



Department
for Transport

South Western Franchise Stakeholder Briefing Document

Moving Britain Ahead

February 2016

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Foreword



Last year, the Government launched a competition to select an operator for the next South Western rail franchise.

Whether they are commuting into central London, taking a trip to the south coast for a holiday, or travelling to one of the many special events that take place each year, passengers rely on this railway.

So we started by publishing our objectives for the franchise, highlighting the role that the railway plays in supporting communities in south western and southern England, and London.

We then put these objectives out for consultation, and I was pleased with the response. People and businesses took the opportunity to tell us about what they want from train services, so we have reflected their views as we've developed the final franchise specification, which is now being put out to tender. With growth in passenger journeys set to continue, our priorities for this franchise are securing the capacity to meet current and future demand, whilst also improving the overall experience for passengers.

Our plans for 150 brand new train carriages, and new and longer platforms at Waterloo mean we're looking for the next franchisee to make best use of this additional capacity for passengers. But we're challenging bidders to go even further. We've asked for innovative proposals for delivering even more trains, more space, and faster journey times.

And we are also looking for bidders to deliver improvements to the passenger experience, so they will set out their plans for new products and ways of buying tickets, modern facilities at stations and on trains, and better information, particularly about onward journey options and during disruption.

The next step in this competition is for Bidders to respond to the Invitation to Tender. I look forward to their proposals for how to achieve the railway that passengers want.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CL Perry'.

Claire Perry MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Between 12 November 2015 and 9 February 2016 the Department for Transport (the Department) held a public consultation to gather views and opinions from organisations, passengers, and individuals about how services should be delivered in the next South Western franchise. Thirteen events were held across the network and in total 650 formal responses were received.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Stakeholder Briefing Document is to provide stakeholders with a summary of the consultation process and the responses received, to respond to the views expressed, and to summarise the franchise specification that has been included in the Invitation to Tender (ITT) documents, including the draft Franchise Agreement. It is not intended to replace the ITT, which in the case of inconsistencies takes precedence.
- 1.3 The Department is grateful to all the organisations and individuals who took the time and effort to respond to this consultation, and to those who attended the consultation events. The comments and views expressed have been considered and used to inform the development of the South Western franchise specification.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current South Western franchise, which is operated by Stagecoach South Western Trains Limited (SSWT), started in 2007. SSWT operates nearly 1,700 trains a day, serves more than 200 stations, and employs around 4,800 staff.
- 2.2 The franchise serves destinations throughout south west London and counties in southern England. Predominantly operating out of Waterloo Station in central London, the franchise has termini at Portsmouth, Weymouth, Exeter, Bristol, and Reading, and serves a diverse range of destinations in between, including Guildford, Woking, Basingstoke, Southampton, Salisbury, and Clapham Junction, the busiest interchange station in the UK. The franchise also includes the Island Line service on the Isle of Wight.
- 2.3 The current franchise is due to end in February 2017. Following the suspension of the franchise programme in October 2012, it was originally intended for a Direct Award franchise to be awarded to the incumbent operator for the period from 2017 to 2019. However in July 2015 the Department announced its intention to re-let the franchise through a competition. While the current franchise expires in February 2017, there is the option available to the Secretary of State to extend by up to 7 reporting periods through to August 2017. It is intended that part of this extension will be called so that the current franchise will terminate in June 2017, when the successful bidder in this competition can begin operating the new franchise.
- 2.4 On 15 December 2015 the Department announced the transport companies who had been successful in their pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) passport application, allowing them to submit expressions of interest in franchise competitions.
- 2.5 On 4 February 2016 the Department announced the two companies shortlisted for the South Western franchise competition, after successfully submitting an Expression of Interest:
 - First South Western Trains Limited
 - Stagecoach South West Limited
- 2.6 The shortlisted bidders have until September 2016 to submit their bids for how they would deliver the services and requirements specified by the Department. The winning bidder is expected to be announced in February 2017, and the new franchise is scheduled to commence in June 2017.

3. Our vision for the franchise

- 3.1 The Department has developed the specification for the next South Western franchise to deliver the government's vision for rail.
- 3.2 The government's long-term plan is to build a stronger, more competitive economy and a fairer society. Rail is crucial to this and has an important role in the UK's economic growth. It provides access to markets, employment, leisure and tourism, and the rail sector provides over 200,000 jobs. It will also make an important contribution to rebalancing the economy.

Franchise objectives

- 3.3 To meet this vision, the Secretary of State and the Department have set objectives for both the rail franchising programme as a whole, and the South Western franchise in particular. The Secretary of State's objectives for rail franchising were in section 3.5 of the consultation document¹.
- 3.4 The Department wants the next South Western franchise to deliver enhancements in the way the railway serves its markets and communities, with our next private sector partner delivering benefits for passengers, through increased capacity, a high-quality passenger experience, and improved collaboration with a range of stakeholders. At the same time it will be essential to secure further efficiencies to deliver better value for money for taxpayers and fare payers. The South Western franchise objectives are to:
 - Support the economy of the South Western franchise area by offering high quality rail services to, from and across the franchise with service levels that reflect the specific requirements of the different markets served including non-London flows, intra-regional and London-radial, while working within the affordability constraints on public funding
 - Increase capacity to meet current demand and future growth, supporting the delivery of planned infrastructure works and rolling stock investments, whilst minimising disruption to passengers
 - Deliver an excellent experience for passengers which leads to significantly improved passenger satisfaction. Particular consideration should be given to innovative solutions to improving the ticket purchasing experience, the expansion of smart ticketing, the quality of the station environment, on-train facilities, the punctuality and reliability of train services and the commitment to improve compensation arrangements
 - Secure whole industry efficiencies and help reduce overall industry costs by working in partnership across the rail industry

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/south-western-rail-franchise>

- Secure short, medium and long term benefits from collaborative working practices and partnering with industry stakeholders such as Department for Transport, Network Rail and Transport for London, including supporting the development of emerging schemes such as Crossrail 2
- Work with stakeholders to support local communities to deliver local transport integration, local regeneration and investment in and around stations through Community Rail Partnerships and other organisations
- Work with the Isle of Wight Council to secure a long-term sustainable solution for the future of the Island Line during the course of the next franchise that will enable it to become a more sustainable business
- Improve social and environmental sustainability to reduce carbon emissions, use resources effectively, and build skills and capability within the business and supply chain

4. Consultation overview

- 4.1 The South Western franchise consultation ran from 12 November 2015 to 9 February 2016. The purpose of the consultation was to:
- inform stakeholders of the planned process and timescales for awarding the South Western franchise
 - provide stakeholders with background information about the current franchised services and the strategic goals for the new franchise
 - seek views on the current franchise and options that stakeholders and the public wanted the Department to consider as it developed the specification for the ITT
- 4.2 The consultation document was published on the government's website, leaflets were distributed at stations, and it was picked up by local press. Formal consultation events were held in Guildford, Basingstoke, Salisbury, Portsmouth, Ryde, and London. A series of drop-in sessions were also held at stations in Weymouth, Bournemouth, Winchester, Fleet, Basingstoke, Southampton, and Reading. Attendees were able to ask questions about the franchising process and future specification, and put forward their views.
- 4.3 Formal responses to the consultation could be submitted online, by post, or by email. There were a total of 650 responses to the consultation. A breakdown of the responses are in tables 1 and 2, and a list of respondent organisations is at Annex A.

