



Department
for Transport

Great Western Rail Franchise Stakeholder Briefing Document

Moving Britain Ahead



August 2018

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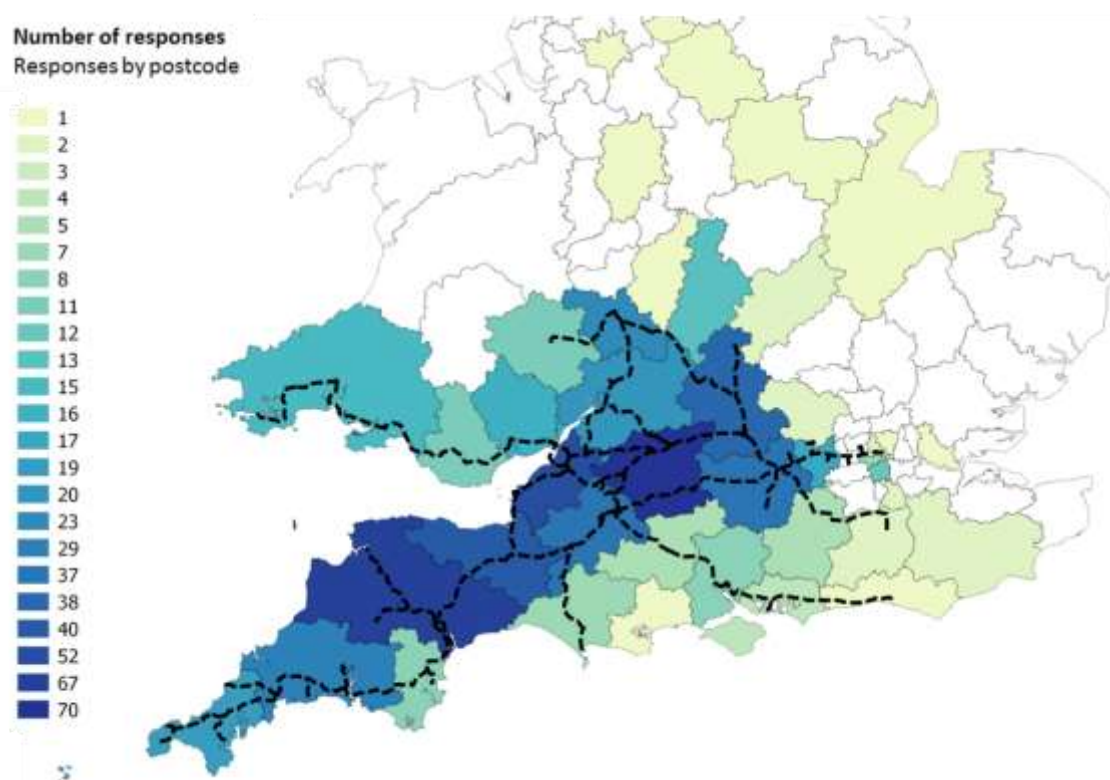
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1. Introduction and background

- 1.1 The Great Western franchise is one of the largest and most diverse franchises in Great Britain, and covers services across a wide area of the Thames Valley, the Cotswolds and Malverns, South Wales, Bristol and the South West. It was formed in 2006 by combining services from three separate franchises: First Great Western Link, Great Western Trains and Wessex trains. In November 2017, the Department for Transport announced that the existing franchise would be extended until 31st March 2020.
- 1.2 In November 2017, we published a consultation document inviting views on priorities for the franchise throughout the 2020s. This covered two specific strategic questions on the future shape of the franchise, and how to improve 'track and train' integration; and a number of questions around consultees' views of priorities for improvement.
- 1.3 Consultees were able to respond to the consultation via an on-line web form, or by e-mail or post. In addition, we held ten consultation events across the franchise area in early 2018 in order to aid consultees' understanding of the proposals and to help them to provide informed responses.

2. Consultation responses

- 2.1 In total, we received 866 submissions to the consultation from 967 respondents (taking account of joint responses with multiple signatories). 599 of these submissions were received via the online consultation response form. The remaining submissions were received directly by email or post.
- 2.2 Responses were received from all areas served by the Great Western rail franchise network, and a small number from areas outside the network's territory. The following map shows the distribution of responses of those respondents who provided a postcode.



- 2.3 Respondents were asked to indicate the stations and “service group” they used most frequently and state the most common purpose of their train journey. The service groups, as defined in the consultation document, are as follows:

Thames Valley: Primarily commuter services between London Paddington, Slough, Reading, Oxford, Newbury and Bedwyn, including the branches to Greenford, Windsor, Marlow and Henley, the Paddington – Hayes & Harlington leg of the Paddington – Heathrow Airport “Heathrow Connect” service; and the Reading – Gatwick Airport service. This service group also includes the significant commuter flows to Reading, Slough and other towns in the region.

High Speed: Long distance services from London Paddington to Bristol, South Wales, Worcester, Hereford, Cheltenham, Gloucester and the South West, covering commuter, business and leisure travel to and between these towns and cities, and the Paddington – Cornwall Sleeper service.

West: Local services within the South West, including the branch lines in Torbay, Devon and Cornwall, covering both local journeys and connections to longer distance services; local services in the Bristol “travel to work” area, regional services between Cardiff, Bristol, Portsmouth and Weymouth and the Swindon – Westbury “TransWilts” route.

- 2.4 The service groups most respondents said they used are the West services (used by 53% of respondents), followed by High Speed (35%) and Thames Valley (12%) services.
- 2.5 The most common journey purposes cited were leisure travel (37%), commuting (29%) and business travel (25%). Travel for education (5%) and to access public services (4%) accounted for the remaining trips.
- 2.6 This demonstrates that we received a spread of responses from across the franchise area, and from users of the different service groups and making journeys for different purposes, and demonstrates how much the franchise matters to the passengers using its services.
- 2.7 A full question-by-question summary of the responses to the consultation is included in Annex A below.

3. Key issues emerging from the consultation

- 3.1 Whilst the issues raised by individual respondents varied widely, a number of common themes emerged which were raised by a larger number of respondents and in the discussions at our consultation events. This section provides an overview of these key themes, and sets out a brief response in each case.

Franchise objectives for the 2020s

- 3.2 Participants at the consultation events, and written responses, generally agreed with most or all of the proposed objectives for the future franchise as set out in the consultation document. The question-by-question summary provides further detail of the specific suggestions made, noting that a number of the suggestions could be linked to existing proposed objectives.

Our response

- 3.3 In view of the level of agreement with the proposed objectives, we do not see a need to make fundamental changes. However, there are several areas in which we agree there is scope to expand or clarify the proposed objectives, and a revised set of objectives is included in Annex B below. These address respondents' comments that the objectives could be improved by:
- making more explicit that services should be provided at the times when people want to travel;
 - giving more emphasis to the need for interchange between rail and other modes to be as easy as possible;
 - further strengthening the emphasis on reliability, to capture the point that improving service frequencies or journey times in the timetable is of greatly reduced value if those improvements cannot be delivered reliably in practice;
 - referencing the need to reduce pollutants emitted by older diesel trains in particular; and
 - giving more prominence to the importance of the rail industry as a whole providing more coherent, joined-up support to local promoters and funders of improvements to the railway.

Providing a reliable service

- 3.4 Research findings presented by Transport Focus at the consultation events demonstrate the importance of meeting passengers' basic expectations of the train service, and in particular reliability, in determining overall satisfaction with their journeys. Consistent with these findings, many respondents highlighted the punctuality and reliability of the current service as an issue, and expressed a desire that this should improve substantially for the new franchise. How the franchise manages disruption and provides the timely, accurate information that passengers need in these circumstances also emerged as a key theme.

Our response

- 3.5 We agree that getting the basics of the train service right is fundamental, and this is reflected in our objectives for the franchise. Restoring punctuality and reliability performance to acceptable levels, and then maintaining them, will be a key priority for the remainder of the current franchise. In common with other recent franchise replacements, we expect to specify stretching but realistic performance targets, as we would like to see further improvements, with contractual requirements to develop and implement improvement plans where performance falls short of those targets. Our specification will also require FirstGroup to set out the steps they will take to improve the provision of information to passengers during disruption, with specific targets to improve passenger satisfaction with this aspect of the service.

Splitting the franchise

- 3.6 Consultees were asked whether they agreed with or did not agree with the options described for splitting the franchise into two smaller franchises, one comprising services in the Thames Valley and High Speed service groups, and one comprising services in the West service group, but including the long distance services from Paddington to the South West peninsula. There was little support for splitting the franchise, with 78% of respondents who expressed a view stating that they did not agree with the proposal as set out. Analysis of responses where respondents provided their postcode indicates that this opposition was spread across the franchise area (see Annex A below for further detail). There was virtually no support for the proposal amongst organisational respondents such as passenger groups, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and community rail partnerships.
- 3.7 Many respondents identified the positive benefits they felt had resulted from the creation of a single, integrated Great Western franchise. Conversely, the most common reasons cited for opposing the proposed split were that it would lead to poorer timetabling, particularly connectivity between services and poorer organisation of the franchise; that the franchise doesn't need to be changed; and that it would lead to wasteful duplication. However, there was also some support, which was also highlighted at the consultation events, for some form of decentralised decision making within the franchise, which could help to improve co-operation with some local authorities and local groups.

Our response

- 3.8 In light of the views expressed and supporting arguments presented by consultees at the consultation events and in the written responses, we do not intend to split the franchise at this time. However, in response to consultees' suggestions, we will require FirstGroup to demonstrate how it will achieve more decentralised decision-making within the franchise, to help ensure that decisions reflect the needs of passengers in the different geographical areas and markets which the franchise serves.

The Greenford branch and Brighton-Southampton-Bristol services

- 3.9 Consultees were asked if they agreed with or did not agree with proposals for transferring the West Ealing – Greenford branch service to Chiltern Railways; and for splitting the infrequent Brighton – Southampton – Bristol service at Southampton (with the GTR franchise's successor taking over the Brighton-Southampton part of the service). The majority of respondents expressed no opinion, reflecting the limited geographical scope of the questions. Of those who expressed an opinion, 70% agreed with the proposal to transfer Greenford branch services to Chiltern Railways and 55% agreed with the proposal to split the Brighton – Southampton – Bristol service at Southampton.
- 3.10 However, in respect of Greenford services, further examination suggests that providing rolling stock from Chiltern's Wembley depot is unlikely to be operationally any easier than from GWR's Reading depot, at least for as long as Reading depot retains a fleet of diesel trains. Thus some of the intended benefits of the proposed transfer to Chiltern may be less than we had first anticipated. Many respondents' replies focussed on how best to provide a reliable and suitably frequent service on the Greenford branch rather than a specific preference for one franchise or the other. In respect of Brighton services, those who opposed the proposal were concerned about the loss of direct services between Brighton and points to the north and west of Southampton.

Our response

- 3.11 Taking account of the consultation responses, we do not see a compelling case for requiring FirstGroup to implement either of these proposals. However, we would be open to considering them further if FirstGroup or any other party can show that either proposal would enable them to deliver material passenger benefits.

Collaboration between the franchisee and Network Rail

- 3.12 Consultees were asked what they felt were the main challenges which could be addressed by greater collaboration between the franchisee and Network Rail. Many respondents highlighted that the interests of passengers, as represented by the franchisee, and those of Network Rail were not always well aligned, in particular how

disruption is managed and engineering work carried out. A number of local authority respondents stated that they found that the industry was fragmented and difficult to deal with, does not necessarily give clear and consistent messages, and that it was often difficult for third parties to know which organisation did what, or to find a single point of contact. This seems to be particularly acute in relation to smaller infrastructure or station schemes, and some respondents stated that better collaboration between the various industry participants should allow these schemes to be progressed more quickly. A number of stakeholders attending the consultation events argued that the fragmented nature of the industry, and difficulty navigating through its processes, was a barrier to locally-funded investment in rail improvements as compared to other modes. Their view was that tackling this issue should help to unlock more local funding for rail schemes.

Our response

- 3.13 We will include requirements for the franchisee to collaborate more closely with Network Rail, building on the current Alliance structure. We are working with Network Rail and FirstGroup to identify how joint partnership working can best be put in place, reflecting the priorities identified by respondents to the consultation. We will expect key features of the existing alliance arrangements to be preserved, including joint leadership to provide oversight, vision and the direction for the various alliance workstreams, and proposals to strengthen the joint approach to communications and stakeholder engagement to ensure clarity and consistency, with "the industry" speaking consistently with one voice.
- 3.14 In light of the consultation findings, we have already asked FirstGroup and Network Rail to work together to develop a specific plan for how, in partnership, they will provide coherent, integrated "whole-industry" support for local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and other third parties who are seeking to promote and fund improvements to the railway.

Improvements to train services

- 3.15 A large number of suggestions for improvements to train services were received, particularly where new services could be provided, new stations provided, or routes and/or times where frequencies could be improved.
- 3.16 Respondents were particularly keen to see the proposed reinstatement of services to Okehampton progressed, and the completion of the 'Metro West' scheme for improved services around Great Bristol, Bath and Gloucester. A number of respondents suggested the introduction of a Bristol – Oxford service, which they argued could call at reopened stations on the route, and could eventually be linked to the future East-West Rail route from Oxford to Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge.
- 3.17 The most frequently cited routes for improvements in frequency were the Thames Valley services from Paddington to Reading, Newbury, Didcot and Bedwyn; the

Cardiff – Portsmouth route; local services around Bristol; and the Bristol – Weymouth route. Respondents also suggested that improvements in frequency were required on some routes during the evening and on Sundays, reflecting that these times and days have up until now generally received a less frequent service, while demand for travel at these times has increased significantly over time.

Our response

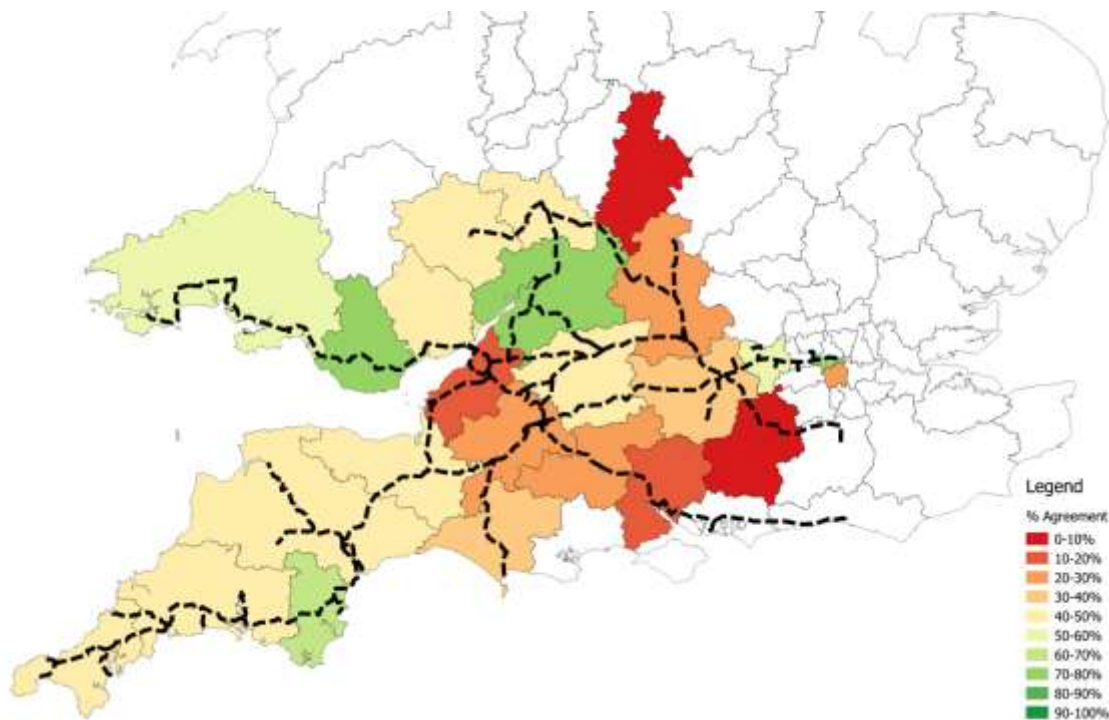
3.18 Working closely with Network Rail, we are assessing the feasibility and potential case for specifying a wide variety of train service enhancements, and will be happy to engage directly with stakeholders to discuss our emerging findings regarding the enhancements in which they have a particular interest. Depending on the results of our analysis, we may treat particular enhancement proposals in different ways, including:

- Specifying them as outright requirements for implementation during the term of the directly-awarded franchise – likely to be appropriate only where there is a strong business case and where, on the basis of advice from Network Rail, we conclude there is a high level of confidence that the enhancement can be implemented without adversely affecting reliability and punctuality more widely across the network;
- Indicating to FirstGroup that we are interested to see them develop proposals, but where we are not yet confident enough in the strength of the business case and/or the practicality of delivering and implementing the proposal for us to specify them outright. Where the business case requires further development, FirstGroup may wish to discuss with local stakeholders whether there is any potential for a local funding contribution to strengthen the business case for delivery through the franchise; where further timetabling analysis is needed, we would expect FirstGroup and Network Rail to work together to assess and build confidence in deliverability;
- Setting out schemes that we would require FirstGroup to work with Network Rail and local stakeholders on developing further during the early part of the directly-awarded franchise, to inform future decisions. This could be appropriate for enhancements that are more suitable for implementation over the longer term, for example because they require infrastructure enhancements that are not yet committed and funded or because they would require additional rolling stock beyond what will be available during the direct award term. We envisage a significantly strengthened role for the franchisee in helping to shape the longer-term development of the train service, maintaining and further developing the contribution the current franchisee is already making to the work of third-party groups such as the Peninsula Rail Task Force and the North Cotswold Line Task Force.

