

29 October 2012

The Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP
Secretary of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

New Secretary of State

Further to the Terms of Reference dated 15 October 2012, I now attach my Initial Findings Report.

The Initial Findings cover the flaws that led to the cancellation of the InterCity West Coast franchise competition on 3 October 2012 – these Findings are provisional and will be covered in further detail with the conclusion of my final report.

In the limited time available this is a preliminary report. What is clear however is that in seeking to run a complex and novel franchising competition process, an accumulation of significant errors, described in the report, resulted in a flawed process.

These errors appear to have been caused by factors including inadequate planning and preparation, a complex organisational structure and a weak governance and quality assurance framework. The full causes and the lessons to be learnt will be addressed in the final report of my independent Inquiry to be published at the end of November.

Firm judgments should not be made based upon what are provisional findings or wider conclusions drawn at this stage.

Yours Sincerely Sam Laidlaw

Sam Laidlaw