Response Type	Number of Respondents
Email	427
Online Questionnaire	171
Letter	52
Total	650

Table 1 Breakdown of Consultation Responses

Stakeholder Category	Responses
Individual	451
Local Government	65
Interest / User Group	30
Parliamentary	28
Other	14
Community Rail Partnership / Society / Trust	11
Councillor	11

Stakeholder Category	Responses
Trade Body or Business	10
Local Society	10
Local Enterprise Partnership	5
Train/Freight Operating Company	4
Airport	4
Passenger Interest Group	4
Trade Union	3

Table 2 Stakeholder Categories

- 4.4 The consultation offered respondents an opportunity to provide comments and views on a wide range of issues affecting the next South Western franchise, from how to improve the passenger experience, to considering how the train service provision could meet their needs, and how we might provide additional capacity.
- 4.5 Bidders have the flexibility to put forward proposals that go beyond the base specification, where it can be demonstrated that such proposals would provide passenger benefits in a way that is affordable and delivers value for money. Where particular aspirations have not been met in the franchise specification, stakeholders are encouraged to engage with bidders directly as they develop their proposals. Bidder contact details can be found at Annex B.

Main themes arising from the consultation

- 4.6 The consultation asked 36 individual questions, grouped into 19 categories. Some respondents offered more general comments, while others addressed certain questions only. Few of the respondents offered comments in relation to every question posed. The categories that received the highest number of responses were:
- Train Service Specification
 - Capacity
 - Stations
 - Franchise Objectives
 - Passenger Satisfaction
- 4.7 The majority of responses were focussed on the core train service, highlighting the need to ensure that sufficient capacity is provided to meet current and future demand, including through the provision of appropriate rolling stock, and a service pattern that meets passenger needs, with enough services at times when people want to travel.
- 4.8 Reliability and punctuality was a popular topic. The majority of respondents believed that reliability needs to be improved in the next franchise. Though some respondents commented that Performance was generally good, acknowledging that sometimes disruption is not the fault of the train operator. There was broad agreement that better information is needed during times of disruption.

- 4.9 Respondents agreed that improving passenger satisfaction and the value for money for the price of the ticket was important. Key themes in this area included ensuring that ticket products meet the needs of passengers, and that sufficient information is provided so that passengers can always understand their options and buy the best value ticket, through whatever media they are using. Passengers want better value for money, where the station and train environment, the facilities available, and the service provision better reflect the price of their ticket, with appropriate compensation when services are delayed or disrupted.

The Department's response to the consultation

- 4.10 The range of views and comments that the Department has received have helped to shape the ambition for change on the franchise. Section 5 summarises how the consultation responses have informed what we are asking bidders to include in their bids for the franchise. Section 6 provides more information on the franchise specification.

5. Summary of consultation responses

- 5.1 The paragraphs below summarise the responses to the questions posed in the consultation document. Where respondents have offered more general comments, these have been included within the analysis of the most relevant question or theme. The summaries below are an attempt to encapsulate the broad range of views submitted by stakeholders in response to the consultation questions.

Passenger satisfaction

Do you support the key priorities that have been identified through the Transport Focus research?

Response rate

- 229 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.2 There was broad agreement with the key priorities identified by Transport Focus. Some respondents suggested that more than the top six priorities should be considered.

Department's response

- 5.3 The Department has considered the rail passengers' priorities for improvement identified by Transport Focus, as well as the results of the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) as it has developed the franchise specification. Reflecting comments from respondents, the Department has not limited itself to considering only the top six priorities which were listed in the consultation document. Improving passenger satisfaction is a theme that runs throughout the requirements included in the ITT.

Are there other priorities you believe should be included to inform the new franchise specification?

Response rate

- 176 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.4 A wide range of additional priorities were suggested on issues including the requirement for additional capacity, improved journey times, improved connectivity, more frequent stopping patterns, and the appropriateness of rolling stock. Responses also suggested there should be improvements to ticketing, with simpler pricing structures and products to suit part-time or flexible workers.

Department's response

- 5.5 The Department has reflected on the additional priorities identified by respondents as it has developed the detailed franchise specification. We have set a Train Service Specification which seeks to deliver additional capacity and improved journey times,

with appropriate rolling stock best suited to the routes and markets served. We have also required bidders to make innovative proposals for new ticket products and easy to understand fares.

Franchise objectives

Do you feel that these are appropriate objectives for the South Western franchise?

Response rate

- 227 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.6 Most responses fully or broadly agreed with the franchise objectives. It was noted that the objectives are high-level, and some respondents asked for more specific deliverables.
- 5.7 Of those who agreed with the objectives, some areas were highlighted as particularly important. A number of respondents suggested that collaborative working with other stakeholder organisations, and local authorities and other transport operators in particular, would be important for delivering the objectives and improvements envisioned. Respondents agreed that providing additional capacity, more frequent services, and more seats was a priority. The role of the franchise in driving economic growth was a popular theme, as was the need to improve non-London flows.

Department's response

- 5.8 Respondents generally agreed with the objectives proposed, so the specification has been developed to meet the stated franchise objectives. Noting that respondents placed particular importance on the franchisee working with other organisations, bidders are required to explain how they will engage with stakeholders, including local authorities and other transport operators, demonstrating how they have understood priorities for future improvements and additional passenger benefits.
- 5.9 The Franchise Agreement will include the contracted targets and specific deliverables (known as Committed Obligations) against which the franchisee's performance will be monitored.

Are there any further objectives you believe should be included?

Response rate

- 206 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.10 A large number of additional South Western franchise objectives were suggested, many of which were specific to particular routes, services, or stations. Some common themes included providing sufficient capacity, reducing journey times, improving connectivity to airports, rezoning stations to be within the London Travelcard Area, and increasing rail's market share to reduce road congestion and deliver environmental benefits.
- 5.11 Many respondents noted that the objectives should reflect regional characteristics, which was consistent with comments on journey times from London to Portsmouth, Southampton, Weymouth, and Bournemouth.

- 5.12 There were some suggestions for complete or partial change of ownership of the franchise. Some supported the transfer of inner suburban London services to TfL, while others called for the franchise to be nationalised. There were also comments that a longer franchise period would incentivise long-term investment.

Department's response

- 5.13 The Department has considered the additionally suggested objectives as it has developed the franchise specification. We agree that providing sufficient capacity is a priority, and so capacity increases have been included in the minimum Train Service Specification, with bidders encouraged to deliver further enhanced services, including additional journey time savings, where possible.
- 5.14 Bidders are required to work with local authorities, other transport operators, and other appropriate organisations to enhance connectivity with other modes of transport. Bidders are also required to present their strategy for working with Community Rail Partnerships, and for working with other organisations to seek third party funding for appropriate schemes.
- 5.15 The franchisee will be required to work with the Department and TfL to develop detailed proposals for how services could be transferred to TfL, which may include setting up a separable business unit which would enable a clear evidence base of actual costs, revenues, and Performance.

Capacity

Considering the planned schemes to deliver additional capacity, what are your views on additional opportunities to deliver more capacity elsewhere within the franchise area?

Response rate

- 175 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.16 Many of the respondents welcomed the existing proposals for creating additional capacity, and particularly the proposed works for additional and lengthened platforms at London Waterloo, which will allow for longer trains.
- 5.17 The need for additional peak capacity was highlighted, with commonly proposed solutions including the provision of longer (ten/twelve-car) trains together with longer or additional station platforms, and increased train frequency. The need for additional off-peak capacity was also noted.
- 5.18 Some respondents acknowledged that the proposed Crossrail 2 scheme could relieve capacity on the South Western network, but that additional capacity was needed before Crossrail 2 could be delivered.
- 5.19 Comments on particular franchise regions included:

West of England

- Additional capacity is needed between Exeter and Salisbury, with suggestions for doubling the single track sections, adding passing loops, and electrifying the line
- Longer train formations on the Exeter to London route would provide additional capacity

- Reinstatement of the South Chord between Yeovil Penn Mill and Yeovil Junction would provide greater operational flexibility and improved connectivity

Solent

- Extra capacity is needed between Southampton Airport and Fareham
- Improved frequency of services at all stations between Portsmouth and Southampton could be delivered through a timetable re-cast
- Additional capacity is needed on the Romsey to Salisbury line
- Reopening of the Waterside Line would allow for services to Marchwood and Hythe