3.19 During the remainder of the current franchise term, we will continue to work closely with local partners and the current franchisee to deliver the ‘Metro West’ scheme and the reinstatement of regular services to Okehampton.

Removing stops at intermediate stations to speed up services

3.20 Consultees were asked if they agreed with or did not agree with a proposal to speed up services to the South West by reducing the number of stops at intermediate stations. 60% of respondents disagreed with this proposal, with 40% agreeing with it. Greater support for the proposal came from respondents in Devon and Cornwall, with more opposition coming from respondents in Wiltshire and Somerset. The following map shows the distribution of responses of those respondents to this question who provided a postcode.



Our response

3.21 As we stated in the consultation document, reducing intermediate calls in order to accelerate longer-distance journeys is unlikely to be acceptable to the communities which are served by the intermediate stations. Over the longer term, however, there may be scope to examine the entire pattern of service over the 'Berks and Hants' line between Paddington and the South West via Westbury, which could allow some journeys to be accelerated whilst maintaining or improving the service to intermediate stations. This is one proposal which we would expect the franchisee to develop through the collaborative working with Network Rail described in the section on 'collaboration' above.

Freight

3.22 Our consultation document highlighted the existence of significant flows of freight across much of the Great Western franchise area, and the importance of those flows to the economy and the consumer society. Consultation responses reaffirmed this view, in some cases identifying recent trends (such as the relative decline of coal

traffic and growth of intermodal and other flows) and opportunities for future growth. The industry's principal concern is to ensure that the current and likely future needs of the rail freight sector are properly taken into account when taking decisions about the passenger service specification. The industry is also concerned that moves to carry out more maintenance and renewal work overnight do not adversely impact freight services, many of which run overnight. In conversations with representatives of the freight industry, we have been encouraged to engage closely with Network Rail to ensure that the conclusions of their recent studies into likely future freight demand are taken into account.

Our response

- 3.23 We agree that the passenger service specification for rail franchises cannot be determined in isolation from the current needs and future opportunities within the rail freight sector. We have been engaging more closely than ever with Network Rail to assess the feasibility of improving the train service in the many areas identified by consultees, and the assessment has considered where network capacity is scarce and therefore where potential passenger service enhancements would restrict opportunities for future rail freight provision. We will encourage FirstGroup, in developing its proposals for the future franchise, to engage with the freight industry to understand its future needs and to identify any opportunities where changes to passenger operations might benefit the freight industry or vice versa.

Rolling stock

- 3.24 Consultees were asked what they felt should be the main priorities in relation to rolling stock which should be addressed. The key priority which emerged from this question was to provide longer trains, with more seats and space for passengers. The next priority highlighted was to replace or modernise the older rolling stock in use on the franchise. This was particularly raised in relation to services in the West service group, which will retain rolling stock which is much older than that in use on the Thames Valley and High Speed service groups. Respondents felt that this would mean a lower level of reliability, passenger comfort and on-board amenities than that provided on services which are receiving new rolling stock, as well as highlighting the relatively poor environmental performance of older diesel trains.

Our response

- 3.25 Between now and the end of the current franchise in March 2020, a large amount of new rolling stock will be introduced across the franchise, the "Pacer" trains will be withdrawn and trains will be transferred within the franchise to provide newer and longer trains on most routes. A key priority for the new franchise in 2020 will be to consolidate the benefits of this transformation and to ensure that reliability improves substantially. This franchise will also allow us to consider the longer-term options available. We are therefore likely to specify a requirement for the franchisee to appraise options for the older rolling stock fleets, and to develop a business case for alternative solutions for these fleets.

3.26 We will also require the options appraisal described above to include alternatives to conventional diesel trains, and we will be particularly seeking proposals which provide a material improvement in the environmental performance of the remaining diesel fleets, so long as they can be implemented without a risk to the operation of a reliable train service.

Accessibility

3.27 Consultees were asked what the franchisee could do to promote equality of opportunity for disabled passengers and those with other protected characteristics, what improvements would make rail services easier to use for all passengers, and which stations should be a priority for improving accessibility. Groups representing disabled passengers highlighted that only just over half of GWR stations have adequate step-free access to platforms, and that it is important that accessibility improvements are not only confined to stations with larger footfalls. Some groups raised concerns about Driver Only Operated services calling at unstaffed stations, and the limitations which this imposes on passengers who require assistance in boarding and alighting. There was wide acceptance that accessibility improvements also provide benefits for other groups of passengers, such as those travelling with small children or with heavy luggage.

3.28 Other than physical accessibility, the most frequently identified measures which would improve accessibility were the provision of enough staff who have received high-quality training to enable them to effectively respond to the needs of people with a wide range of different disabilities, and improvements to public address and other information systems. Provision of enhanced staff training in accessibility issues was suggested by a number of respondents. Groups also highlighted that there is a wide range of disabilities, some of which are not immediately visible, with therefore a wide range of differing requirements beyond issues of physical accessibility at stations.

Our response

3.29 The Department has recently published its Inclusive Transport Strategy, which sets out the Government's plans to make our transport system more inclusive and to make travel easier for disabled passengers. This includes a range of measures, including a commitment to make available up to £300 million for rail accessibility improvements between 2019 and 2024.

3.30 Alongside measures announced in this Strategy, we are considering the case for replacing the existing 'Minor Works Budget' within the current franchise with an appropriately sized Accessibility Improvement Fund, which, subject to affordability and deliverability, could be used to fund a wider range of accessibility improvements to reflect the diversity of different needs. We will require FirstGroup to set out how it will further improve accessibility, measure the quality of service provided to disabled passengers, and involve disabled passengers and representative groups in taking decisions on matters which affect them. We will also require FirstGroup to demonstrate how it will provide high quality training to staff in disability issues, and how it could involve disabled passengers in providing this training.

Stations

3.31 Respondents to the consultation and participants at our consultation events identified a variety of potential priorities for future station improvement. No single overwhelming priority has emerged from the consultation process and priorities will vary from place to place, but the most important themes included:

- the need to provide step-free access to enable disabled passengers to travel and to make journeys easier for other passengers, for example those travelling with heavy luggage or small children;
- an emphasis on the need for basic facilities to be provided at smaller stations, in particular to ensure that information systems are able to provide accurate and up-to-date information on the train service;
- concerns that a lack of ticket retail facilities at smaller stations is leading to significant levels of ticketless travel on certain routes, often by honest passengers who would purchase a ticket if the opportunity were provided;
- evidence that constraints on accessing certain stations, particularly a lack of car parking capacity and insufficient integration between rail and other modes, can be a significant barrier to travel by rail;
- the value that passengers attach to station staff providing a visible presence and being available to assist around the station; and
- a desire to see unused station buildings made available for public and community use.

Our response

3.32 We are considering how best to ensure future investment in station facilities is targeted towards the priorities that passengers and stakeholders have identified. While the current franchise includes a number of separate commitments to fund and deliver specific station improvements, we see merit in a more flexible approach that allows decisions on station investment to be taken during the course of the franchise term in response to passengers' most pressing current priorities. A single "Station Improvement Fund" could be one way of achieving this, but suitable governance arrangements would be needed to ensure that investment was appropriately spread across the franchise area and is targeted on schemes that best support the franchise objectives.

3.33 We expect our specification to challenge FirstGroup to explain how they will address the priorities identified above. See also our separate responses on accessibility, co-ordination between rail and other modes and support for community initiatives.

Co-ordination between transport modes

- 3.34 Consultees were asked at which stations co-ordination between transport modes could be improved, how this co-ordination could be improved, and where there were examples elsewhere of best practice in co-ordination between different transport modes.
- 3.35 Respondents identified a number of stations where co-ordination between modes could be improved; the most commonly cited being Bristol Temple Meads, Taunton and Swindon. In general, respondents felt that co-ordination was best improved through co-ordinating timetabling and through physical works to make interchange easier, although many respondents suggested that bus services should also be improved. Responses under the 'fares and ticketing' question below also highlighted that better integration between bus and rail ticketing, particularly bus company or local authority smartcards, would be desirable, contrasting this with the situation in London where a single product (the Oyster card) can be used on bus, rail and underground services.
- 3.36 During the consultation events, some stakeholders suggested that there could be more integration and marketing of through bus/rail links to tourist attractions not served by rail, e.g. Blenheim Palace or Stonehenge, as many tourists staying in London may use organised coach trips to visit these attractions. A small number of respondents raised the possibility of using national rail services to operate over existing heritage railways to improve links to places not served by national rail, e.g. to Minehead via the West Somerset Railway or to Goodrington via the South Devon Railway.

Our response

- 3.37 We will require FirstGroup to develop proposals for improving co-ordination between transport modes at a number of stations across the franchise network, through measures such as improving the co-ordination of timetables, physical works or improvements to the information provided about other transport modes. We will also ask FirstGroup for proposals for improving co-ordination with local authority or bus company 'smartcard' ticketing schemes, and for proposals for improving the range of through-ticketing to tourist attractions. We will encourage FirstGroup to work with local stakeholders and the promoters of such schemes to explore how barriers to operating national rail services over heritage lines might be overcome.

Fares and ticketing

- 3.38 Consultees were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the priorities for fares set out in the consultation document, which priorities they would add or change, and which changes to the fares structure would benefit them.
- 3.39 The majority of respondents agreed that the priorities for fares and ticketing were the right ones. The main priorities raised in response to this question were for cheaper

or more affordable fares, a simplified fares structure, and the availability of flexible season ticket products suitable for passengers travelling fewer than 5 days per week.

Our response

- 3.40 Fares regulation policy will continue to be set at a national level. However, we will work with FirstGroup to consider the feasibility and affordability of developing products for part-time commuters, possibly on a pilot basis targeting specific journeys where the fares structure is least favourable to these passengers; and to address fares anomalies which have been highlighted through the public consultation. We will also require FirstGroup to set out plans to facilitate increased take-up of new ticketing options such as smart cards and mobile tickets.

Stakeholder and community engagement

- 3.41 Consultees were asked what else the franchisee could do to help the Community Rail sector. There was widespread agreement that the current franchisee already provides good support to Community Rail Partnerships and the wider community. Respondents stated that they would like this good level of support to continue, and in particular that the level of funding the franchise provides should be maintained or enhanced, and that dedicated regional managers should be provided to maintain and enhance support for the Community Rail Sector.
- 3.42 Respondents were positive about the existing funding for Customer & Communities Improvement initiatives, and were keen that funding is maintained for this scheme. There was also some support for encouraging further Community Rail Partnerships to be set up, with the Association of Community Rail Partnerships suggesting that dedicated funding should be provided to support this. Some responses suggested increased engagement by the franchisee with local schools as a way of promoting a 'railway safety' message, to encourage more young people to use the train as a way of developing the 'passengers of the future' and to highlight the careers opportunities available in the rail industry and its supply chains.

Our response

- 3.43 We see clear benefit in specifying continued funding to support Community Rail and other community initiatives across the franchise, and will work with FirstGroup to assess the case for additional funding for Community Rail Partnerships, taking account of the evidence provided by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships and others about the value added by CRPs' activities. We will ask FirstGroup to set out how they will provide suitable financial and human resources to provide good quality support for Community Rail and for organisations seeking to set up Community Rail Partnerships.

Workforce skills

3.44 Consultees were asked what more the franchisee could do to invest in workplace and industry skills. A large number of respondents suggested the provision of apprenticeships, with some suggesting closer liaison with schools, colleges and universities in the franchise area to develop these. The Trade Unions highlighted that providing suitably trained staff can improve perceptions of a safe and secure environment, and ensure that passengers can obtain assistance in buying tickets. Trade Unions suggested methods to ensure that the franchisee is a responsible employer, and highlighted the need to ensure that it provided a suitable work/life balance for its employees.

Our response

3.45 We agree that all franchises should place a high premium on the skills, training and welfare of its people, equipping and motivating them to deliver the best possible service for passengers. We anticipate requiring the franchisee to engage with its workforce to develop a People Strategy that will address these issues. In common with other recent franchise awards, we also expect to specify minimum requirements for the creation of apprenticeships across the business.

4. Progress to date and next steps

- 4.1 Since the public consultation ended, we have been reviewing the responses and evaluating these to decide whether there will be a case for specifying specific improvements to the franchise. This builds on the earlier round of stakeholder engagement which took place during Summer 2017. In some areas, we will seek specific improvements from the franchise; in others we may set out the issue or the outcomes we require, and ask FirstGroup how it will address these issues or outcomes.
- 4.2 We had originally suggested that we might to issue the formal specification to FirstGroup in June 2018. However, a number of issues have arisen, which mean that this will no longer be appropriate. In particular, there have been delays in completed sections of the agreed infrastructure upgrades, and we feel that it will be more beneficial if the franchise is able to concentrate on managing the effect of this, the introduction of new fleets of trains and the transfer of trains within the franchise, and preparing for the introduction of new timetables. In common with other franchises, we also need to consider how future timetable improvements can best be introduced in order to provide the intended benefits while restoring better performance, and ensuring that passengers can be confident that the timetable will operate as planned.
- 4.3 Over the coming months, we will work with FirstGroup as we develop the 'Request for Proposal', which will comprise the formal specification for the franchise. In doing so, we will have to consider consultees' priorities for improvement alongside the availability of central government funds to secure those improvements, recognising the continuing pressures on the public finances. We will expect FirstGroup to engage closely with stakeholders as part of this process and this engagement could include discussions about the potential for local funding contributions towards initiatives that support local plans for economic, employment and housing growth but that would not be viable for FirstGroup to deliver alone. FirstGroup will develop a full costed 'Proposal' in response to our specification, which we evaluate to ensure that it meets our specification and is affordable. We will then negotiate detailed terms with FirstGroup, including contractual commitments to secure delivery of the outcomes promised within the Proposal.

