and increasing capacity for the future.

1.10 To assist our thinking, we would like to receive views on how the assessment criteria we present here should be balanced as we develop our proposals (see Chapter 5). In some cases, the priority for the Review will be to recommend approaches which will better allow these trade-offs to be considered in future.

# 2. Proposed objectives

2.1 The Review has formulated three high-level objectives for a successful railway for Great Britain (Figure 1). As discussed above, trade-offs will inevitably need to be made across and within these objectives. A successful model should, however, have these broad objectives as its aim and be able to facilitate effective approaches to the making of these trade-offs.

*Great Britain needs a safe and secure railway that is delivering the right outcomes for:*

## Passengers
Higher passenger satisfaction and greater public confidence through improved experience and value for money

## Objectives

## Taxpayers
Improving long-term affordability and value for the taxpayer

## Wider society
Growing social, environmental and economic contributions to the country (including through promoting freight traffic)
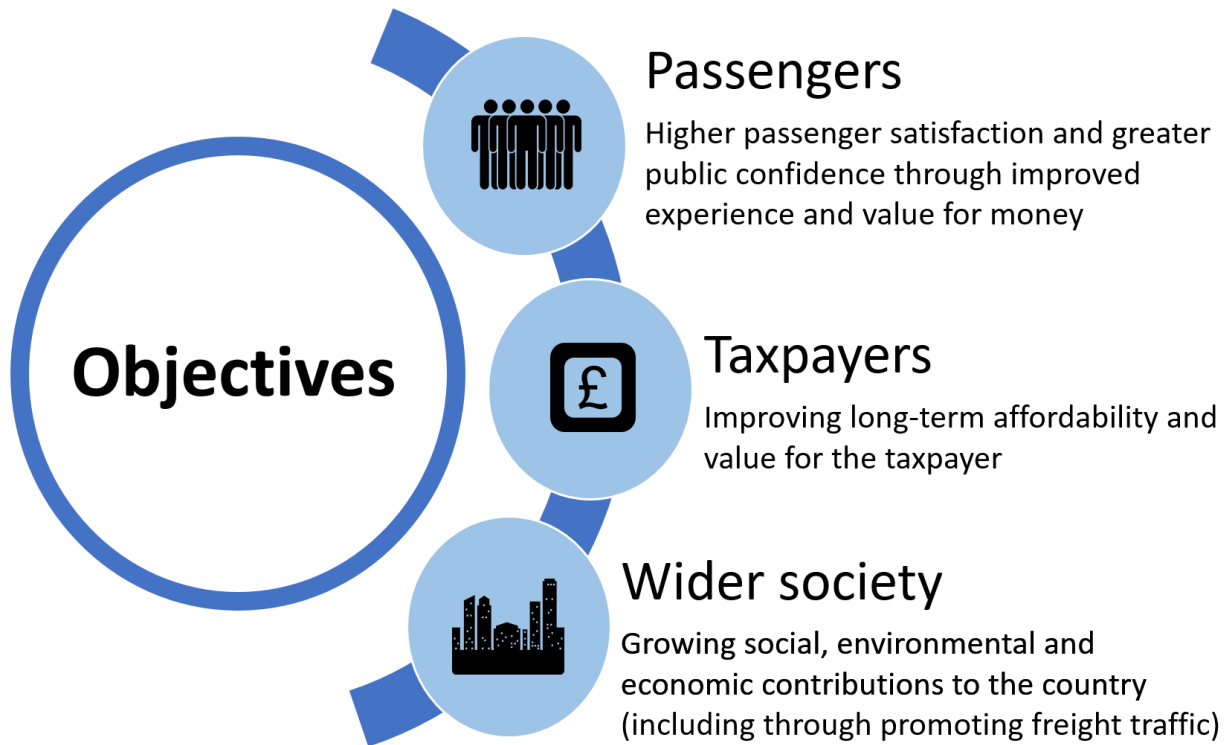
**Figure 1. Proposed objectives**

2.2 The Review will make proposals which will help deliver these objectives. In line with the Review's Terms of Reference these proposals will be fiscally neutral, beyond any reasonable transition costs, and designed to avoid negative impacts on the public sector balance sheet. The proposals will also be practically deliverable from a baseline of today's railway and capable of implementation within realistic timescales.