Heartland

- Additional capacity is required to open new markets and relieve overcrowding
- Grade separation at Woking Junction would allow for more trains and increased service frequency
- Additional capacity could be provided through longer trains during the peak
- Doubling the single track section between Alton and Frimley would allow greater train frequency
- Increased train frequency at Guildford could be delivered through the changes proposed in the Network Rail Wessex Route Study

Reading and Windsor

- More direct links between Camberley and London would be welcomed
- Support for 10-car trains on the Reading lines, and an increase in service frequency during the peak

Jurassic Coast

- Longer trains would provide additional seats for longer journeys
- Upgrading the 3rd rail power supply towards Weymouth and redoubling the Dorchester to Moreton section would improve reliability and enable additional services
- Line speed could be improved through the New Forest

Suburban London

- Longer trains would relieve overcrowding
- Additional interchange opportunities at Clapham Junction would be welcomed

Department's response

5.20 By December 2018 the Wessex Capacity Improvement Plan will bring Waterloo International platforms 20-24 back into use, as well as extending platforms 1-4. Together with extending platforms at ten other stations, and the introduction of a new 150-carriage fleet of trains, these works will allow for ten-car trains to run on the Windsor, Reading, and Main Suburban services, and for the cascade of trains to other routes, increasing capacity across the network.

5.21 The Department has developed a Train Service Specification to reflect current and forecast demand for train services. We have specified from December 2018 at least 95 additional services per day from Monday to Friday. From December 2020 there

will be 20% increase in peak time capacity, and passengers will see quicker journey times on at least 70% of all services. Bidders need to demonstrate how they will deliver these service enhancements.

- 5.22 Reflecting respondents' comments, the ITT also challenges bidders to make innovative proposals for even further increasing capacity where there is likely to be sufficient passenger demand, and they believe that it is achievable.

Are there particular services or routes where you believe there is a need to introduce additional capacity to address overcrowding?

Response rate

- 239 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.23 Respondents noted that additional capacity would be welcomed across the network, on suburban services into Waterloo, on the mainlines to Portsmouth and Weymouth, and on the West of England lines. While many responses highlighted overcrowding on peak services, and particularly into London Waterloo, a number of respondents also commented on the need for additional capacity on off-peak services.
- 5.24 It was noted that special provision should be provided for additional capacity for planned major events, such as Royal Ascot, the Red Bull Air Race, the Royal Windsor Horse Show, events at Windsor Racecourse, and state events.
- 5.25 Particular routes or services noted as needing additional capacity included:

Heartland

- Peak services from London to Woking, Winchester, Basingstoke, Guildford, Fleet, Alton, and Farnborough

Inner Main Line

- Peak and off-peak services from London to Kingston and Surbiton
- Services stopping at Clapham Junction

West of England

- Peak services into and out of Exeter, especially west of Salisbury

Solent

- Southampton to London
- Romsey, Chandler's Ford, and Eastleigh to Southampton Airport Parkway and other local stations
- Peak and off-peak services from Fareham to London

Reading and Windsor

- London to Reading, Windsor, Camberley, Bagshot, and Frimley

Suburban London

- Most peak services into and out of Waterloo, including those on the Hounslow / Twickenham / Teddington loop, and the services to and from Hampton Court

Jurassic Coast

- Weymouth and Bournemouth to London

Portsmouth

- Peak and weekend services from Portsmouth to London

Department's response

- 5.26 The Department has specified additional capacity across the South Western network to meet forecast future demand (see 5.21 above). Bidders need to demonstrate how they will deliver this minimum additional requirement.
- 5.27 Understanding that there might be opportunities to provide further capacity on particular routes, and noting those that have been identified by respondents, bidders have been challenged to make proposals to deliver additional capacity, over and above the minimum specification, where there would be passenger benefit and they believe that the infrastructure, rolling stock, and train service plan will allow.
- 5.28 Bidders are also required to demonstrate how they will take a proactive approach to planning for additional demand as a result of seasonal travel and special events, including how they will provide additional capacity where possible.

It may be possible to increase overall passenger carrying capacity by introducing different rolling stock that has more standing space and/or modifying the internal configuration of trains, including rebalancing first and standard class seating. Do you have views on these potential rolling stock changes?

Response rate

- 288 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.29 Many respondents believed that the 3+2 seating configuration is not appropriate for longer journeys. This is because the seating is considered to be uncomfortable, with passengers often avoiding the middle seat.
- 5.30 There was overall agreement that first class seating could be removed to provide additional standard class seats. There was some agreement that additional space for standing (and bicycles and wheelchairs) might be appropriate for metro-style shorter journeys, but passengers expect to have a seat for longer journeys. There was a common suggestion that additional capacity should be provided through longer trains.

Department's response

- 5.31 The Department has specified the minimum length of trains that should be used in each service group, to ensure that the longest possible trains are used at the busiest times. Bidders have been given the freedom to tailor the type and internal configuration of rolling stock to the particular requirements of the markets to be served. Reflecting the views expressed in the consultation, bidders are required to implement rolling stock which meets the needs of passengers, whether on longer or shorter journeys. Bidders are also incentivised, through the award of Quality points, to make proposals for additional passenger benefits, above and beyond the minimum requirements.
- 5.32 The Department believes that the train operators are best placed to plan for and deliver rolling stock in the most appropriate configuration to provide optimum capacity, and so does not generally specify the types of rolling stock or seating configuration that should be used on particular routes.

Future impacts on demand

What factors may impact on demand for travel on the new South Western franchise, drawing on local impacts in particular? Please provide any evidence you may have.

Response rate

- 225 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.33 Respondents to this question focussed on expected increases in housing and jobs which would bring additional demand for rail services. A number of respondents mentioned the community expansion around Cranbrook. It was also noted that rising house prices was encouraging commuters to live further from London.
- 5.34 Several responses mention forecast significant economic growth as a likely driver of future demand, particularly in the West of England, Solent, Hampshire, and Poole. It was also noted that increased road congestion was likely to drive future increases in rail travel.
- 5.35 A number of responses noted that rail would have to be able to cope with the anticipated increase in demand for travel to the airports in the region, particularly Heathrow, Gatwick, and Southampton.
- 5.36 Many responses highlighted particular local factors that were likely to have a significant impact on future demand, including developments at Ludgershall Barracks and new football stadia at Brentford and Wimbledon.

Department's response

- 5.37 The responses demonstrate that there is expected to be significant growth in demand for rail services across the South Western network. As such, the specification requires bidders to demonstrate that their proposals for additional capacity will accommodate the forecast demand growth. Bidders are also required to take a proactive approach to planning for seasonal demand and travel to and from special events.

Train Service Specification

Where, if anywhere, would you like to see any changes to first and last trains on the South Western network and why? Do you have any evidence to support this?

Response rate

- 166 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.38 Respondents to this question generally agreed that there would be benefit in later evening services from London to principal towns and cities on Friday and Saturday nights. This would allow passengers more time to make their way home after evening leisure activities. There was some preference for earlier weekday trains into London too.
- 5.39 There were requests for changes to the first or last train on some non-London routes, including preference for earlier weekday services from Southampton to Bristol, and

later services between Portsmouth and Southampton. It was also suggested that the first and last trains on the Isle of Wight should match with the first and last ferries.

- 5.40 It was noted that it is important to consider how any changes to first or last trains might adversely impact on the time available for Network Rail to conduct over-night infrastructure maintenance and renewal work.

Department's response

- 5.41 The specification includes requirements to operate earlier first and later last trains on Windsor and Suburban routes from December 2018. The ITT also incentivises bidders, through the allocation of Quality points, to reflect the needs, aspirations and priorities of passengers, including for earlier first and later last trains on other routes where, and at times when, there is likely to be significant passenger demand. Bidders will need to consider the potential impact of any such proposals on the time available for Network Rail's infrastructure maintenance and renewal work.