Annex A: Detailed summary of responses

Background

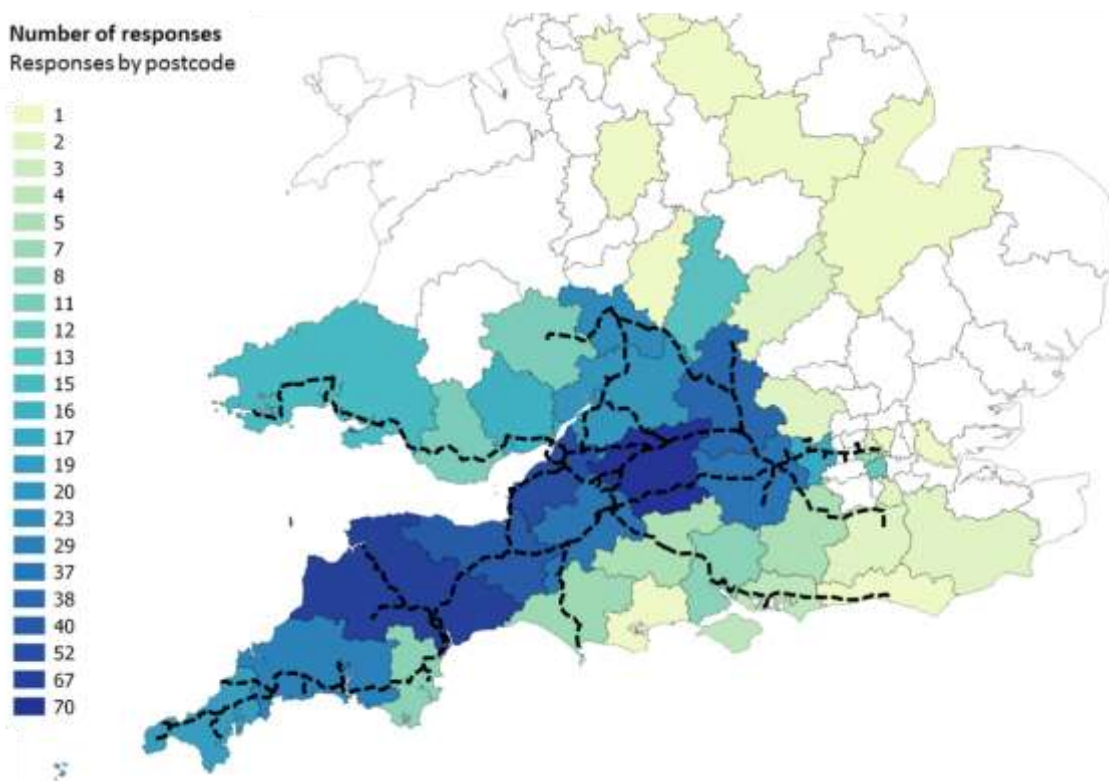
- A.1 From 29th November 2017 to 21st February 2018, the Department for Transport held a public consultation seeking views on improving train services on the Great Western rail franchise network. The consultation sought views from passengers, communities, businesses, local authorities and other interested parties. The consultation document and associated response forms included 18 questions (with sub-questions), which asked respondents for their views on how services can be improved and which initiatives a future franchisee should prioritise. Respondents were invited to submit their views through an online form or by email/post. Interested parties had the opportunity to attend any of ten consultation events held across the Great Western rail franchise network in early 2018 to aid their understanding of the proposals and inform their responses.
- A.2 In this Annex we present a summary of the responses to this consultation. In general, the structure of this Annex follows the order of the questions in the consultation document. In a small number of cases we have deviated from the structure of the consultation document to maintain continuity in the presentation of our analysis.

Responses

- A.3 In total, we received 866 submissions to the consultation. 599 of these submissions were received via the Department's online consultation response form and the remaining submissions were sent to the Department directly by email or post. Some of these submissions (particularly those sent by email/post) were joint submissions, representing more than one individual or organisation. In these cases, we have assumed each individual or organisation should be counted as a separate response. Based on this assumption, this consultation received 967 responses in total. We are extremely grateful to all those individuals and organisations that took the time and effort to respond, and those that attended the consultation events.
- A.4 We received responses from all areas served by the Great Western rail franchise network, and a small number from areas outside the network's territory. The geographical distribution of respondents (by postcode area) is presented in **Figure A.1**. We asked respondents to indicate the stations and "service group" they use most frequently and state the most common purpose of their train journey. The service groups, as defined in the consultation document, are as follows:

- **Thames Valley:** Primarily commuter services between London Paddington, Slough, Reading, Oxford, Newbury and Bedwyn, including the branches to Greenford, Windsor, Marlow and Henley, the Paddington – Hayes & Harlington leg of the Paddington – Heathrow Airport “Heathrow Connect” service; and the Reading – Gatwick Airport service. This service group also includes the significant commuter flows to Reading, Slough and other towns in the region.
- **High Speed:** Long distance services from London Paddington to Bristol, South Wales, Worcester, Hereford, Cheltenham, Gloucester and the South West, covering commuter, business and leisure travel to and between these towns and cities, and the Paddington – Cornwall Sleeper service.
- **Western:** Local services within the South West, including the branch lines in Devon and Cornwall, covering both local journeys and connections to longer distance services; local services in the Bristol “travel to work” area, regional services between Cardiff, Bristol, Portsmouth and Weymouth and the Swindon – Westbury “TransWilts” route.

Figure A.1: Responses by postcode area (where provided)



A.5 A summary of the stations and service groups used most frequently by respondents is provided in **Table A.1** and **Figure A.2** respectively. A summary of the most common purpose of respondents’ train journeys is provided in **Figure A.3**. These figures show that the stations used most cited by respondents are the major stations on the Great Western rail franchise network: London Paddington, Bristol Temple Meads and Exeter St. David’s.

A.6 The service groups most respondents say they use are the West services (used by 53% of respondents), followed by High Speed (35%) and Thames Valley (12%) services. This differs from the split of the journeys undertaken on the Great Western rail franchise in the 2016/17 financial year, where Thames Valley services represented the largest number of journeys (43%), then High Speed (36%), then West (21%).

A.7 The most common journey purpose cited was leisure travel (37%), commuting (29%) and business travel (25%). Travel for education (5%) and to access public services (4%) accounted for the remaining trips.

Table A.1: Stations most frequently used by respondents

Rank	Stations	Responses
1	London Paddington	213
2	Bristol Temple Meads	119
3	Exeter St David's	95
4	Reading	87
5	Swindon	73
6	Taunton	53
7	Bath Spa	49
8	Oxford	41
9	Cardiff Central	37
10	Plymouth	33
	All other stations	1,261

Figure A.2: Service group most frequently used by respondents

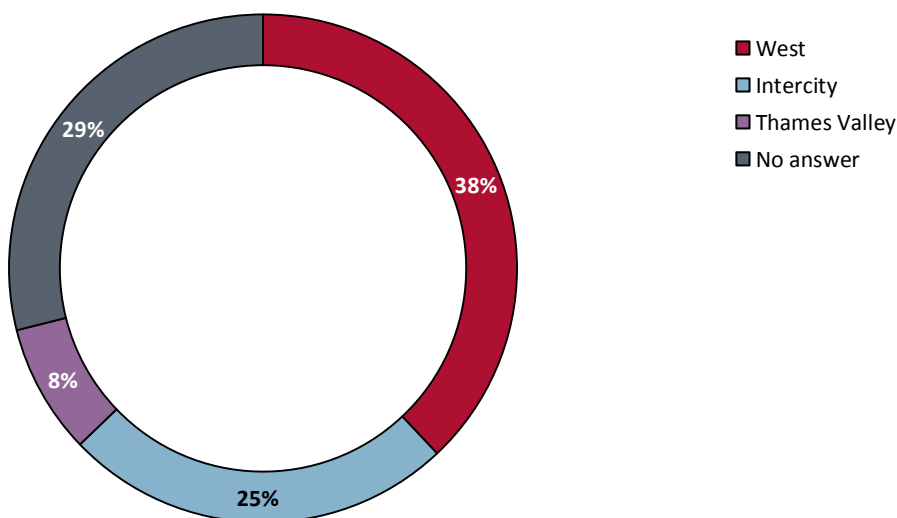
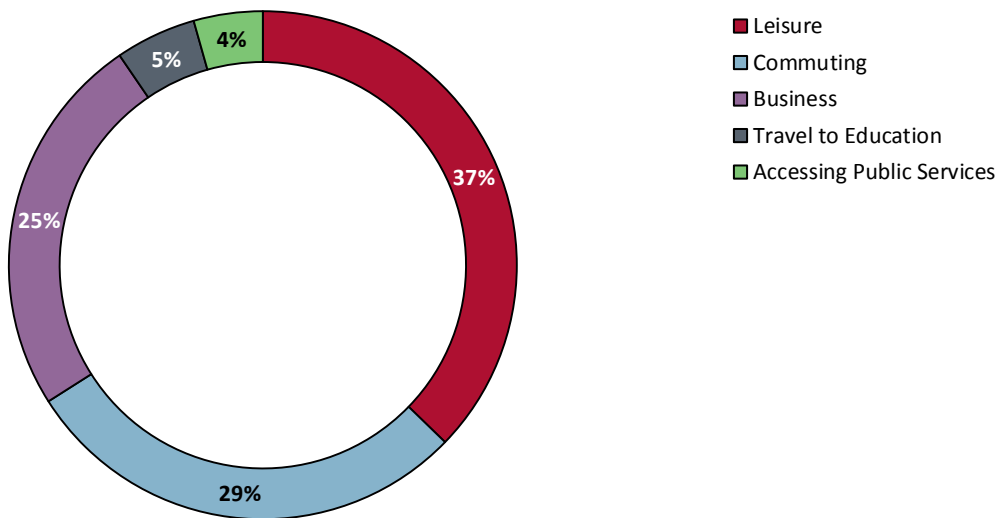


Figure A.3: Respondents' purpose of travel on the Great Western rail franchise



Analysis and presentation

- A.8 We have grouped qualitative responses into common themes (i.e. categories) to enable us to present these responses in quantitative terms and in graphs and tables. Where there is clear duplication in responses, we have grouped them together. Where there is overlap in responses, we have kept them separate to ensure areas of no overlap are not lost.
- A.9 Where we present a summary of responses in bar graphs, we present the top 10 most commonly cited comments. This is not exhaustive of all the comments provided by respondents. In most tables we provide figures for all “other” comments made outside those most commonly cited.

Franchise Priorities

Consultation Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree with [the Department's] objectives [for the Great Western rail franchise]? Why?

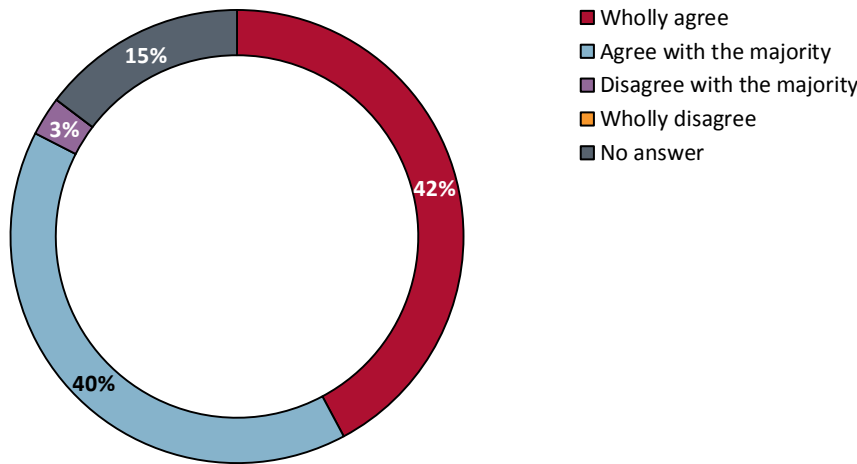
- A.10 Respondents were invited to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the ten proposed objectives for the franchise, as detailed on page 20 of the Consultation Document.

A.11 The ten proposed objectives were:

- Provide safe, punctual and reliable services with enough seats and space for people who want to use them;
- Focus on the needs of the travelling public to provide an excellent and continually-improving customer experience for all passengers, whatever their needs and abilities;
- Maximise the benefits for passengers from the current transformational investment in the Great Western railway network;
- Maximise the contribution of the railway to driving local and regional economic growth, enabling planned growth in housing, and meeting the wider needs of citizens and society across the whole of the franchise area;
- Be a responsible employer who invests in the welfare and the development of its workforce, motivating staff and equipping them with the right skills to provide the best possible customer service;
- Strengthen the connection between the railway and the communities it serves, supported by strong relationships with all those who have an interest in the franchise and the services it provides;
- Continue to improve the environmental performance of the railway and support wider environmental objectives by providing an attractive alternative to more polluting modes, and improving measures such as energy and water consumption and recycling;
- Develop close collaborative working with Network Rail and other partners, bringing the operation of track and train closer together to deliver the best possible service for passengers and drawing in funding from the widest possible range of sources;
- Work with the Government and other agencies to support the development and delivery of other major rail investment schemes, such as the proposed western rail link to Heathrow, East-West Rail and the interface with HS2 at Old Oak Common; and
- Operate efficiently, providing best value for taxpayers' and passengers' money, thereby ensuring the maximum possible resources are available for further service improvements.

A.12 The first part of this question (“to what extent do you agree or disagree with these objectives?”) was answered by 825 respondents. In general, respondents expressed a high level of agreement with the franchise objectives. As shown in Figure 2.1, more than 80% of the respondents believed the objectives wholly or partially aligned with their vision of the future franchise. No respondent stated that they wholly disagreed with the franchise objectives.

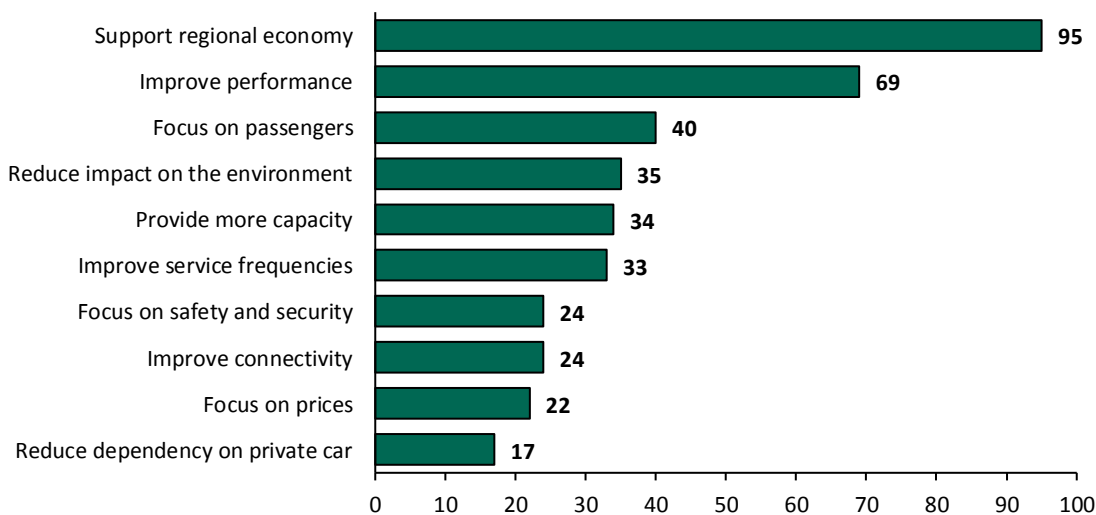
Figure A.4: Public agreement with franchise objectives



A.13 968 comments were drawn from responses to the second part of this question, (“Why [do you agree or disagree with the Department’s objectives]?”). A high proportion of these respondents used this opportunity to simply reaffirm their general agreement with the objectives.

A.14 The key themes to emerge from the comments related to reliability, economic growth, and environmental performance. Most of these themes are, to a greater or lesser extent, captured by the franchise objectives. This is particularly true for reliability, frequency of services and economic growth. Other frequently mentioned themes include fares, rolling stock capacity, rolling stock quality, station accessibility, and journey times. A summary of the comments drawn from the responses to this question is provided in **Figure A.5**.