# 3. Summary problem statement

3.1 The railway plays a vital role in the economy and society of our country. The Review's evidence papers set out the importance of the railway and the many benefits it generates for passengers, communities and businesses around the country.



**Figure 2. Summary problem statement**
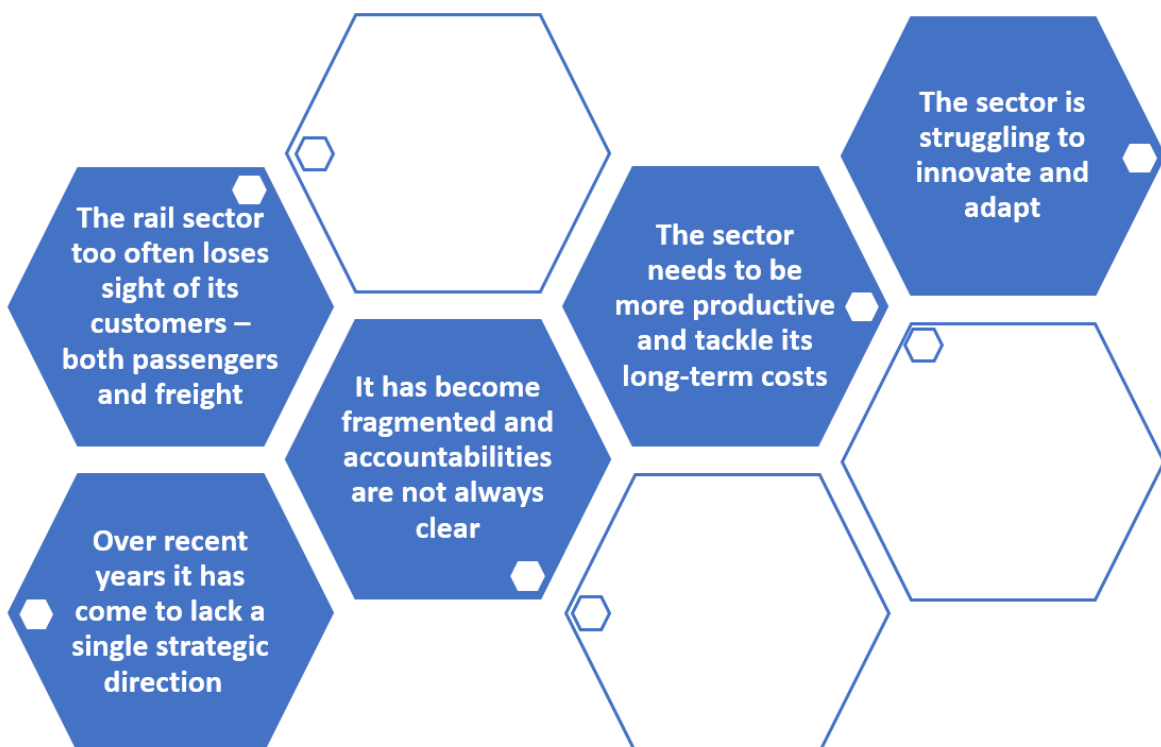
3.2 However, there is a general consensus both within and beyond the sector that reform is required if the railway is to fulfil its potential in the future. Drawing on this engagement the Review has identified a set of common problems that reflect people's concerns about how the railway works today (Figure 2). This is presented here to stimulate responses to the ongoing call for evidence.