Where, if anywhere, would you like to see any changes to weekend trains on the South Western network and why? Do you have any evidence to support this?

Response rate

- 134 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.42 There was general agreement that more frequent services should be provided on Sundays. A number of respondents also commented that there should be a Boxing Day service, operating at least a Sunday timetable.

Department's response

- 5.43 Reflecting the comments received, we have incentivised bidders, through the allocation of Quality points, to propose additional services on Sundays where there is significant demand. The Department conducted analysis, but didn't find a positive case for specifying Boxing Day services as part of the minimum requirement. However, through the award of additional points, the ITT incentivises bidders to make proposals for any other additional train services that would benefit passengers, where there is significant demand.

Would you support a specification which is flexible enough to allow the operator to review how station calls are allocated to train paths in order to improve overall line capacity? What impact might this have on passengers?

Response rate

- 191 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.44 Responses to this question were mixed. Passengers travelling longer distances into London were more supportive of allowing the operator to review station calls, especially if it would result in faster journey times. Passengers travelling from smaller regional stations were less positive, believing that the operator would take the opportunity to prioritise the flows that generated greater revenue.
- 5.45 While some respondents were absolutely against any reduction of service, others supported the principle of allowing the operator flexibility to review station calls to improve overall line capacity, although it was suggested that the specification should include a minimum level of service.

Department's response

- 5.46 Reflecting comments received, the Department has set a Train Service Specification which specifies a minimum number of calls at each station per hour. Bidders have the flexibility to determine how they will achieve this minimum specification. The Department believes that the franchisee is best placed to develop a timetable, based on the minimum specification, which makes optimal use of the available capacity, while delivering a train service that meets the needs of passengers. Through the award of Quality points, the ITT also incentivises bidders to propose further enhancements above the minimum service requirements, where possible, and where there is likely to be significant passenger demand.

Respondents are invited to propose any changes to the current service pattern which they feel should be considered and to explain their rationale, for example by identifying specific local factors which might influence the future level of passenger demand which should be reflected in a revised specification.

Response rate

- 262 responses to this question

Respondents who wish to promote service changes should clearly identify these in their response to this consultation, as well as any supporting business case or value for money (VfM) analysis.

Response rate

- 87 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.47 Respondents generally agreed that there should be more, faster trains, linking the key cities across the network, and particularly London. There was also strong support for the specification of a Boxing Day service.
- 5.48 Respondents offered suggestions for service changes which they believed would deliver faster journey times, more frequent services, and additional capacity across the South Western network, with some also offering supporting business cases or economic analysis. While many respondents made suggestions for reducing journey times and increasing the frequency of services into London, others also highlighted the need for service improvements on non-London routes.

Department's response

- 5.49 The Train Service Specification has been set to deliver enhancements to the current level of service, where the network and infrastructure allows. Many passengers will benefit from longer and more frequent trains, and quicker journey times.
- 5.50 Through the award of Quality points, bidders are also incentivised to make proposals for further improvements to the level of service on top of the minimum Train Service Specification, including to meet passenger and stakeholder aspirations, such as those highlighted in the consultation responses. This could include making proposals for further reducing journey times or increasing service frequency, where the network and infrastructure allows, and there is significant passenger demand. The Train Service Specification has been set to allow bidders flexibility to propose innovative timetabling proposals to achieve this.

Performance and reliability

Are there any specific stations or services where you believe reliability or punctuality should be improved?

Response rate

- 157 responses to this question

Where possible, please explain your reasoning when responding to this question.

Response rate

- 77 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.51 The majority of respondents believed that reliability and punctuality should be improved. However some respondents thought that current levels of reliability and punctuality were reasonable, particularly in the context of the wider rail network.
- 5.52 Many comments highlighted the need to improve reliability on particular parts of the network. Suggestions for improving Performance included reducing station dwell times (particularly at stations such as Clapham Junction and Vauxhall), and redoubling single-track sections of the route.
- 5.53 There were some comments on how reliability and punctuality is reported to passengers, noting that it can be frustrating when trains arrive after their scheduled arrival time, and yet are recorded as 'on time' under the Public Performance Measure (PPM) regime. It was suggested that there should be PPM targets for intermediate stations, and not only the destination.
- 5.54 Some respondents noted that there were limiting factors that were outside of the control of the train operator, such as problems with the infrastructure, power supply, and signalling, or congestion on the network. It was also believed that some rolling stock configurations with only doors at the end of the carriages increased dwell times at stations, requiring longer for passengers to get on and off.

Department's response

- 5.55 The Department understands that punctuality and reliability is important to passengers. Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will improve punctuality and reliability so that they will be able to meet the challenging targets that we have set in Schedule 7.1 of the draft Franchise Agreement. Acknowledging that improving Performance requires an industry-wide approach, bidders also need to demonstrate how they will work with Network Rail and other operators to work towards operating a 'Right Time Railway'.

Managing disruption

Respondents are asked to suggest what mitigating actions and steps the South Western operator should be expected to take to meet the needs of its passengers both during the planned disruption to the franchise as a result of enhancement works and when ‘force majeure’ events, such as extreme weather or unplanned events that impact the smooth operation of the network.

Response rate

- 189 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.56 The need for appropriate information for passengers dominated responses to this question. Respondents believed that information should be provided well in advance of planned disruption. In the event of unplanned disruption, respondents believed that the train operator should use all forms of communication (including email, website, twitter, and text messages) to provide information to passengers, including advising passengers at the time of ticket purchase. Staff should be available at stations, on platforms, and on trains, and be well informed about the disruption and able to offer advice on how passengers can complete onward journeys.
- 5.57 There was general agreement that trains should be run as close to the site of disruption as possible, to minimise the length of journeys requiring replacement buses. These buses should also be accessible for wheelchairs and bicycles, with sufficient room for carrying luggage. Many responses noted that purchased tickets should be accepted on other appropriate rail or bus services for no additional cost. Some responses offered a preference for not skipping stops to make up for time lost during disruption.

Department's response

- 5.58 Bidders are required to work with industry partners, including Network Rail, to minimise disruption to services. Reflecting comments received, the specification requires bidders to set out how they will manage disruption effectively when it occurs, and how they will provide live, relevant, and helpful information for passengers, including their approach for training and supporting staff to assist passengers.

Respondents are asked to consider whether they would support replacing first/last train services with alternative transport where it can be demonstrated that a longer period of engineering access for Network Rail would improve the infrastructure reliability and reduce disruption overall.

Response rate

- 166 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.59 In general respondents agreed that this would be an acceptable approach, especially if it reduced the number of weekend engineering works, or over-running night possessions. However there was caution that the alternative transport provided would have to be able to cope with the anticipated morning peak demand, and would have to be accessible to all passengers. It would be important to provide relevant information to passengers well in advance of this taking place. There were also comments that this should not be used on a regular basis. Some respondents were against the proposal, believing that it would be too disruptive to journeys.

Department's response

- 5.60 Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will work with Network Rail to minimise the impact of engineering works, including by maximising the opportunity for trains to continue running, or by using suitable diversionary routes where available.

Partnership working and collaboration

We are interested in your view on the best way to achieve efficient operation of this railway through partnership and collaboration. Please describe how such working arrangements might support this objective.

Response rate

- 179 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.61 Respondents saw benefit in the train operator working closely and cooperatively with Network Rail to ensure efficient and effective delivery of infrastructure projects and to reduce disruption. There was also a strong feeling that the operator should work closely with other transport providers to ensure effective integration with other services and transport modes.
- 5.62 Respondents wanted the train operator to work with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce, and Community Rail Partnerships to ensure a joined-up approach to planning, to seek opportunities to access locally available funding, and deliver community-focussed benefits.
- 5.63 There was agreement that the train operator should work closely with TfL, particularly to ensure effective integration with the London transport network. Some expressed support for the proposal to devolve inner London services to TfL, believing that TfL were better placed to deliver an efficient train service for London. Some respondents expressed concern that transferring services to TfL may have a negative impact on longer distance routes, and could result in fragmented services.