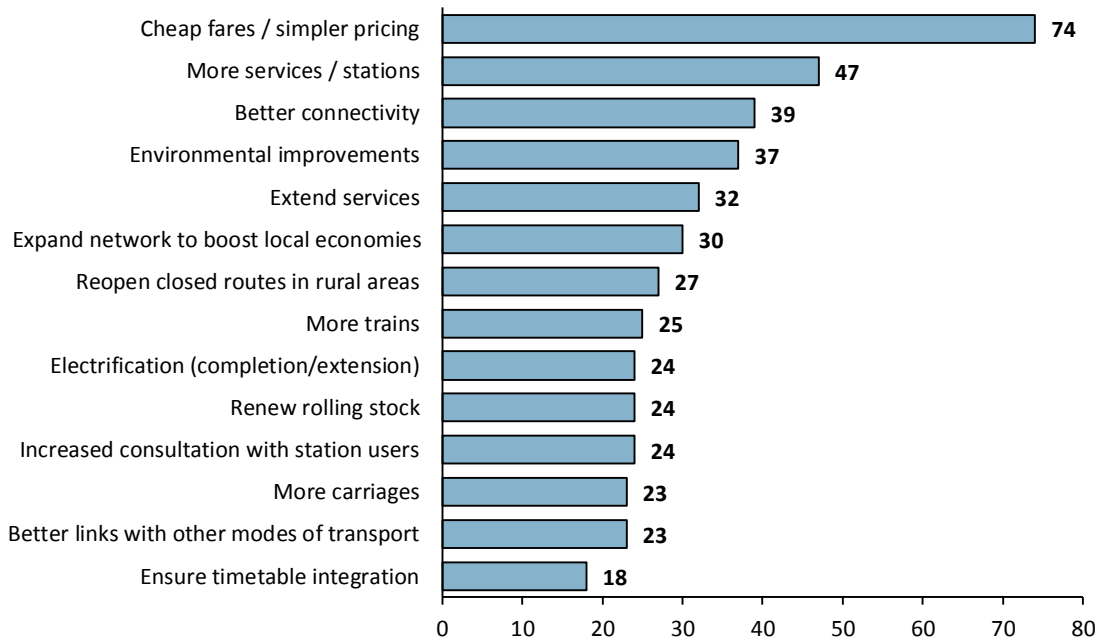
Figure A.5: Number of comments provided by respondents in reaction to proposed franchise objectives



Are there any priorities you would like to change or add? [If so], why?

A.15 Respondents were invited to indicate if there were any priorities they wished to change or add. 945 comments were drawn from responses to this question. We have grouped these responses into categories and presented the 15 most common categories in **Figure A.6**.

Figure A.6: Number of comments proposing additions or alterations to priorities



A.16 Most of the responses to this question could be aligned with the 10 franchise objectives provided in the Consultation Document. We have provided a summary of the comments made, and their relation to each franchise objective, below.

Provide safe, punctual and reliable services

A.17 Reliable and punctual services were a key focus of many responses. As this aspiration is covered by the franchise objective, it has not been displayed in **Figure A.6**. Approximately 10% of these responses highlighted the recent engineering works that have led to a decline in reliability and performance of Great Western rail services. Respondents also highlighted the need for more frequent services and more stops while emphasising the importance of safe services.

Focus on the needs of the travelling public

A.18 Comments focussed on reducing fares and the need for a simpler pricing system. Improved refund processes were mentioned and e-ticketing services were suggested. There were requests for more trains, services with more carriages and a focus on passenger comfort. Accessibility was a key theme with respondents commenting on disabled access and bicycle provision at stations. Some responses suggested introduction of an objective on Wi-Fi provision, noting that on-board Wi-Fi

is currently sporadic. Many respondents, particularly business travellers, commented that they cannot rely on existing Wi-Fi because of the poor mobile connectivity and significant gaps in mobile signal along some Great Western routes.

Maximise the benefits for passengers from the current transformational investment

A.19 There were very few responses which corresponded to this objective, with some individuals asking for investment in new rolling stock to modernise the fleet. Passengers felt new trains would improve reliability across the network. Some respondents expressed concerns that, under the current franchising model, train operators place too much focus on shareholder needs and would prefer, instead, to change to a public ownership model to push the emphasis back onto the passenger.

Maximise the contribution of the railway to driving local and regional economic growth

A.20 Responses were supportive of this objective, with additional comments suggesting expanding the network into new areas to help local economies. Some respondents requested improved links to rural areas (e.g. West Dorset, North Devon) and coastal communities (e.g. Weymouth and Minehead). Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships commented on the general need to focus on linking communities and enhance (or at the very least, maintain) connectivity within their areas and between their areas and other parts of the country. Some of these respondents also requested specific service frequency improvements.

Be a responsible employer who invests in the welfare and the development of its workforce

A.21 Respondents were very supportive of this objective and highlighted the importance of training and staff presence on the network. The Trade Unions that responded to this consultation expressed views on this objective. All stressed the importance of staff visibility across the network to ensure passengers feel safe and supported. One Trade Union commented that additional station staff should be considered at more stations on the network. In addition, they emphasised the role of the operator in promoting a healthy work-life balance and highlighted training provisions for passenger facing staff to improve passenger satisfaction. Another respondent suggested several commitments that should be enshrined within the franchise contract, including:

- The franchisee should avoid outsourcing and, instead, maintain all work in-house;
- All employees should be paid the Living Wage or London Living Wage, where applicable; and,
- There should be a guarantee of no compulsory redundancies.

Strengthen the relationship between the railway and the communities it serves

A.22 There were very few comments relating to this objective from the general public, but a number from Community Rail Partnerships and industry bodies. Several Community Rail Partnerships asked for a greater focus on providing an integrated transport network that improves inter and intra-modal connections. Some highlighted

the need to improve timetabling to facilitate easier interchanges and shorter end-to-end journeys. One respondent highlighted the role rail can play, with other transport models, to promote healthy modes of transport (such as cycling and walking). Several respondents expressed concern that the link between rail, housing growth and wider societal benefit was not fully captured by this objective.

Continue to improve the environmental performance of the railway and support wider environmental objectives

A.23 Some respondents expressed strong support for environmental improvements. There were some comments requesting that the current electrification programme be completed (or, indeed, extended), emphasising the environmental benefits of this network enhancement. Some members of the Peninsula Rail Task Force requested infrastructure improvements to increase resilience to extreme weather conditions. Some industry bodies and Local Authorities expressed similar opinions about the railway's resilience.

Develop close collaborative working with Network Rail and other partners

A.24 While this objective drew few comments, some respondents expressed strong (negative) opinions about collaboration with the Western Zone. Four Local Authorities suggested better communication to encourage future programmes and deliver a more integrated transport system.

Work with the government and other agencies to support the development and delivery of other major rail investment schemes

A.25 Some respondents urged the Great Western rail franchisee to reopen closed routes – these are covered in more detail in Chapter 3. Others commented on the need to upgrade signalling and infrastructure on the Great Western routes. There was support from some Local Enterprise Partnerships in relation to this objective.

Operate efficiently, providing best value for taxpayers' and passengers' money.

A.26 Several responses to this priority requested renewal of rolling stock to improve the efficiency of passenger service operations and deliver better value for money for the passenger. Simpler fares structures and refunds for poor performance were mentioned. There were also broad suggestions that the franchise reduces its overhead costs, but no specific suggestions as to how this could be accomplished, other than individuals stating that splitting the franchise and transferring lines would increase costs.

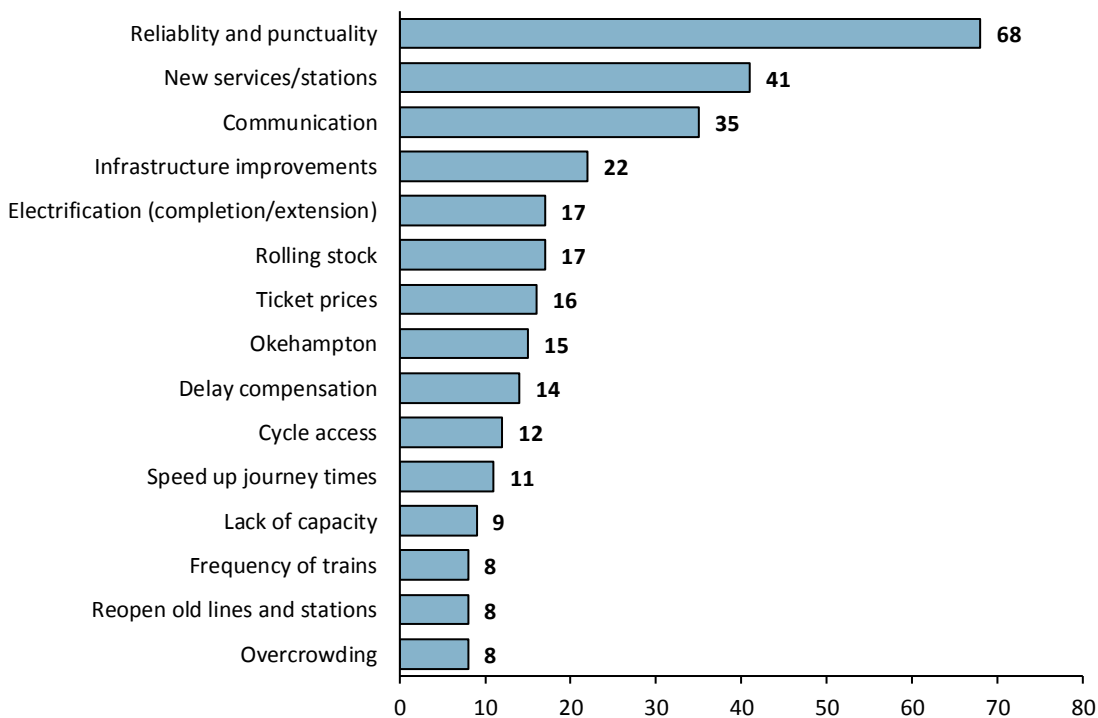
Consultation Question 18

Are there any other priorities you would wish to see addressed [in the next Great Western rail franchise]?

A.27 At the end of the Consultation Document, in Question 18, respondents were invited to highlight any other initiative they would like the future franchise to prioritise. Respondents provided 448 comments on this. The responses to this question align closely to those in provided Question 1, so analysis of the responses to Question 18 is presented here.

A.28 The key themes drawn from the responses to this question focus on passenger satisfaction, value for money, communication and reliability. Some respondents expressed a wish to see a reduction in crowding and better accessibility at stations. Two potential new services were mentioned as priority additions to the network: Taunton-Minehead and a new route between Exeter and Plymouth via Okehampton, Tavistock and Bere Alston. Many of the responses to this question appear to have been driven by co-ordinated campaigns. A summary of the 15 most cited themes/initiatives is provided in Figure A.7.

Figure A.7: Number of comments relating to other priorities to be addressed



A.29 While there is clearly a lot of overlap in the responses to Question 1 and Question 18, a small number of priorities are highlighted in **Figure A.7** that were less commonly cited in responses to Question 1. This includes communication and information sharing with passengers, infrastructure improvements and new stations/lines/services.

Which of the priorities, detailed in Chapter 4 of the Consultation Document, do you think should be pursued most urgently in the period between 2020 and 2022?

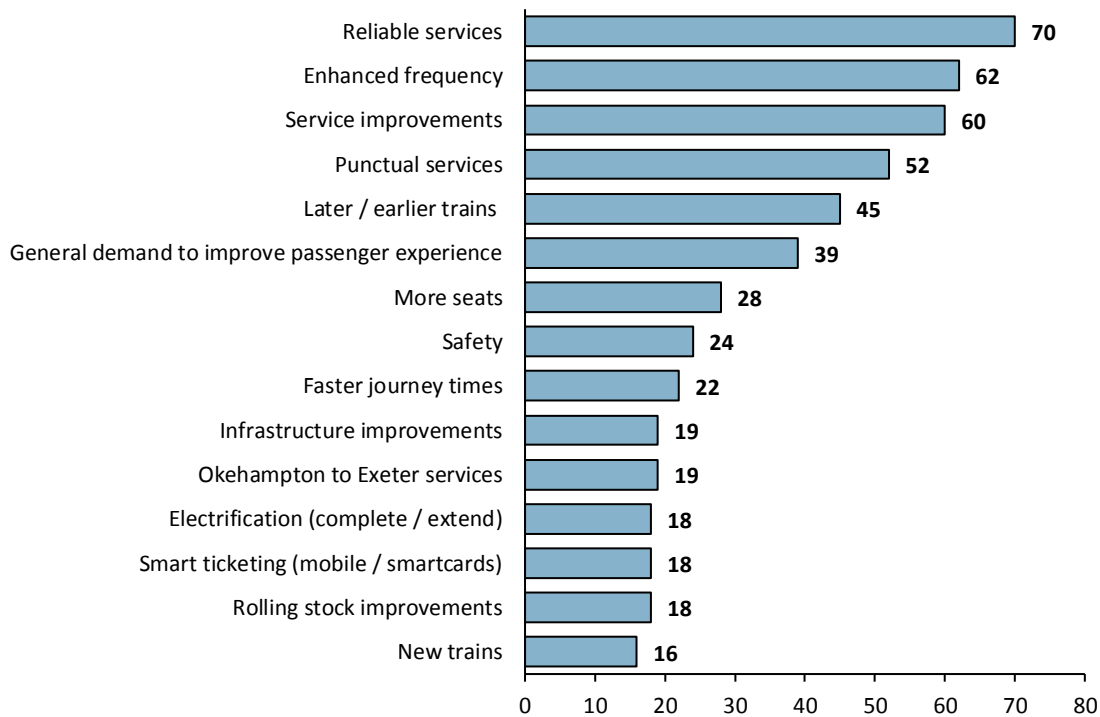
A.30 Chapter 4 of the Consultation Document listed several priorities relating to:

- Future train service and timetable development;
- Rolling stock;
- Passenger experience and stakeholder engagement;
- Understanding the needs of passengers with disabilities;
- Stations;
- Fares, ticketing and marketing;
- Community Rail Partnerships;
- Investing in the workforce and wider industry skills; and
- Environmental impact.

A.31 Respondents were invited to identify which of the priorities described in Chapter 4 of the Consultation Document should be pursued most urgently between 2020 and 2022. 685 comments were drawn from responses to the question, which are summarised in **Figure A.8**.

A.32 Most responses focussed on reliability and passenger comfort. Other issues raised include infrastructure and rolling stock improvements, electrification and station re-openings. Several responses described a general desire for “service improvements”, while others identified specific factors which should be improved. In this case, we have presented the general responses as a distinct category so as not to lose the detail of other responses.

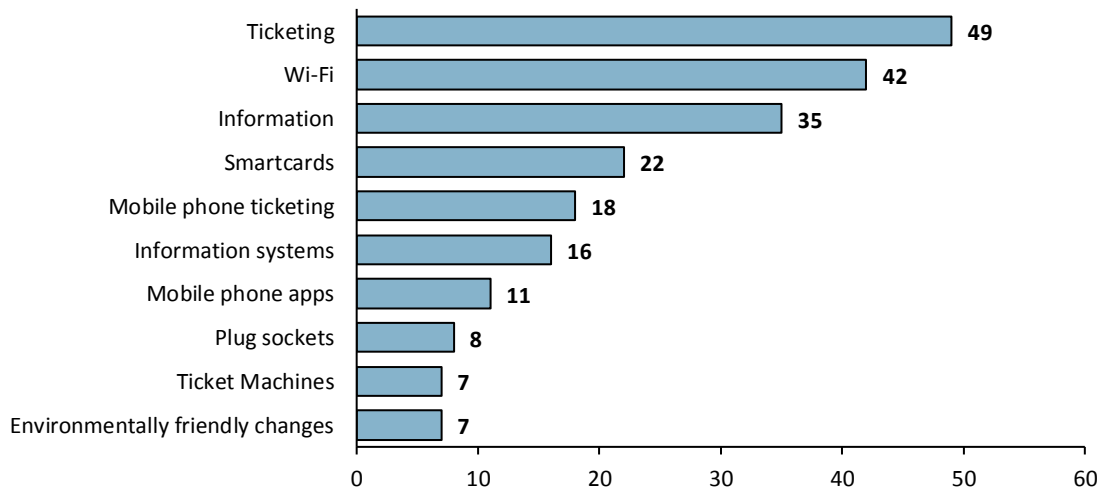
Figure A.8: Number of comments relating to the most urgent priorities detailed in the Consultation Document



What initiatives not currently offered can ... be provided through improved technology to meet the changing requirements of passengers?

A.33 406 comments were drawn from responses to this question. The responses were wide reaching. The most common theme raised was around ticketing related technology, information sharing platforms, Wi-Fi connectivity and charging points.