# 4. Summary assessment criteria

4.1 The proposed broad assessment criteria will be used by the Review to develop its recommended model(s) for the railway. They comprise 11 outcomes, supported by seven outputs.
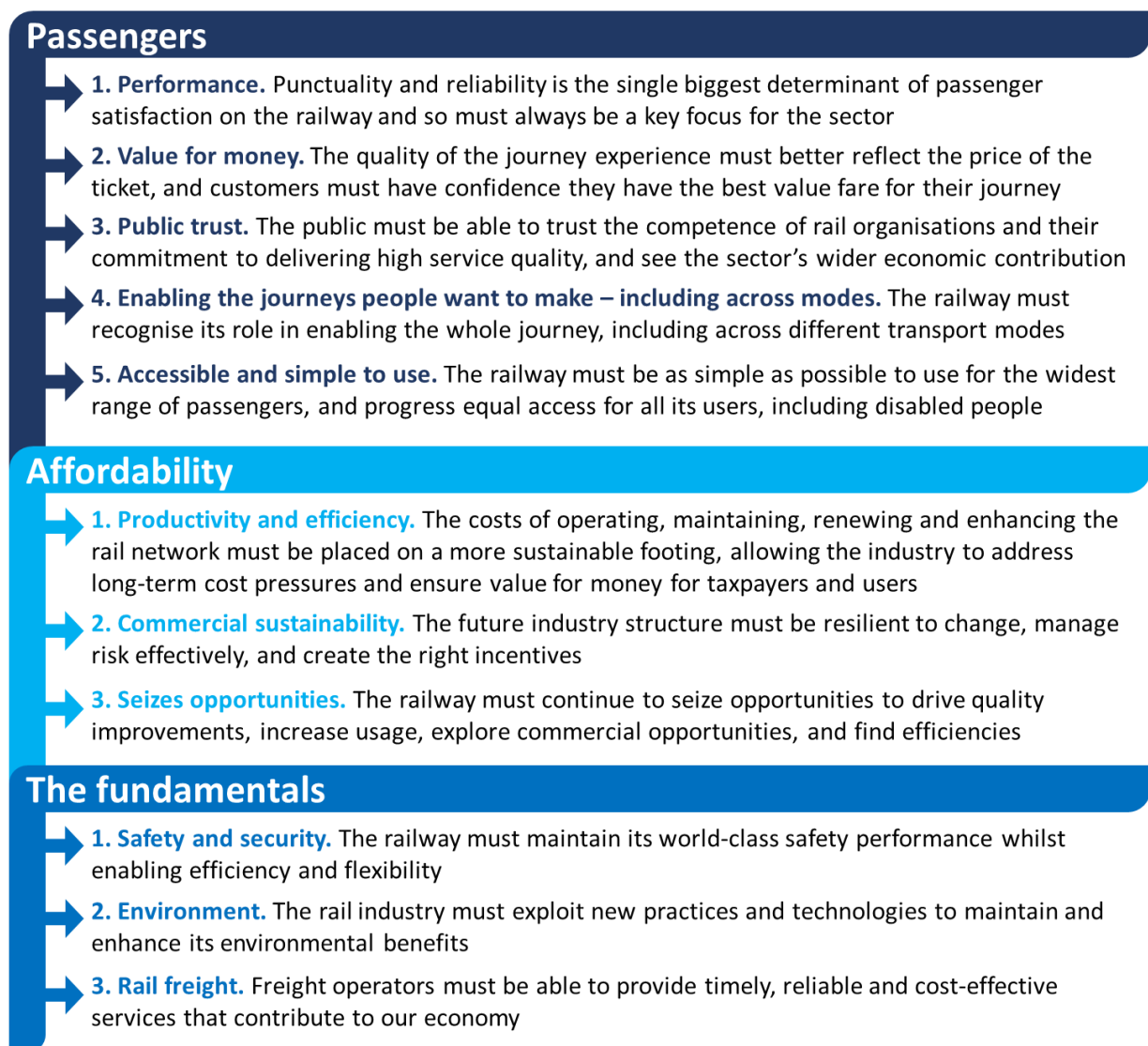
4.2 The 11 **outcomes** are:

## Passengers

**1. Performance.** Punctuality and reliability is the single biggest determinant of passenger satisfaction on the railway and so must always be a key focus for the sector

**2. Value for money.** The quality of the journey experience must better reflect the price of the ticket, and customers must have confidence they have the best value fare for their journey

**3. Public trust.** The public must be able to trust the competence of rail organisations and their commitment to delivering high service quality, and see the sector's wider economic contribution

**4. Enabling the journeys people want to make – including across modes.** The railway must recognise its role in enabling the whole journey, including across different transport modes

**5. Accessible and simple to use.** The railway must be as simple as possible to use for the widest range of passengers, and progress equal access for all its users, including disabled people

## Affordability

**1. Productivity and efficiency.** The costs of operating, maintaining, renewing and enhancing the rail network must be placed on a more sustainable footing, allowing the industry to address long-term cost pressures and ensure value for money for taxpayers and users

**2. Commercial sustainability.** The future industry structure must be resilient to change, manage risk effectively, and create the right incentives

**3. Seizes opportunities.** The railway must continue to seize opportunities to drive quality improvements, increase usage, explore commercial opportunities, and find efficiencies

## The fundamentals

**1. Safety and security.** The railway must maintain its world-class safety performance whilst enabling efficiency and flexibility

**2. Environment.** The rail industry must exploit new practices and technologies to maintain and enhance its environmental benefits

**3. Rail freight.** Freight operators must be able to provide timely, reliable and cost-effective services that contribute to our economy

**Figure 3. Assessment criteria – the 11 outcomes**

4.3 To achieve these outcomes, changes within the sector itself will need to happen. These can be termed system 'outputs'. To achieve the desired outcomes the railway must deliver the following seven **outputs**:

## System changes

➤ **1. Focus on users.** The whole railway must adopt a fully customer-centric view as the basis for decision-making at every level

➤ **2. Accountability and leadership.** A reformed system must make it clear who is taking the decisions that affect passengers and freight customers, so people understand who is in charge. There should be clear accountability to taxpayers

➤ **3. Decision-making at the right level.** Decisions should be taken closer to users where appropriate, while retaining network-level functions to preserve the benefits of an interconnected national network, for both passengers and freight

➤ **4. Collaboration.** The whole sector must draw together the skills and resources needed to plan, deliver and improve rail services more effectively, with everyone focused on delivering for the customer rather than narrow responsibilities defined by organisational boundaries

➤ **5. Long-term thinking and innovation.** The railway must plan and prioritise for the long-term, seeking opportunities for innovation through technology and ways of working

➤ **6. Delivery capability, including of change.** The industry must have access to the full range of skills needed to ensure delivery on time and to budget

➤ **7. Workforce engagement and diversity.** The sector needs to ensure a productive, flexible, engaged and diverse workforce supported by strong leadership that puts the customer first and is proud of the industry in which it works

**Figure 4. Assessment criteria – the 7 outputs**

# 5. Call for evidence questions

5.1 We would welcome written responses that address the following four questions:

- **Question 1.** The evidence papers summarise the key themes and evidence on which the Rail Review will draw in the subsequent phases of our work. Are there other themes or areas of evidence that we should consider? If so, what are they?

- **Question 2.** Has the Review identified the right high-level objectives as set out in Chapter 2?

- **Question 3.** Has the Review identified the key issues constraining the success of the railway in Chapter 3? What relative priority would you place on them?

- **Question 4.** Do the broad assessment criteria in Chapter 4 capture the right issues against which the Review should test its proposals? What priority should we attach to each and how should we balance trade-offs?  Are there other issues we should consider?

5.2 Responses can be sent by email to rail.review@dft.gov.uk or via our call for evidence platform: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/williams-rail-review

5.3 We are seeking responses on these issues by 30 April 2019. Please note that, as we set out in December, the wider call for evidence will remain open until 31 May 2019 and all responses will be considered by the team.

5.4 All responses will be reviewed by the team.