Department's response

- 5.64 The Department wants the franchisee to work collaboratively with the industry for the benefit of passengers, local communities, and the taxpayer. Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will work with Network Rail to improve punctuality and reliability, and the delivery of infrastructure projects. Bidders also have to explain how they will work with local authorities and other relevant stakeholders to improve the door to door experience for passengers, and seek opportunities to access third-party funding for schemes.
- 5.65 From the fourth year of the franchise there will be an annual £2.6m Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF), which will be used to deliver improvements in facilities and services in consultation with passengers and local communities.
- 5.66 The franchisee will be required to cooperate and work with the Department and TfL in the development of proposals to transfer services to TfL.

Community rail and other local partnerships

What opportunities are there for Community Rail Partnerships and other local partnerships to expand their role and range of activities to support local communities, businesses and other organisations?

Response rate

- 120 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.67 There was very strong agreement that Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) have had a positive impact on the South Western network, particularly in promoting local services and enhancing the station environment in more rural locations. It was generally felt that more support for CRPs would bring further benefits. Suggestions for support included additional funding (£30,000 per annum for each CRP was suggested), and a greater level of interaction through a dedicated franchisee Community Liaison Officer.
- 5.68 While some respondents were sceptical about the ability for other local community organisations to make a real difference, there was a feeling that additional benefits could be realised through better cooperation with local rail users' groups and other passenger and station organisations.
- 5.69 Some respondents also commented on the importance of the franchisee working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), particularly to seek opportunities for third-party funding for local schemes.

Department's response

- 5.70 The Department agrees that CRPs are important organisations that greatly contribute to improving the experience for passengers, as well as putting local communities at the heart of the railway. An annual £200,000 fund will be available to support their work, and bidders are required to develop a strategy for how they will work with existing CRPs and organisations looking to form CRPs.
- 5.71 Bidders will also demonstrate how they will work with stakeholders to seek third-party funding for appropriate schemes.

Island Line

What factors do you consider should be taken into account in assessment of options for the Island Line?

Response rate

- 147 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.72 Respondents agreed that the Island Line provides a vital service for the Isle of Wight and that the passenger services should be secured for the long-term. However there were mixed views about how this long-term solution should be provided.
- 5.73 The majority of respondents favoured keeping the Island Line as part of the wider South Western franchise, believing that this approach would most likely result in a secured future for the services.

- 5.74 A few responses acknowledged that the current situation is unsustainable in the long-term, and that running services through a separate, more locally-focussed organisation could be beneficial. However the majority of respondents were against this proposal, believing that a separate organisation would not be able to make the required investment, would not be capable of running services effectively, and that this would ultimately lead to the closure of the line.
- 5.75 Many respondents noted that investment in infrastructure and rolling stock would be required for the continuation of services. Some suggested that the service could be improved by adding an additional line to allow for a more regular thirty minute service, and that it would be beneficial for the train times to better match with the ferry services. Some respondents believed that converting the line to be operated by light rail or trams might offer a more sustainable and improved service.

Department's response

- 5.76 The Department understands that the Island Line provides important transport for residents and visitors to the Isle of Wight, and that there should continue to be the provision of passenger transport services on the island. Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will deliver improvements in passenger experience, including by working with other transport operators to facilitate onward journeys. An annual £50,000 Customer and Communities Improvement Fund will be available from the second year of the franchise for investment in improvements to Island Line facilities and services, generated from passengers' and local communities' feedback.
- 5.77 With the view to securing a more sustainable, long-term solution, the next franchisee will be required to work with stakeholders, including the Isle of Wight Council, Network Rail, and the Department to explore options for the future provision of services that meet the needs of passengers, the local community and the taxpayer. This will also include establishing a business unit for the Island Line, which will provide separate financial and operational data to inform the consideration of potential options.

Do you have any innovative proposals for how the Island Line might operate on a more self-sustaining basis?

Response rate

- 82 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.78 Respondents suggested a range of different proposals. The most common was for converting the line for operation by light rail or trams, believing that costs could be reduced and the level of service improved.
- 5.79 Some other suggestions included improving revenue collection by introducing Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) and potentially barriers at all stations, delivering a more regular half-hourly service by moving the existing passing loop, ensuring that the timetable was better coordinated with the timetables for the ferry services, and upgrading the infrastructure to allow for alternative rolling stock to be used. A few respondents believe that additional marketing activities could attract more passengers.

Department's response

- 5.80 As for the wider network, bidders have to demonstrate how they will work jointly with Network Rail to deliver benefits and cost-efficiencies for the Island Line, as well as their proposals for generating growth in passenger numbers. The franchisee will

commit to working with the Isle of Wight Council and other appropriate stakeholders as options are developed and assessed for the provision of future services.

Third party funded changes

Are you aware of any proposals for third party funded changes?

Response rate

- 33 responses to this question

Please provide details in line with the requirements set out above, or provide sufficient detail for further dialogue to take place to understand the proposals.

Response rate

- 14 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.81 In general respondents believed that the franchisee should work with local authorities and other organisations to determine where third party funding might be available.
- 5.82 Respondents provided further information on potential schemes, at varying levels of readiness, including proposals for a second station at Cranbrook East, interchange improvements at Salisbury station, and additional platforms at Westbury and Chippenham.

Department's response

- 5.83 The Department believes that there are opportunities to secure third party funding to deliver additional benefits for passengers, at minimal cost to the wider taxpayer. Bidders will demonstrate their plans for collaborating with other organisations within and outside of the rail industry to seek third party funding for new products or services that would have passenger benefits.

Stations

What improvements would you like to see at the station(s) you use to enhance your journey experience?

Response rate

- 333 responses to this question

Please indicate the name of the station(s) and the rationale for your specific comments.

Response rate

- 110 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.84 Respondents offered a wide range of suggestions for improvements at stations across the South Western network, with a number of common themes. Recommendations for general improvements included:
- better toilet facilities that are open when services are operating
 - improvements to station access, including through the provision of lifts

- better availability of staff
- more TVMs
- additional parking for cars and bicycles
- improvements to general maintenance and cleanliness
- better provision for shelter and seating

5.85 The most prevalent single suggestion in response to this question was for the provision of lifts at Pokesdown station. Respondents noted that the current steps severely limited access for passengers. The provision of step-free or improved access was also recommended at Isleworth, Kingston, Ash Vale, Basingstoke, and Yeovil stations. Additional entrances were suggested at Wandsworth Town and Putney stations.

5.86 Recommendations for Waterloo included reintroducing the old international platforms, improved passenger information, and better passenger access to ease congestion.

5.87 Clapham Junction and Surbiton were also particularly noted as needing improvements to prevent overcrowding.

Department's response

5.88 In the draft Franchise Agreement we have set targets to drive bidders to propose improvements at stations. These targets are based on Transport Focus' National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), and have been set to challenge bidders to deliver consistent improvements in overall passenger satisfaction with stations throughout the franchise period. The NRPS includes an assessment of satisfaction with stations overall, as well as with certain individual criteria, including the availability of staff, ticket buying facilities, availability of seating, provision of information, and cleanliness.

5.89 Bidders are also required to demonstrate how they will accommodate the increasing numbers of passengers, so that stations will continue to be operated safely.

5.90 Acknowledging the significant number of requests from respondents, we undertook an assessment of the viability of providing lifts at Pokesdown station. The assessment determined that there would be a positive benefit, and so the franchisee will be required to provide lifts at Pokesdown station. We also looked at the case for improving accessibility at a number of other stations that were brought to our attention. While positive cases were not found for specifying lifts at other stations, bidders are incentivised to propose schemes that would significantly improve the station environment and accessibility for persons with reduced mobility. The Minor Works budget will also continue to be available for the new franchisee to make improvements.