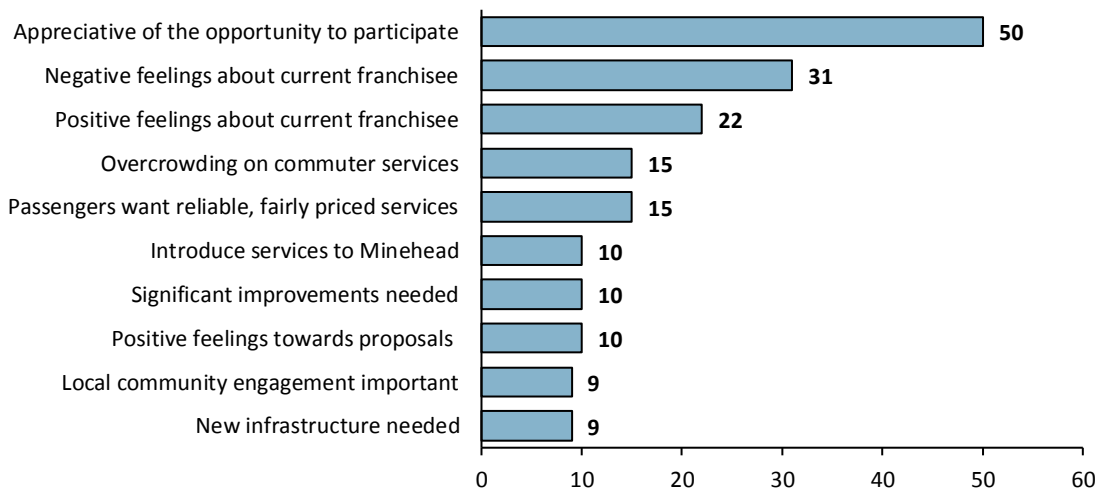
Figure A.9: Number of comments in relation to technological initiatives



Do you have any other comments?

A.34 484 comments were drawn from responses to the question. Many respondents used this question to restate opinions that were relevant to other questions. Some respondents took this opportunity to express their general feelings about the Great Western rail franchise, with slightly more respondents stating their dissatisfaction than those who stated satisfaction. The responses to this question were broad and covered areas such as service reliability, fares, crowding, service improvements and community engagement. The Minehead-Taunton route was highlighted by several respondents, who wish to see a regular train service on this route to serve the West Somerset district.

Figure A.10: Other comments



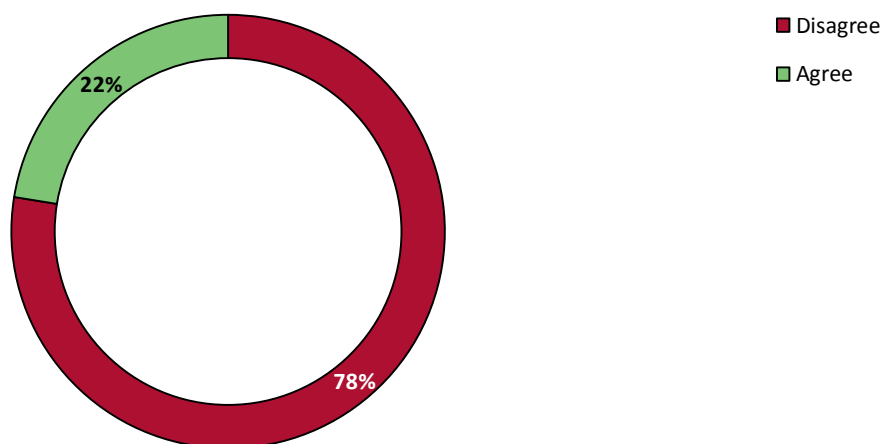
Franchise Structure

Consultation Question 2

Do you agree or disagree with the proposals outlined for splitting the Great Western rail franchise into smaller franchises?

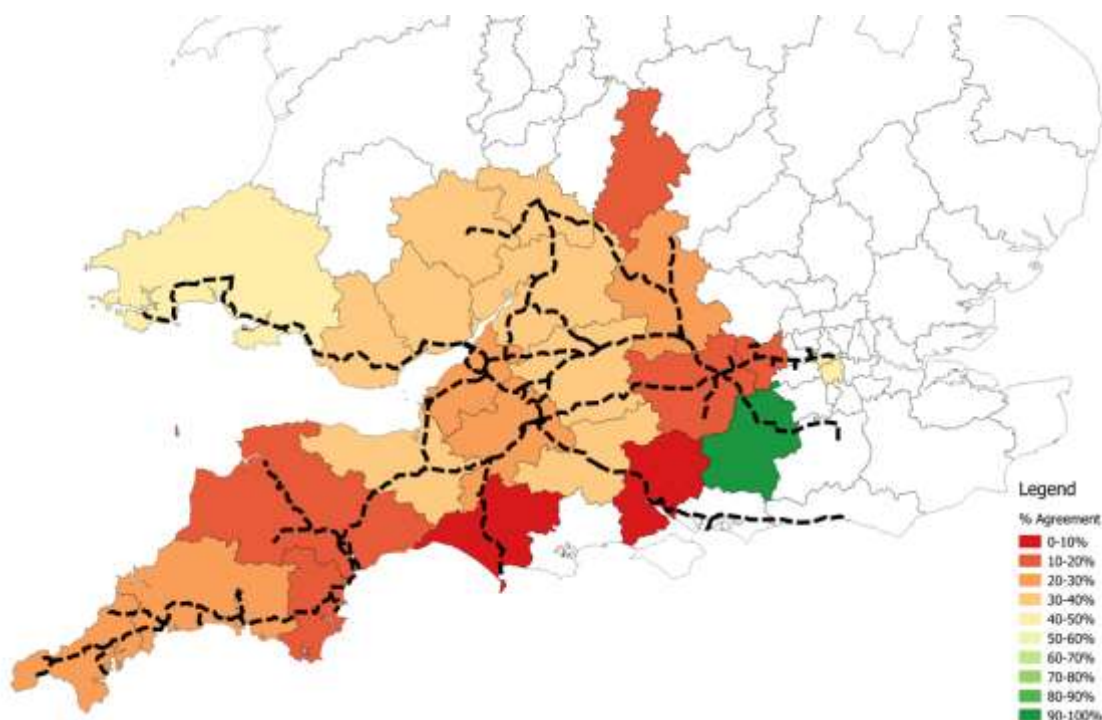
A.35 The consultation invited views on a proposal to split the Great Western rail franchise into two or more smaller franchises. The Department set out the advantages and disadvantages of this change in the Consultation Document. It also provided an example of how a future Great Western rail franchise might be split, whereby “West” service groups and High Speed services serving the South West Peninsula would form one franchise, and the remaining High Speed and Thames Valley services would form a second franchise. Respondents were invited to explicitly state whether they agreed or disagreed with this proposal, and to set out their reasons for their view. As shown in **Figure A.11**, most respondents indicated that they did not agree with proposals to split the Great Western rail franchise.

Figure A.11: Should the Great Western rail franchise be split into smaller franchises (excluding “no opinion”)?



A.36 We were interested in understanding if there were geographical variations in responses to this question. Just under 62% of respondents to the Great Western consultation provided their postcode. This enabled us to analyse responses by postcode area, which are shown in **Figure A.12**. For statistical reasons, postal codes with fewer than five respondents were removed from this analysis. The only area to indicate a balance of responses in favour of splitting was the Guildford postcode (which had five respondents).

Figure A.12: Q2a. Should the Great Western rail franchise be split into smaller franchises (% agreement by postcode areas with more than five responses)?

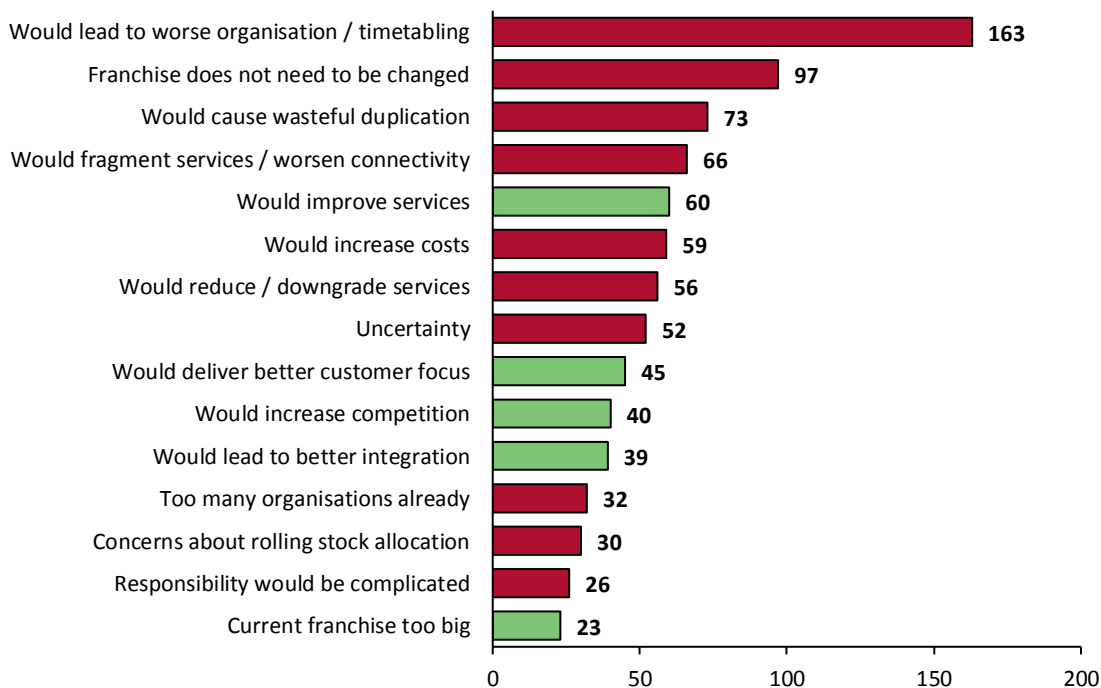


Why [do you agree/disagree with proposals to split the Great Western rail franchise]?

A.37 1,065 comments were drawn from the responses to this question. These included both positive and negative responses, although most were in opposition to splitting the franchise.

A.38 **Figure A.13** shows the responses, split by supportive and opposing comments. Respondents cited a wide range of concerns about splitting the franchise. These concerns included timetabling, cost, uncertainty, risk of downgrading services, fragmentation, and rolling stock allocation. Conversely, supporters of the proposals believed it would improve services and, due in part to competitive pressures, there would be a greater focus on customer service. Some respondents suggested that it should be possible to achieve the intended purpose of the proposed split – i.e. maximise the focus on the needs of local communities across a wide area – in a less disruptive way. Some respondents suggested that greater decentralisation of decision-making within the franchise, using the resources the operator already dedicates to stakeholder engagement, could be a better approach.

Figure A.13: Top 15 reasons cited by respondents for opposing/supporting splitting the Great Western franchise



Consultation Question 3

Do you agree or disagree with the options outlined [in the Consultation Document] for i) transferring Greenford branch services to the Chiltern franchise and ii) transferring the existing Brighton-Southampton portion of the current Great Western Bristol-Brighton service to Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise?

A.39 Respondents were asked if they supported two further remapping proposals. The first proposal would involve transferring the Greenford branch service – a diesel service that operates between Greenford and West Ealing in London – from the Great Western rail franchise to the Chiltern franchise. The second proposal would involve cutting back the current occasional Great Western Bristol-Brighton service to Southampton and transferring the Brighton-Southampton portion to the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise.

Greenford Branch service remapping proposal

A.40 Most of the responses received for this proposal expressed “No opinion”. Those who did express an opinion were generally supportive of the proposal, as shown in **Figure A.14**. A further 341 comments were drawn from the responses to this question. The most commonly cited reasons are shown in **Figure A.15**.

A.41 The reasons given in support of the proposal focussed on resourcing and the capacity of Chiltern (as a diesel operator) to operate these services better than Great Western. Some respondents expressed the view that the Greenford branch should be operated by Transport for London as part of the London Overground network or as part of Crossrail.

Figure A.14: Should the Greenford Branch service be transferred to the Chiltern franchisee? (excluding “no opinion”)

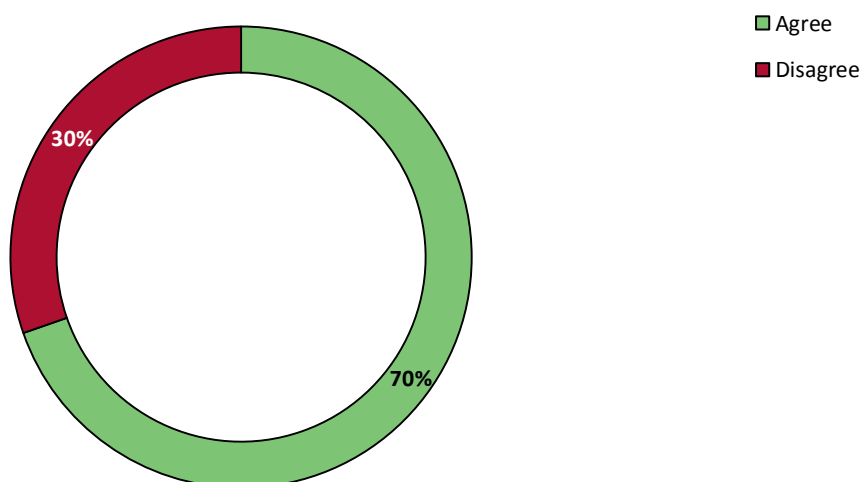
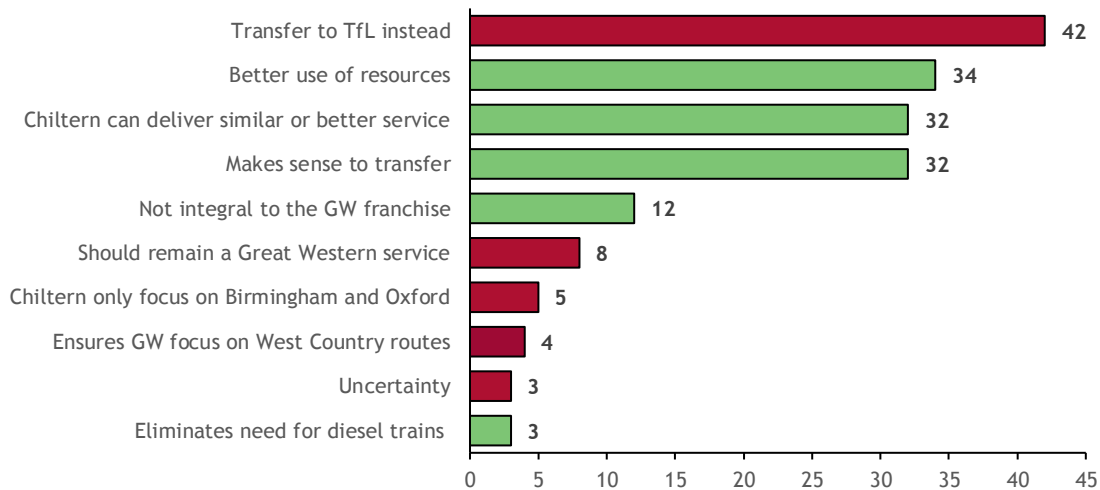


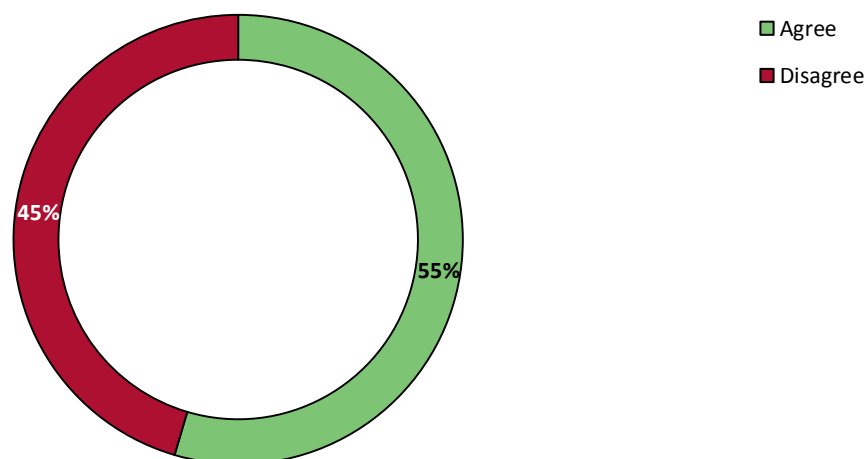
Figure A.15: Top ten reasons for supporting (green) or opposing (red) the Greenford Branch service transfer



Brighton service remapping proposal

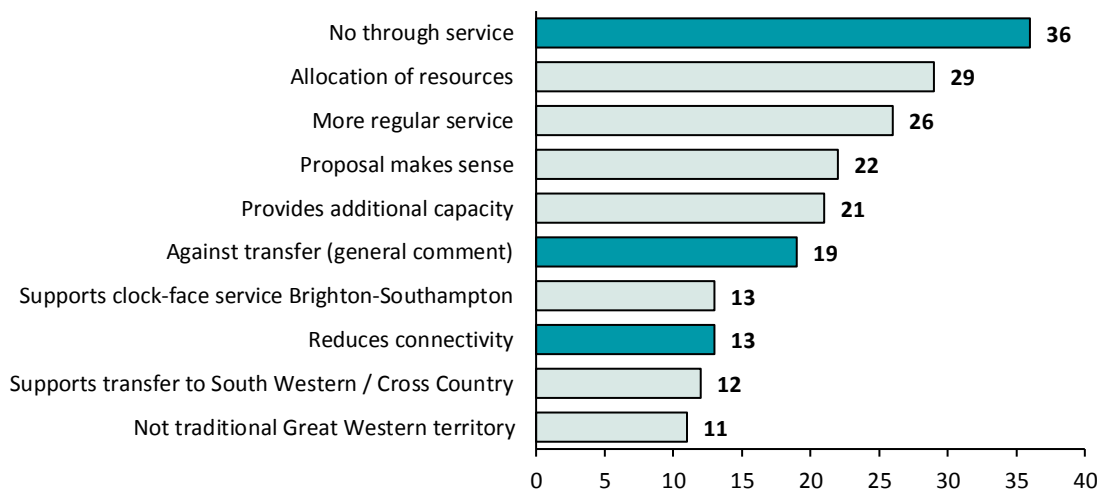
A.42 Similarly, most of the responses to this proposal expressed “No opinion”, largely because the route was outside their geographic area of interest. Those who did respond to this question were split, with slightly more in agreement than disagreement, as shown in **Figure A.16**.