5.91 The old International Platforms at Waterloo station are already planned to be reintroduced as part of the Wessex Capacity Programme. It is expected that they will be fully operational from December 2018.

5.92 The Department recognises that stations, and the facilities that they provide, play an important role in delivering a positive passenger experience. The number of responses to these questions demonstrate that there is opportunity to improve passengers' satisfaction with stations across the South Western network.

Door-to-door journeys

What are your proposals for providing passengers better and safer access to different modes of transport at stations (including bus, car, cycling and walking)?

Response rate

- 125 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.93 The most common proposal was for provision of improved facilities for cycling at stations, with adequate secure cycle parking suggested as a minimum. There were also recommendations for encouraging cycle-hire businesses and locker and shower facilities. It was suggested that improved cycle facilities could reduce the requirement for car parking, as more people would be encouraged to cycle.
- 5.94 Improvements to walking routes was also recommended. Another popular suggestion was for better integration with connecting buses, with efforts to align timetables, and better provision of onward travel information in the station.
- 5.95 A few respondents recommended more and cheaper car parking, particularly at rural stations. The provision of electric car charging points was also suggested.

Department's response

- 5.96 Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will invest in improving facilities for interchange with other modes of transport, and how they will provide information to passengers to assist such interchanges. They will also set out how they intend to maintain and update Station Travel Plans. This will help meet respondents' aspirations, as well as addressing one of the Department's wider objectives, which is to facilitate passengers travelling between different modes of transport; improving the door to door journey. Clearly an important part of this is to help passengers arrive at, depart from, and interchange at stations.

What opportunities exist for improved integration between modes, citing relevant examples to support your comments?

Response rate

- 161 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.97 Responses highlighted the need for provision of better cycle facilities, and proposed developing walking and cycling routes to stations in collaboration with local authorities. There were some suggestions for providing more space for bikes to be carried on trains. More car parking spaces were also recommended, particularly at stations where there were limited options for alternative onward travel.
- 5.98 A large number of respondents noted that there were opportunities for better integration with bus services, and particularly aligning timetables. Integrated train and bus ticketing was also suggested. A number of respondents suggested that the reinstatement of the Liphook rail bus shuttle would improve access to the station.
- 5.99 There was desire for better integration between the train and ferry timetables at Ryde Pier Head and Portsmouth Harbour stations.

Department's response

- 5.100 Bidders are required to demonstrate their approach for working with local transport authorities, public transport operators and other organisations to significantly improve connections with other modes of transport. This will include providing passengers with up to date and comprehensive information about onward journeys, including for other transport modes, and making proposals for encouraging passengers to cycle or walk to and from stations.

Fares and ticketing

What are your views on the availability of retail staff and the ability for passengers to have widespread access to ticket buying opportunities (e.g. through new and improved approaches such as smart ticketing, increased advance purchase ticketing or via mobile phones), adequate measures to ensure vulnerable passengers are not disadvantaged, and more effective customer service by both station and on-train staff?

Response rate

- 214 responses to this question

Do you have any evidence to support your views?

Response rate

- 53 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.101 Responses suggest that passengers want an easily-understood fares structure, and access to the cheapest available fare no matter how they chose to buy their ticket. There was some preference for maintaining staffed ticket offices, but reasons for this were often because it was believed that TVMs didn't provide the necessary information or full range of ticket types for passengers to be able buy the most appropriate, or best value ticket.
- 5.102 There was a strong preference for TVMs to sell the full range of tickets available, and to direct passengers to the cheapest available ticket for the journey. Faster ticket printing would also help to reduce queues.
- 5.103 While there was some preference for maintaining the traditional paper ticket, there was strong support for introducing new ticketing technology and developing the provision of smart ticketing. Respondents saw that there would be benefits in offering contactless, mobile, and smart ticketing options, especially where they could be integrated for use on other transport services, and particularly with TfL.
- 5.104 There was also support for the development of new ticketing products, especially a season ticket that could benefit commuters that work part-time.

Department's response

- 5.105 Reflecting respondents' comments, the franchisee will be required to ensure that information about fares and tickets is communicated clearly and transparently to customers, so that they can easily access the information they need in order to choose the most appropriate fare for their journey. Bidders need to show that the rail fares offered are easy to understand.

- 5.106 Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will transform the ticketing experience for passengers, including how they will introduce smart ticketing technology, and increase the use of smart annual season tickets. Bidders are also required to introduce products to benefit passengers who work or commute part-time.
- 5.107 Bidders need to demonstrate how they will support cross-industry initiatives to improve the ticketing experience for all rail customers, including customers whose journeys involve other operators.

Smart ticketing

What are your experiences of using smartcard technology within the franchise area to date?

Response rate

- 132 responses to this question

To what extent do you believe that smartcard technology could be used to manage passenger demand and to create an integrated journey experience for passengers?

Response rate

- 134 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.108 Respondents generally had little experience of using smart technology on the South Western network, but noted positive experiences of using TfL's Oyster card.
- 5.109 There was general agreement that development of smart ticketing would offer benefits to passengers, particularly if it would facilitate the introduction of new ticket products, ensure that passengers only pay for the cheapest fare, and facilitate travel across different transport services. There was also some acknowledgement that smart technology would provide opportunities for managing passenger demand.
- 5.110 It was noted that smart technology would need to be fully integrated with other transport systems, and especially TfL's Oyster card.

Department's response

- 5.111 Bidders are required to develop a strategy to transform the ticketing experience for passengers. As part of this strategy the bidders need to demonstrate how they will use smartmedia, together with smart ticketing technology, to improve the experience, and ensure that customers have widespread and easy access to the full range of tickets. In particular, bidders need to increase the uptake of annual season tickets using smartmedia.

Passenger information

Are there areas of improvement in customer information and engagement you would like to see before, during and after your journey?

Response rate

- 174 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.112 Respondents agreed that there should generally be more live information for passengers, and particularly at times of disruption. There was a strong preference for information to be supplied through the internet and social media, but equally acknowledgement that staff should also be available, and reliably informed.
- 5.113 Several respondents identified opportunities for providing on-platform live information about train loadings, and the location of available seating on trains, potentially allowing for faster boarding and reduced delays.
- 5.114 There were also comments about the need to improve information about ticket options, so that passengers are able to buy the cheapest ticket for their journey.
- 5.115 There were preferences for more information to help passengers plan their onward journey, as well as requests for only relevant on-board announcements, such as notices about train splitting.

Department's response

- 5.116 We have included a strong set of requirements for bidders to make proposals for improving the information that is provided for passengers at all stages of their journey. This includes the requirement to train and develop staff to provide a visible and pro-active presence, particularly during times of disruption. Bidders will also demonstrate how they will provide useful information for passengers to plan their onward journeys.
- 5.117 The Department believes that passengers should be provided with the information that they need. Passengers need information before they travel so that they can plan their journey and buy the most appropriate ticket. During their journey passengers should be provided with information to help them with their onward travel, and the provision of live and helpful information during times of disruption is particularly important.

Service quality

What areas of customer service within your end-to-end journey would you expect to see monitored and reported on to improve the service quality for passengers?

Response rate

- 173 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.118 Respondents suggested a number of areas to be monitored to promote improvements in customer service. Popular factors to be measured and reported included punctuality (right-time), cleanliness, crowding, how the operator deals with delay, availability of toilets on trains and at stations, and visibility of staff.
- 5.119 It was considered important that the requirements should be set out in the franchise agreement, potentially with failure to meet the requirements linked to financial penalties. Passengers were also keen for greater transparency of the results of any monitoring regime.