Figure A.16: Should Brighton-Southampton services transfer to the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern? (excluding “no opinion”)



A.43 458 comments were drawn from the responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.17**. Approximately 40% of comments supported the proposal, 26% opposed the proposal, and the remaining 34% were neutral. Reasons given in support of the transfer focussed on the view that the transfer would result in improvements in frequency and capacity of services. Opposition was centred on the view that the transfer of services would result in a reduction in through services and greater inconvenience arising from the need to change trains at locations such as Southampton or Fareham. Other comments included suggestions that the line be transferred to the South Western or Cross Country franchises, in addition to comments about cost and requests for nationalisation.

Figure A.17: Reasons for supporting (green) or opposing (red) the Brighton-Southampton service transfer



What other locations or routes do you think should be considered for adding to the franchise or transferring to another franchise? Why?

A.44 Respondents were invited to recommend locations or routes that could be added to a future Great Western rail franchise or transferred to another franchise.

Adding to the franchise

A.45 401 suggestions were made from responses to this question, covering 147 different routes and 63 different stations. There was considerable overlap in some suggestions and we have combined some responses where this overlap was significant. A list of the top ten routes suggested by respondents is provided in **Table 5.2**. A map showing the most cited routes in responses to both questions is provided in **Figure A.18**.

Figure A.18: Map showing most cited routes for adding to (green) or removing from (red) the GW Franchise

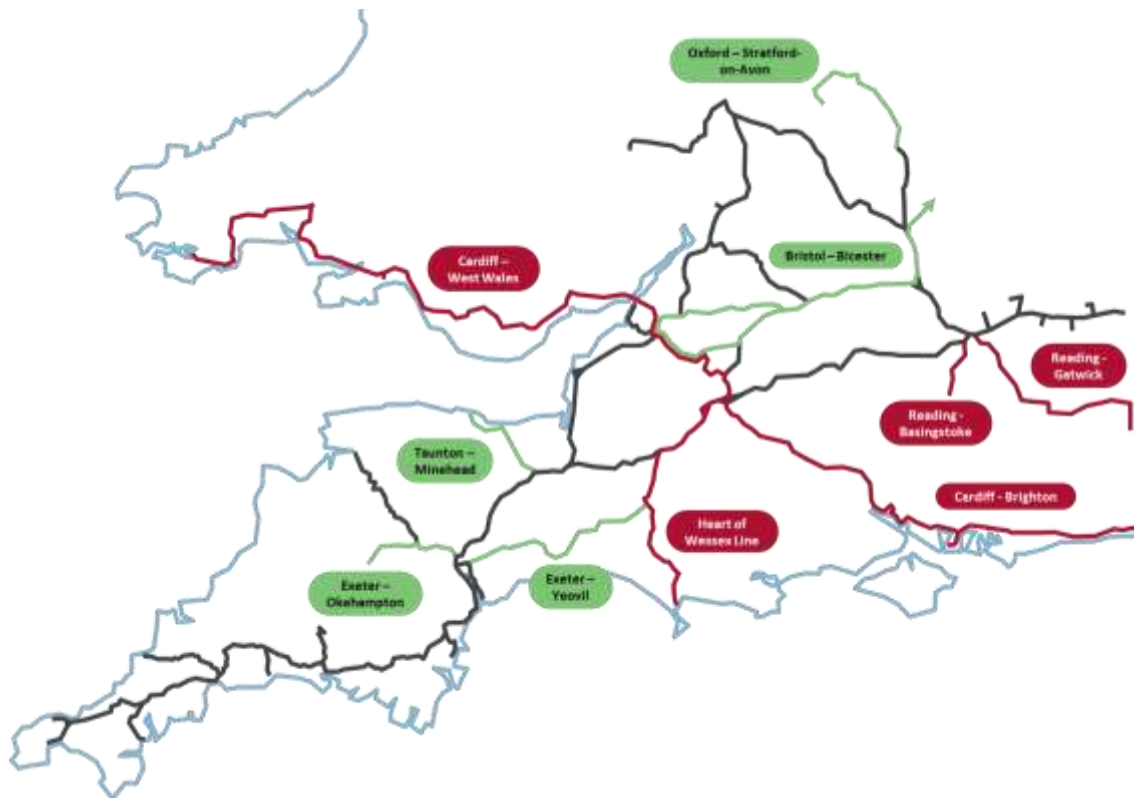


Table 4.2: Top ten routes suggested for consideration for adding to the Great Western rail franchise

Rank	Routes	Responses
1	Okehampton – Exeter	24
2	Minehead – Taunton	21
3	Exeter – Cranbrook – Honiton – Axminster	13
4	Bristol – Swindon – Oxford – Bicester	8
4	London – Oxford – Banbury – Stratford-upon-Avon	8
6	Exeter – Yeovil – Weymouth – Bournemouth	4
7	Crossrail Route	3
8	Honeybourne – Long Marston	3
9	Torbay – Newton Abbot – Plymouth	3
10	Cardiff – Cheltenham	2
10	Waterloo – Exeter	2
10	Paignton – Kingswear	2
10	Swindon – Westbury	2
	Other	133

A.46 While the responses to this question were very varied, there were some common themes and routes, including:

- Stations or routes not currently served (or regularly served) by any franchised rail operator such as Okehampton-Exeter and Minehead-Taunton;
- Some services currently operated by the Cross Country and South Western franchisees, notably West of England routes in the Exeter area;
- Direct routes between Oxford and the West of England (via Didcot), notably Bristol-Swindon-Didcot-Oxford, which could exploit the future (planned) East-West Railway;
- Direct services between London, Oxford and Stratford-upon-Avon, which would improve connectivity between Stratford-upon-Avon and other notable tourist destinations including London, Oxford and Windsor (via Slough); and
- Proposed new stations, such as Devizes Parkway and Portishead.

Transferring from the franchise

A.47 117 suggestions were drawn from responses to this question and are provided in **Table A.3**. The most cited routes were the Reading-Gatwick (North Downs Line), Reading-Basingstoke, and Bristol-Weymouth (Heart of Wessex) routes. Some respondents cited poor performance on these routes, while others believe the geography of these routes sit better with other franchises.

Table A.3: Top routes suggested for consideration for transferring to another franchise

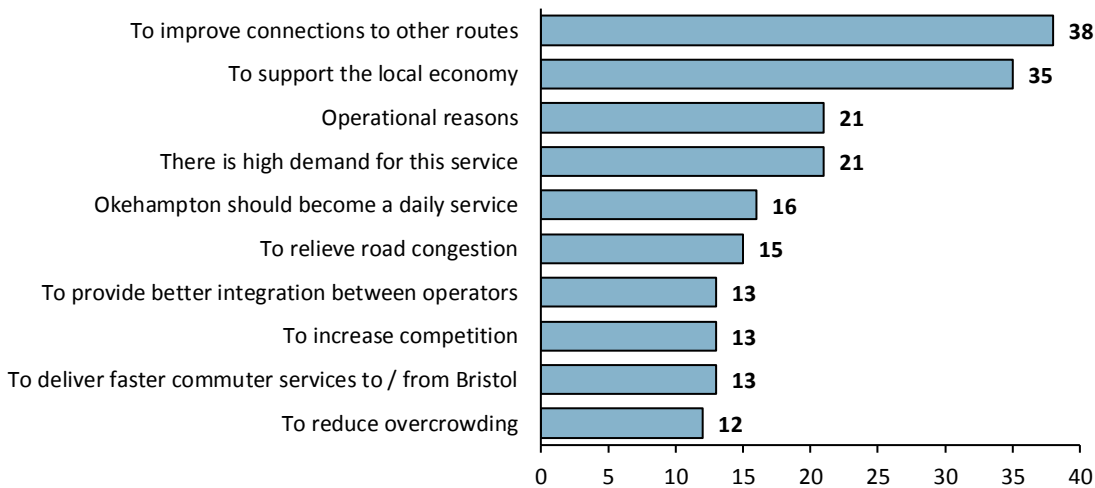
Rank	Routes	Responses
1	Reading – Gatwick (North Downs Line)	43
2	Cardiff – Bristol – Southampton – Portsmouth	9
3	Reading – Basingstoke	9
4	Bristol – Yeovil – Weymouth (Heart of Wessex Line)	8
5	Cardiff – Swansea – West Wales	6
6	Oxford – Banbury	5
7	Cornwall services	4
8	Cotswold services	3
9	Henley branch	2
9	Reading – London (local services)	2
9	Windsor branch	2
	Other	65

A.48 Four Members of Parliament, who responded on behalf of their constituents, expressed the view that the Heart of Wessex route should be transferred to South Western franchise. This view was supported by a councillor and several other consultation respondents.

Reasons for remapping

A.49 **Figure A.19** presents the reasons given for adding/removing routes and stations from/to the Great Western rail franchise. This is based on 534 comments, which were drawn from responses to both elements of this question. These covered a wide range of reasons, including connectivity, local economic growth and demand.

Figure A.19: Top ten reasons cited in support for additions to or transfers from the Great Western rail franchise



Collaboration and Development

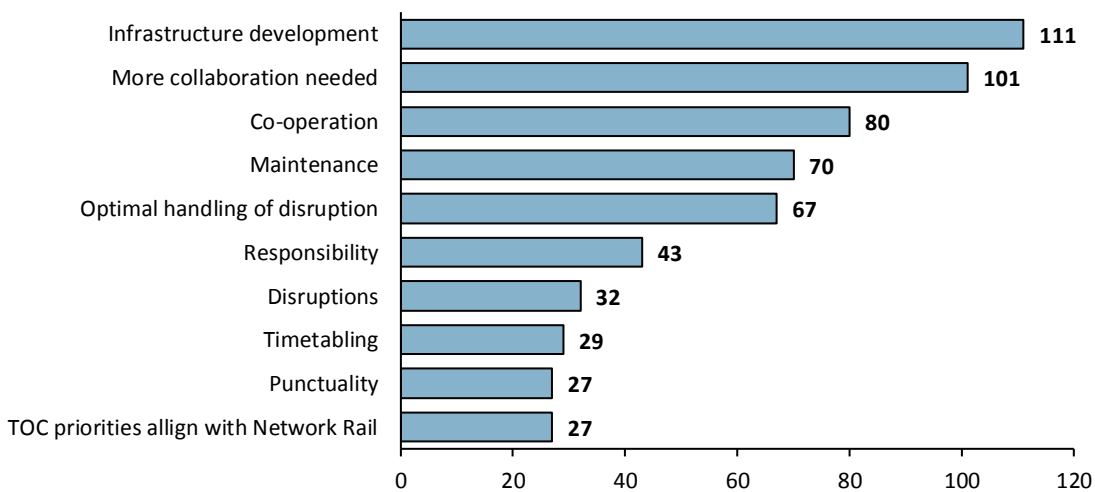
Consultation Question 4

What do you think are the main challenges that might be addressed through greater co-ordination and integration between the train operator and Network Rail?

A.50 Respondents were invited to comment on co-ordination and integration between the Great Western rail franchisee and Network Rail. 870 comments were drawn from the responses to this question and are summarised in Figure 4.1. The comments focussed on responsibility for disruption and collaboration between Network Rail and train operators in relation to infrastructure and maintenance. Other comments were related to the impact of poorly managed infrastructure, leading to disruption and poor reliability. Many respondents agreed there is a need for more collaboration between the train operator and Network Rail, but others voiced concerns that the priorities of operators (and by implication, their passengers) are not always aligned with those of Network Rail. Some comments stressed the need for more communication with passengers and local communities to prioritise the needs of the travelling public.

A.51 Local Authorities expressed concerns about the challenges in collaborating with the operator and Network Rail to commit to and deliver smaller rail enhancement schemes, such as platform lengthening or minor signalling alterations. These respondents note that, under current arrangements, which some respondents described as “fragmented”, it can be challenging for scheme promoters to identify a single point of contact within the industry. Some respondents expressed the view that improving coordination would enable such schemes to progress faster and ultimately benefit passengers on the network faster.

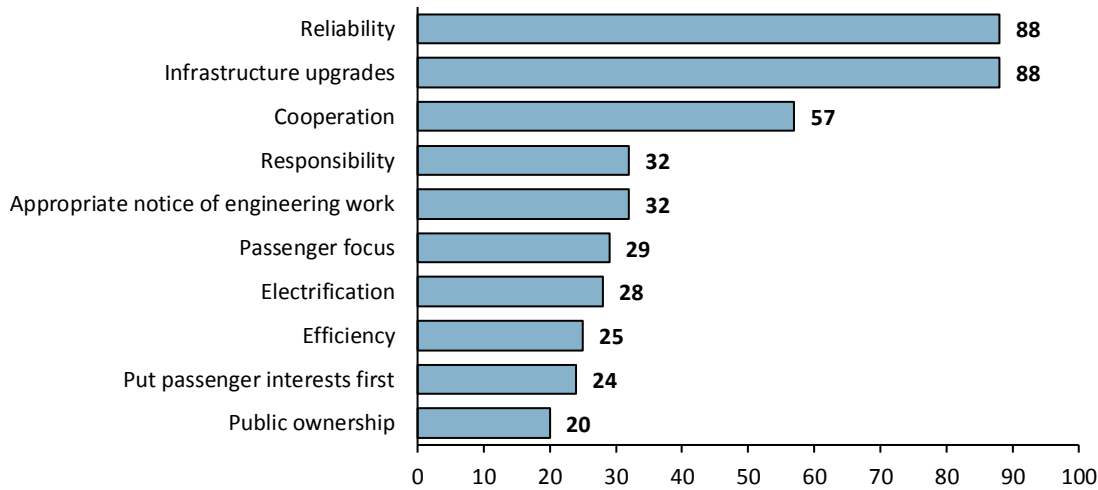
Figure A.20: Top ten challenges, cited by respondents, to be addressed through greater co-ordination between the train operator and Network Rail



What do you think should be the future priorities for strengthened partnership working between the franchise operator and Network Rail?

A.52 780 comments were drawn from the responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.21**. The comments were similar to those provided in response to the question on challenges to be addressed by improving co-operation, albeit more specific. In particular, there were requests for improved prior notice of engineering works and improved communication during service disruption. Additional priorities identified by respondents included ensuring the delivery of the electrification programme, placing greater emphasis on delivering a passenger focussed railway, and improving collaboration to improve station facilities and safety. Staff training, organisation and pay were also mentioned by some respondents. Respondents also suggested that an improved partnership should provide better provision for rail freight.

Figure A.21: Top ten future priorities for collaboration cited by respondents



Consultation Question 6

Are you promoting a scheme for a new station or line which has a realistic prospect of being funded? If so, please provide brief details.

A.53 650 comments were drawn from the responses to this question, citing over 40 different schemes. The top 20 schemes mentioned by respondents are listed in **Table A.4**.

A.54 Although most schemes refer to new stations, lines, or services, some comments related to specific station improvement schemes. Some comments referred to improving the frequency of services – these are described in more detail in **Table 5.10**. A summary of the schemes with a prospect of being funded most cited by respondents included in **Table A.4**.

A.55 Respondents who referenced schemes between Oxford and Swindon were primarily requesting a new service between these areas, with others asking for specific intermediate stations to be introduced (such as Wantage and Grove).

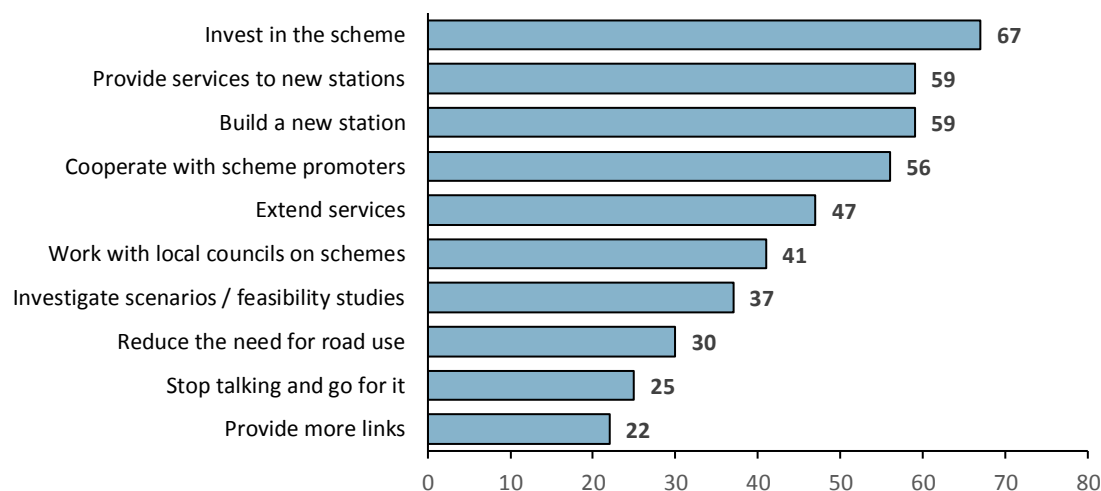
Table A.4: Top 20 schemes with a prospect of being funded cited by respondents

Rank	Schemes	Responses
1	Okehampton	62
2	MetroWest	55
3	Tavistock – Plymouth	44
4	Wilton Parkway station	41
5	Minehead – Taunton	34
6	Exeter stations	22
7	Devizes Parkway	19
8	North Cotswold Line Task Force	18
9	Devon Metro	16
10	Bourne End – High Wycombe	13
11	Corsham station	11
12	Somerton and Langport stations	10
12	Stratford – Honeybourne	10
12	Yeovil – Weymouth (hourly service)	10
15	Swindon – Oxford	9
15	Marsh Barton station	9
15	Portishead station	9
18	Royal Wootton Bassett station	8
19	Cullompton station	7
20	Swindon – Cheltenham branch line	6
20	Swansea Parkway station	6
	Other	231

What actions would you like the franchisee to undertake to support the development of this scheme?

A.56 611 comments were drawn from responses to this question, which are summarised in **Figure A.22**. Most were centred around cooperating with the teams proposing the schemes and to serve new stations if these are delivered. While financial assistance was the most common response, there were also requests to cooperate with local councils, to undertake feasibility studies and consultations, and to support the work of proposal teams through sharing data.

Figure A.22: Top ten actions respondents believe the franchisee should undertake



Train Service Improvements

Consultation Question 5

Which routes do you believe could benefit from improvements to train frequencies?

A.57 Respondents were asked to suggest routes that would benefit from a higher frequency train service. Responses to this question were very wide-ranging. In total, 2,149 comments mentioning 197 different stations or locations were drawn from responses to this question. The most common routes cited in the responses to this question are presented in **Table A.5**.

Table A.5: Stations and routes that could benefit from improved frequencies

Rank	Route	Responses
1	Thames Valley (London – Didcot / Branch Lines / Newbury / Basingstoke / Bedwyn)	280
2	Cardiff – Brighton / Portsmouth	222
3	Bristol Locals (including Avonmouth and Severn Beach)	220
4	Bristol – Weymouth (Heart of Wessex Line)	188
5	Devon and Cornwall local services (Tiverton – Penzance)	177
6	London – West of England	167
7	London – South Wales	144
8	North Cotswold Line (including London – Oxford)	141
9	Cardiff – Taunton / Weston-super-Mare	123
10	Swindon – Westbury	120
11	Devon and Cornwall branch lines	114
12	London – Bristol (including Swindon)	109
13	Bristol – Gloucester / Worcester / Malvern	100
14	London – Cheltenham Spa	60
15	Oxford locals (Didcot-Banbury)	60
16	New Routes (Taunton- Minehead, Exeter-Okehampton, etc)	19
17	Reading – Gatwick (North Downs Line)	18

A.58 The most mentioned routes largely belong to the Thames Valley (predominantly commuter) service group which is used most frequently by 12% of respondents. West service groups featured highly in responses correlating with 53% of respondents who use the services regularly. High Speed routes, which represent 30% of respondents, were less mentioned.

What times of the day or week are these improvements needed?

A.59 1,781 comments were drawn from this question and are summarised in **Figure A.23** and **Figure A.24**. The latter shows the responses broken down on an hourly basis across a 24-hour period. The day of the week when improvements are most needed, as identified by respondents, was “all days”. This may be explained by the high proportion of leisure travellers who responded to the consultation. Similarly, responses suggesting improved frequency of services around peak hours, in the morning and on weekdays are likely to be related to business and commuter travellers. In total, 203 respondents suggested service improvements are needed at weekends. Sundays drew around three times as many comments as Saturdays, implying that the frequency of Sunday services are most need of being improved. The specific hours of the day when improvements are most needed (as cited by respondents) broadly mirror the traditional peak hours. Very few respondents requested earlier services.

Figure A.23: Periods which require improved frequencies

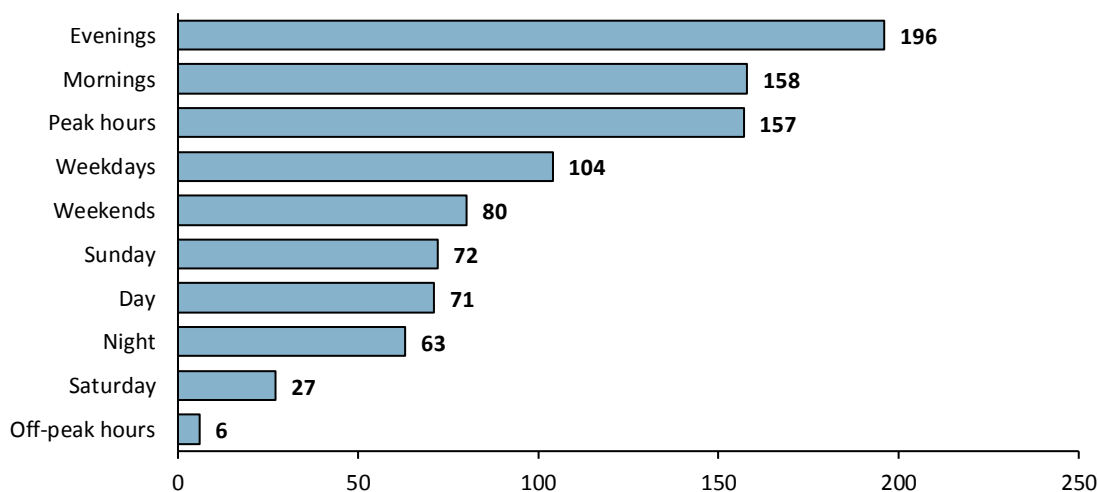
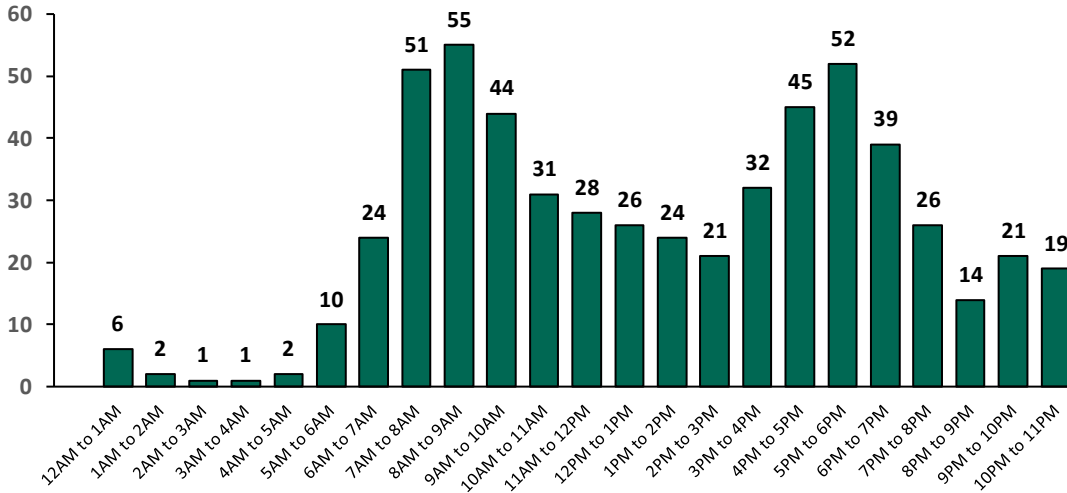


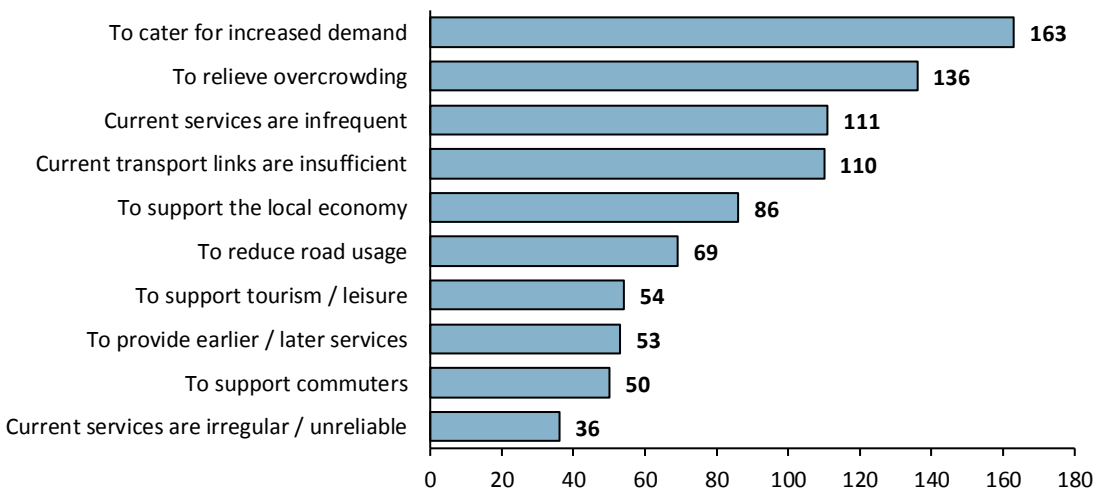
Figure A.24: Specific times that require improved frequencies



Why [are these train service frequency improvements needed]?

A.60 944 comments were drawn from responses to this part of the question and are summarised in **Figure A.25**. The main themes were around capacity, demand and service frequencies. Economic benefits and increasing the attractiveness of rail were also mentioned. Some respondents discussed their journey purpose in their responses. These respondents cited that frequency improvements were needed for both commuting and leisure purposes. We noticed a relatively high proportion of respondents who indicated their primary journey purpose is commuting both responded to this question and requested higher frequency services on their routes – suggesting that commuters may feel more strongly about increasing frequency of services than other passengers.

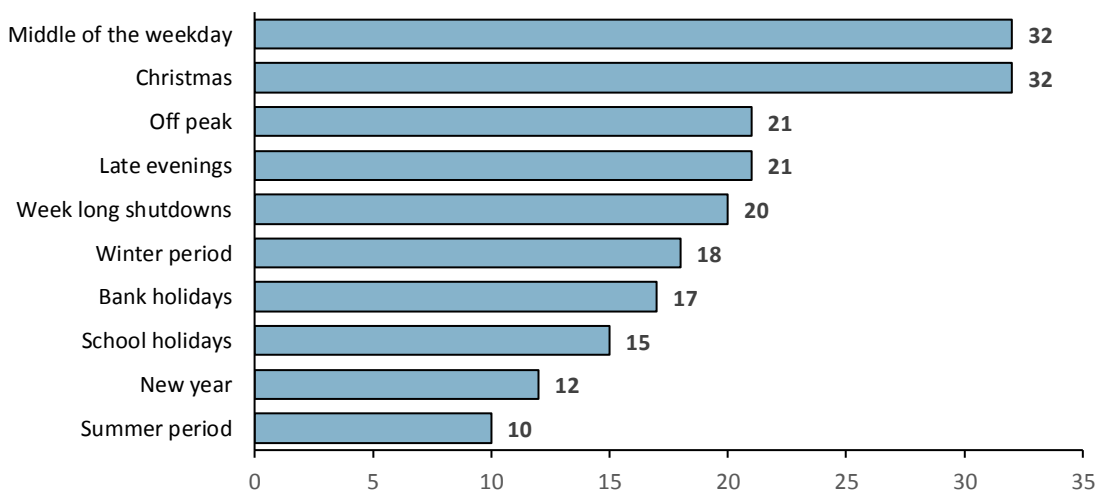
Figure A.25: Reasons for improved frequency of services



If the only way of achieving earlier first trains or later last trains was to curtail services at other times of the week or year so Network Rail can carry out essential maintenance, what times would you suggest?

A.61 509 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.26**. The most common response was to support overnight maintenance, which implied some acceptance that early and late services would be affected. Other respondents indicated that they preferred works to be carried out during weekends, Christmas, Bank Holidays or school holidays. Some people proposed week long shut downs of routes. Some respondents stressed the importance of running high quality bus replacement services during closures. Although the question asks about achieving earlier first trains, it should be noted that Figure A.2 suggests very few respondents are interested in increasing service frequencies before 6am. Some industry bodies and other stakeholders emphasised the importance of providing alternative rail services wherever possible (even if journey times are significantly longer), with high-quality bus as a last resort.

Figure A.26: Times to curtail services for maintenance

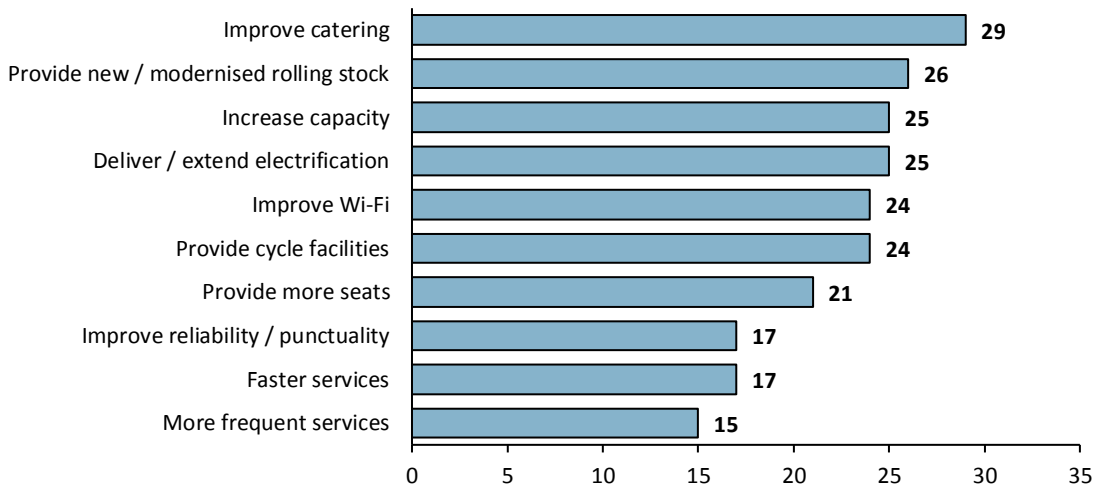


Consultation Question 10

What other train service enhancements do you believe should be considered for inclusion in the next franchise? Why?