Department's response

5.120 The draft Franchise Agreement (Schedule 7.1) includes targets for improving punctuality (measured as the Public Performance Measure (PPM)), reducing the number of cancellations, and reducing the number of short-formed trains. The franchisee will face financial penalties should they fail to meet these targets. The draft Franchise Agreement (Schedule 7.2) also includes targets for improving passenger satisfaction, based on the NRPS, which measures passenger satisfaction across a broad range of criteria consistent with many of those proposed by respondents, including train and station cleanliness, availability of staff, and how the operator deals with delays. The new franchisee will be required to spend additional funds on improvements for passengers if performance drops below the NRPS benchmarks. Performance against these targets will be published in the franchisee's Customer Report.

Passenger compensation

Please provide details of your experience with the current delay repay passenger compensation arrangements, and suggestions for how this might be modified in the new franchise to make compensation more transparent and convenient for passengers.

Response rate

- 160 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.121 Respondents felt that the current system for passenger compensation was cumbersome, and it was difficult to make claims, particularly compared with what was offered by other train operators.
- 5.122 Respondents believed that the length of delay after which compensation is offered should be reduced, with some suggestion that compensation should be given after a 15 or 30 minute delay.
- 5.123 There was agreement that there should be greater transparency about when passengers are entitled to compensation, and it should be easy to claim online. Many stated a preference for compensation to be paid in the form of original payment, rather than travel vouchers. Many also requested automatic compensation payments.
- 5.124 There was a strong feeling that season ticket holders are not currently adequately compensated, and there should be a more appropriate form of compensation linked to the actual delays experienced, rather than the annual average Performance.

Department's response

- 5.125 Bidders need to provide new swift and simple Delay Repay compensation arrangements for passengers. Passengers will see a significant improvement, with compensation being offered for shorter delays than under the current system. The next franchisee will also be required to actively promote the new compensation scheme to passengers.
- 5.126 The Department wants reliability and punctuality to improve. But when disruption and delay occur, passengers should more easily be able to claim the compensation for which they are entitled.

Security and safety

Do you have any proposals to improve security and safety at stations and on trains that you would like us to consider?

Response rate

- 135 responses to this question

Please provide details of the stations(s) and/or train(s) where appropriate that have informed your comments, and provide supporting information where available.

Response rate

- 37 responses to this question

Summary of responses

- 5.127 Respondents generally agreed that it was important to increase the perception of a safe environment, with many suggesting that this could be achieved through more visible and monitored CCTV, and improved lighting at stations. There was a strong preference for greater visibility of staff both at stations and on trains, and particularly late at night. Security of cycle racks and the provision of additional help points were also common themes. Some respondents suggested that ticket barriers would prevent non-passengers from accessing platforms.
- 5.128 Overcrowding at ticket barriers and on platforms was a significant safety concern. This was particularly noted at London stations, including Waterloo, Wimbledon, Surbiton, Putney, Earlsfield, and Wandsworth Town, and at stations used regularly for events.

Department's response

- 5.129 Safety and security is a priority for the Department, and this is a theme that runs throughout the franchise specification. Bidders are required to set out how they will work with the British Transport Police (BTP) and other organisations to operate stations safely, and deliver a safe and secure environment for passengers, including by training and supporting staff, and applying the principles of community safety.
- 5.130 When installing or upgrading CCTV on trains, the franchisee will be required to reflect the principles outlined in the relevant BTP and Association of Train operating Companies (ATOC) guidance documents.

6. The franchise specification

- 6.1 The South Western franchise specification has been developed seeking to provide train services which meet the needs and expectations of passengers, while accommodating the anticipated growth in demand. The specification has been produced through a process of in-depth analysis of the current provision of service and forecast future requirements, and an understanding of passenger aspirations and priorities through the public consultation.

The length of the franchise

- 6.2 The franchise is planned to start in June 2017 and will operate for seven years, with an option for the Secretary of State to extend the term by one year. We considered a number of factors when determining the length of the franchise, including dates for already planned infrastructure projects and existing leasing arrangements, the schedule for other franchise competitions, the effect that the length would have on financial requirements of the franchisee, and comments from the consultation. We believe that a core seven year franchise period offers the best balance, providing continuity and opportunity for the franchisee to invest and improve services for passengers.

Train services

- 6.3 We have set a Train Service Specification to deliver enhancements to the current level of service, including additional capacity, more frequent trains, and journey time improvements. From December 2018 we have specified at least 95 additional services per day from Monday to Friday, with an extra 20% peak capacity and quicker journey times on at least 70% of all services from December 2020.
- 6.4 Consultation responses showed that earlier weekday services, later Weekend services out of London, and additional trains on Sundays would all be welcomed. The minimum Train Service Specification includes earlier first and later last trains on many routes from December 2018, and we have incentivised bidders, through the award of additional points, to include more Sunday services where there is significant demand.
- 6.5 We have also incentivised bidders to make proposals for further service enhancements, above the minimum specified requirement, where there would be benefit for passengers and sufficient demand.

Providing more space for passengers

- 6.6 The South Western franchise experiences very high demand, with peak services into and out of London being particularly busy. Our analysis of forecast growth of

passenger numbers, and the response to the consultation showed that providing sufficient capacity to meet demand is one of the key priorities for this franchise.

- 6.7 The planned Wessex Capacity Improvement Programme will deliver additional and lengthened platforms at Waterloo and a fleet of 150 new carriages, which will provide additional capacity across the network.
- 6.8 The Train Service Specification has been set to make best use of the new infrastructure, and to deliver additional capacity in the next franchise. Bidders are also incentivised, through the award of Quality points, to make proposals for how they will deliver further capacity, on top of the minimum requirement, through innovative timetable or rolling stock proposals.
- 6.9 Bidders are also required to propose plans for meeting demand for seasonal travel, and providing, as far as reasonably practicable, the additional capacity required for special events.

Improving the customer experience

- 6.10 Passengers rightly expect to get value for money for the price of their ticket, and much of this is to do with their experience of travelling by train. Passengers expect their train to arrive on time, and to be compensated appropriately when it doesn't. They expect modern facilities at stations and on board trains, and for them to be maintained to a high standard.
- 6.11 The specification requires bidders to put together a proposal for how they will deliver a high standard of customer service, so that passenger satisfaction will improve to meet the NRPS targets set in the draft Franchise Agreement. Bidders will make proposals for improvements on-board trains and at stations, including for cleanliness and maintenance, the provision of facilities, and the availability of staff.
- 6.12 Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will train and develop staff to proactively assist passengers. They will set out their proposals for providing accurate and helpful information, particularly in times of disruption, and to facilitate onward journeys. Bidders will include, and promote awareness of, a new Delay Repay compensation scheme, with a swift and simple claims process.
- 6.13 The next franchisee will work with the British Transport Police to ensure that passengers feel safe at stations and on-board trains. We also expect engagement with local authorities to seek opportunities for third party funding of station schemes, and to improve integration with other modes of transport. The franchisee will actively work with Community Rail Partnerships and other community groups to promote passenger involvement with stations, so that they play a prominent role in the communities they serve.

Delivering better trains

- 6.14 The South Western franchise serves a range of different passengers who have different requirements and preferences for facilities on-board trains. Passengers are more likely to be content to stand for a short journey into London, where the priority is to reduce the time trains stand at stations to improve punctuality, while those travelling longer distances would prefer to have a seat.
- 6.15 The Department does not generally specify types of rolling stock, or how they should be deployed in franchises. Instead, we have specified the minimum length of trains

that should be provided across the service groups in the peak hour into Waterloo station, giving bidders the flexibility to propose rolling stock in configurations that best meet the needs of passengers travelling on different routes.

- 6.16 150 brand new train carriages have already been ordered for the South Western franchise, to operate in 10-car formations out of Waterloo. Bidders are required to demonstrate how they will make best use of these new trains, and the trains that are 'cascaded' to other routes, to offer the most space for passengers.
- 6.17 Bidders are required to propose a rolling stock strategy to include trains that are modern, comfortable, and that meet the needs of passengers according to the type of journey. Free on-board WiFi will be available for most passengers by the end of 2018. Any new trains will also have audio and visual equipment to provide passengers with the information that they need, and we have incentivised bidders to include power sockets or USB ports.

Providing better stations

- 6.18 The responses to the consultation show that stations and their environment can have a significant effect on the passenger experience. We have set targets, based on Transport Focus' NRPS, for bidders to consistently improve the passenger satisfaction with stations over the course of the franchise.
- 6.19 Bidders are required to work with partners to enhance the station environment, including by improving access for those with reduced mobility, and installing lifts at Pokesdown station in particular.
- 6.20 An annual £2.6m CCIF will be available from the fourth year of the franchise, to spend on improvements to facilities and services in consultation with passengers and local communities.
- 6.21 Bidders also have to set out how they will make better use of existing facilities by managing stations as long term assets, and identifying the potential for stations to be either developed commercially or made available for use by local communities.
- 6.22 Improving the door to door journey is one of the Department's key strategic priorities, and bidders are required to set out how they will work with local authorities and other transport operators to develop plans for making it easier for passengers to continue their onward journeys from stations. This will include providing better information about transport options, and improving facilities for those who cycle or walk to stations.

Fares and ticketing

- 6.23 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.
- 6.24 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. Bidders are required to increase the uptake of

annual season tickets using smartmedia, and introduce products to benefit passengers who work or commute part-time.

Island Line

- 6.25 The Department wants to see the continuation of passenger services on the Isle of Wight, but in a way that is sustainable in the long-term. An annual £50,000 CCIF will be available from the second year of the franchise to deliver improvements in facilities and services, in consultation with local residents and users of the line.
- 6.26 The franchisee will set up a separate business unit for the operation, with distinct accounting and reporting arrangements. The franchisee will be required to cooperate with the Department, the Isle of Wight Council, Network Rail, and other stakeholders to contribute to the development of any proposals or plans for a more sustainable, long-term Island Line service, as required.

Working with TfL

- 6.27 The South Western franchisee will be required to cooperate and work with the Department and TfL on detailed proposals for how services could be transferred to TfL. This could include creating a separable business unit to enable the establishment of a clear evidence base for actual costs, revenues, and Performance.

Complying with equality obligations

- 6.28 We have ensured that the specification for the franchise was produced in accordance with the equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. Further information on the Equality Act 2010 can be found on the UK government website².
- 6.29 As part of their licensing obligations, train operators must establish and comply with a Disabled People's Protection Policy that sets out how they will protect the interests of disabled users of their trains and stations. Further information on this duty in relation to boarding trains and accessing stations can be found on the Office of Rail and Road website³.

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

³ <http://orr.gov.uk/info-for-passengers/passengers-with-disabilities>

Annex A: Respondent organisations

Organisation Type	Organisation
Airport	Heathrow Airport Ltd
	Heathrow Hub Ltd
	Southampton International Airport Consultative Committee
	Southampton International Airport Ltd
Chamber of Commerce	Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
	Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce, Tourism and Industry
	Tourism Advisory Board of the Isle of Wight Chamber of Commerce
	Yeovil Chamber of Trade and Commerce
Charity	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
	Friends of the Earth
	Sustrans
	Whitchurch Association
Community Rail	Association of Community Rail Partnerships
	Basingstoke and District Railway Society
	Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership
	East Hampshire CRP
	Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership
	Isle of Wight CRP
	Swanage Railway Trust
	The Friends of Bruton Railway Station
	The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership
	TransWilts
Cycling Group	Cycling Opportunities Group for Salisbury
	Portsmouth Cycle Forum
Educational Establishment	Sandown Bay Academy

Freight Operating Company	DB Schenker
	Freightliner
Interest/User Group	Alton Line Users' Association
	Destination Okehampton
	East Surrey Transport Committee
	Friends of Crewkerne Station
	Guildford Rail users
	Haslemere Rail Users' Group (HRUG)
	No450
	Pokesdown Community Forum
	Railfuture
	Salisbury to Exeter Lineside Consortium of Authorities (SELCA)
	Shawford Rail User Group
	Sherbourne Transport Action Group
	South Hampshire Rail Users' Group
	South West trains Passenger Panel
	South West Transport Network, Railfuture (Severnside), TFGBA and Bus Users UK
	St John's Residents Association (SJRA)
	Strand on the Green Association
	Strawberry Hill Residents Association
	Tarka Rail Association
	The Petersfield Society
	The Teddington Society
	Tisbury Rail Users
	Torbay Line Rail Users Group
	Transport for Greater Bristol
	Travel Watch South West
	West of England Joint Transport Board
	West Wiltshire Rail Users Group
	Whimple Rail Users Group (WRUG)
	Windsor Line Passengers Association
Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	Dorset LEP
	Enterprise M3
	Heart of the South West LEP
	Solent LEP
	Thames Valley Berkshire LEP
Local Government	Alton Town Council

Borough of Poole
Borough of Richmond upon Thames
Bournemouth Borough Council
Bracknell Forest Council
Brading Council
Christchurch and East Dorset Councils
Compton and Shawford Parish Council
Crewkerne Town Council
Devon County Council
Dorset Council Partnership (North Dorset District Council, West Dorset District Council and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council)
Dorset County Council
East Hampshire District Council
Eastleigh Borough Council
Elmbridge Borough Council
Elmbridge Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Exeter City Council
Fareham Borough Council
Guildford Borough Council
Hampshire County Council
Hampton North Ward
Havant Borough Council
Heywood Parish Council
Isle of Wight Council
London Borough of Hounslow
London Borough of Merton
London Borough of Sutton
Ludgershall Town Council
Misterton Parish Council
New Forest National Park Authority
Overton Parish Council
Parrett and Axe Parish Council
Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)
Petersfield Town Council
Portsmouth City Council

	Reading Borough Council
	Rowlands Castle Parish Council
	Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
	Salisbury City Council
	Shanklin Town Council
	Solent Transport
	Somerset County Council
	South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA)
	South London Partnership
	South Somerset District Council
	Southampton City Council
	Spelthorne Borough Council
	Surrey County Council
	Surrey Heath Borough Council
	Test Valley Borough Council
	Torbay Council
	Transport for London
	Wandsworth Council
	Whitehill Town Council
	Wiltshire Council
	Winchester and Chandlers Ford
	Winchester City Council
	Wokingham Borough Council
Local Society	Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Group
	Holy Trinity Amenity Group
	Keep Island Line in the Franchise (KILF) Campaign
	Putney Society
	Shawford Village Residents Association
	The Hampton Society
	West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society
	Winchester Action on Climate Change
Network Rail	Network Rail
Parliamentary	All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hampshire and the Isle of Wight
	North East Hampshire Petitioners

	Ten MPs Representing South West London
Passenger Watchdog	London TravelWatch
	Transport Focus
Political Party	Kingston Borough Liberal Democrats
Trade Body or Business	Alexander Lodge Guest House
	Barton Willmore
	Build Consultants Ltd
	Hover Travel
	Rail Freight Group
	Rugby Football Union (RFU)
	Sky
	Trainline
	Transport Investigations
	Wightlink, Isle of White Ferries
Trade Union	ASLEF
	Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
	Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers
Train Operating Company	Isle of Wight Steam Railway (IWSR)
	Pre Metro Operations
Other	Bank of England
	Peninsula Rail Task Force

Annex B: Contact details for bidders

Bidder	Contact Details
First South Western Trains Limited	Owen Hazell Bid Director - Rail First Group 4th Floor, Capital House 25 Chapel Street London NW1 6DH
Stagecoach South West Limited	Anthony Hyde Bid Director Friars Bridge Court 41-45 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8NZ