A.62 707 comments were drawn from responses to this question, which are summarised in **Figure A.27**. The responses to this question were particularly wide ranging and included requests to improve catering, provide better quality of rolling stock, increase capacity/seating and deliver/extend electrification enhancements.

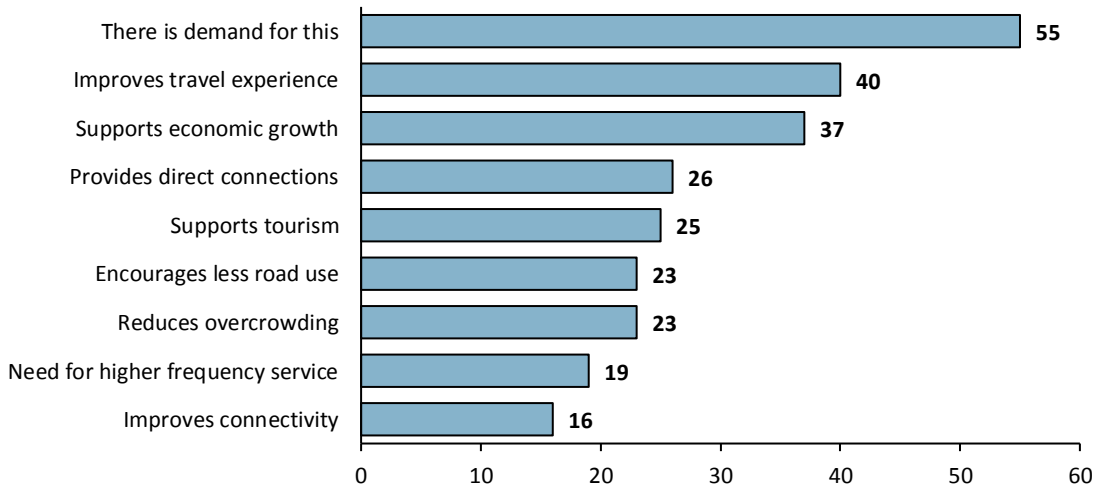
Figure A.27: Other train service enhancements for inclusion in next franchise



A.63 Many respondents used this question as an opportunity to reinforce their responses to Question 6 (promoting new schemes), including proposed new and improved services.

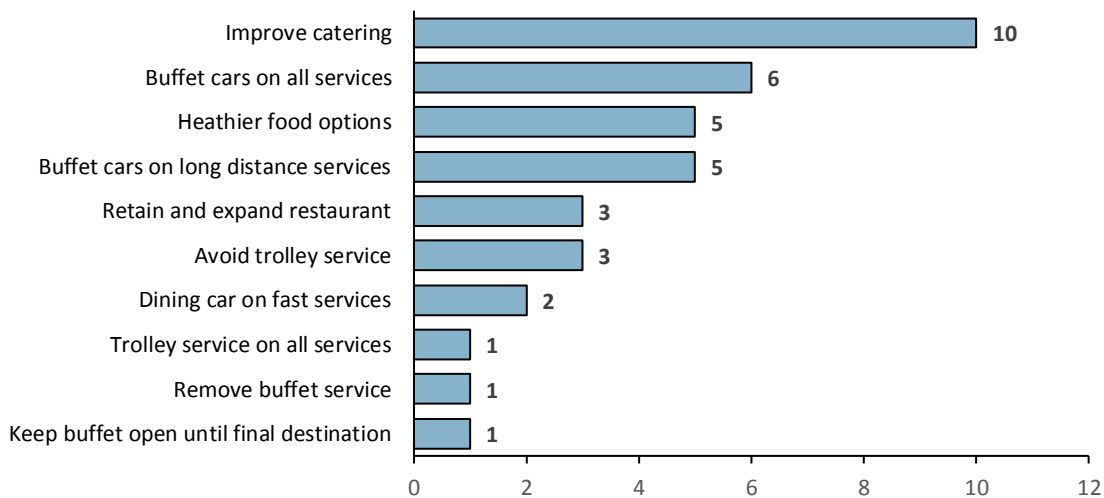
A.64 A summary of the reasons for needing the train service improvements described above is provided in **Figure A.28**.

Figure A.28: Top reasons for needing train service enhancements cited by respondents



A.65 Given the number of responses made about catering in **Figure A.27**, analysed these responses in more detail to determine, specifically, what catering improvements were requested. These are summarised in **Figure A.29**. The most common reason was a generic call to improve catering. More detailed suggestions recommended improvements to the catering offer and operating hours.

Figure A.29: Proposed catering service enhancements



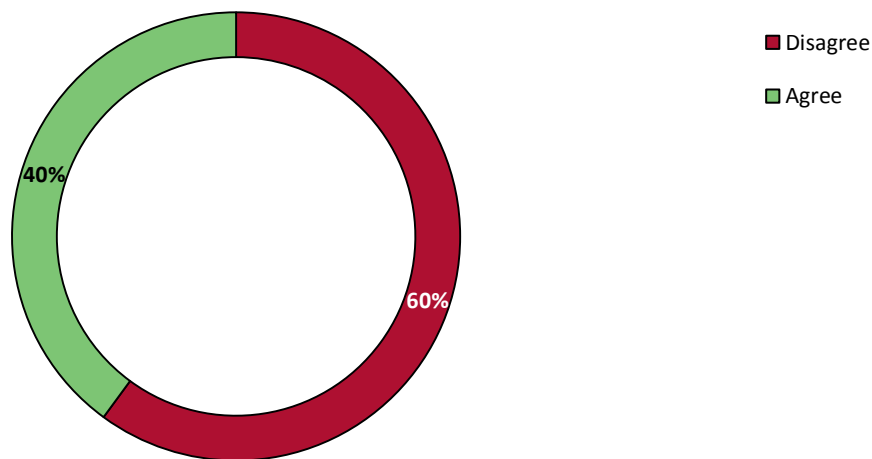
Direct and Stopping Services

Consultation Question 7

Do you agree or disagree with reducing journey times to destinations in the South West by reducing stops at intermediate stations?

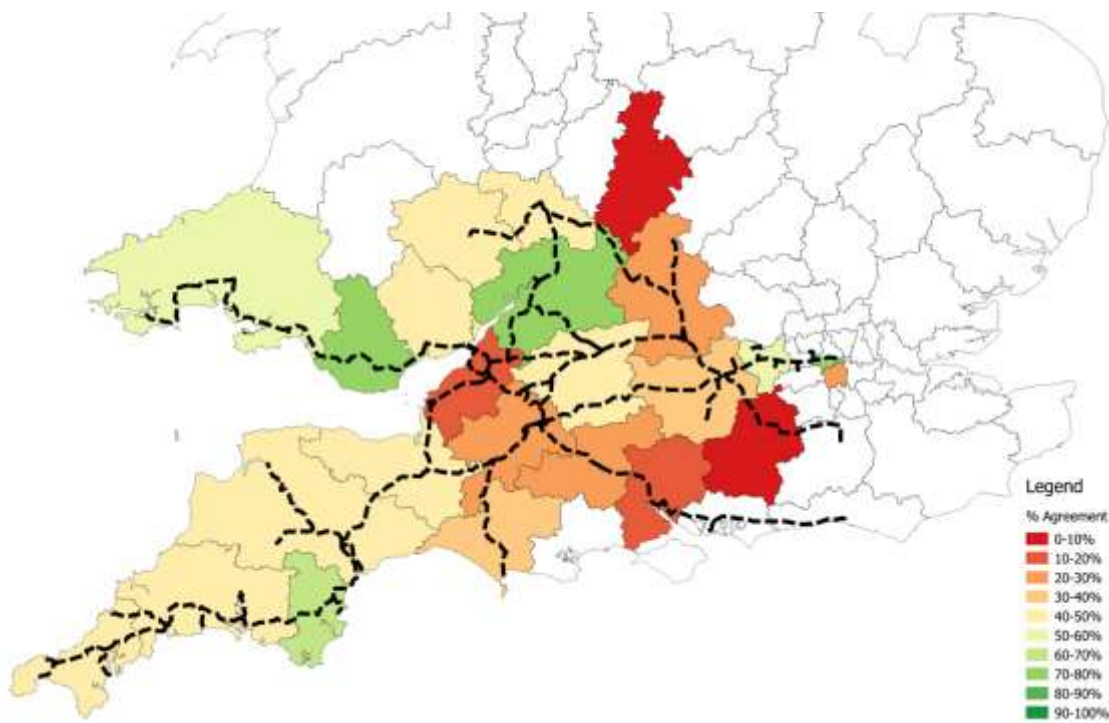
A.66 The consultation document highlighted the specific aspirations of the Peninsula Rail Task Force (comprising local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships across the South West peninsula) for faster journeys to and from London. It highlighted that one way of achieving faster long-distance journeys could be to reduce intermediate calls, but also noted that this would be detrimental to passengers wishing to board or alight at those intermediate stations. To help understand people's views about the relative importance of these competing considerations, respondents were asked if they would support improving journey times from London to the South West Peninsula by reducing the number of calls along the route. The response to this proposal was divided. As shown in **Figure A.30**, of those who responded, 40% of respondents support the proposal and 60% oppose it.

Figure A.30: Should stops at intermediate stations be reduced to reduce journey times?



A.67 We were interested in understanding if there were geographical variations in responses to this question. An analysis of responses by postcode area is shown in Figure 3.2. This shows there is slightly more support for this proposal in the South West Peninsula (Devon and Cornwall) than there is opposition. The areas expressing most support are in South Wales and Gloucestershire. Opposition to the proposal is strongest in Somerset, Surrey and Wiltshire.

Figure A.31: Should stops at intermediate stations be reduced to reduce journey times (by postcode area)?



Which services or stations would benefit or be disadvantaged by this approach? Why?

A.68 1,099 suggestions were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in by station **Table A.6** (services that would benefit) and **Table A.7** (services that would be disadvantaged).

Table A.6: Stations that would benefit from reducing stops at intermediate stations on long distance services

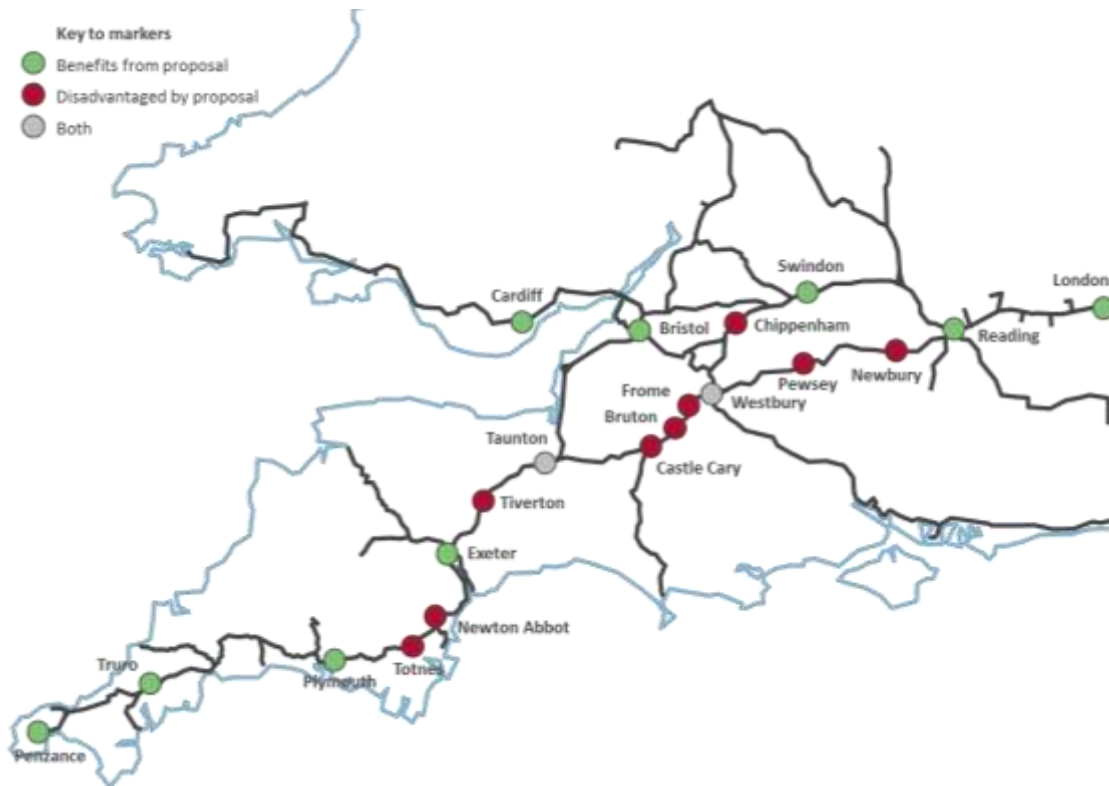
Rank	Stations that would benefit	Responses
1	London	69
2	Exeter	56
3	Plymouth	54
4	Penzance	32
5	Taunton	31
6	Reading	25
7	Bristol	21
8	Truro	14
9	Cardiff	12
10	Swindon	11
10	Westbury	11
	Other	173

Table A.7: Stations that would be disadvantaged by reducing stops at intermediate stations on long distance services

Rank	Stations that would disadvantaged	Responses
1	Castle Cary	38
2	Westbury	38
3	Pewsey	20
4	Tiverton Parkway	16
5	Ivybridge	16
6	Totnes	14
7	Frome	13
8	Chippenham	12
9	Taunton	11
10	Newbury	10
10	Newton Abbot	10
10	Bruton	10
	Other	252

A.69 We plotted the top ten most cited stations in **Table A.6** and **Table A.7** in **Figure A.32**. As expected, respondents perceive larger stations would benefit from this proposal, while smaller stations would be disadvantaged. Taunton and Westbury are cited as being stations which could benefit or be disadvantaged by removing intermediate stops to improve journey times to the South West.

Figure A.32: Location of key stations impacted by reducing stops at intermediate stations

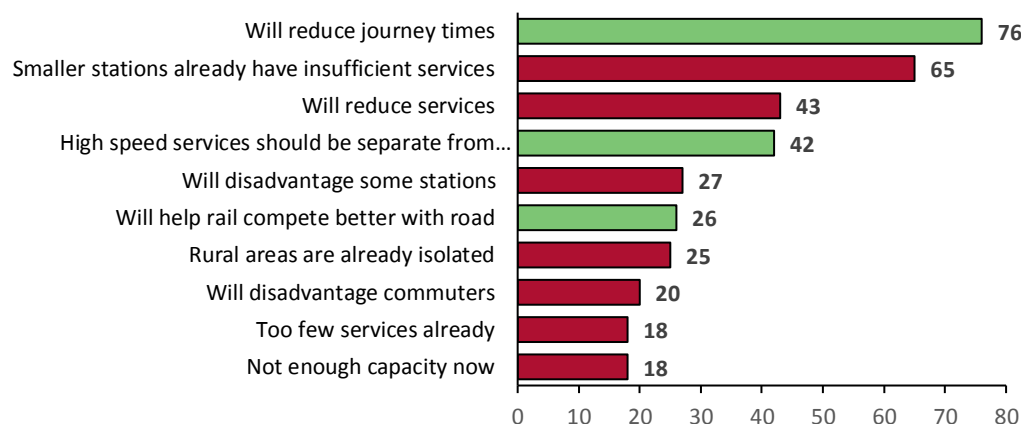


A.70 646 comments providing reasons in support of (shaded green) and against (shaded red) the proposal were drawn from responses to the second part of this question. These are summarised in **Figure A.33**. There were also some neutral comments, which are shown in grey. Many responses commented that reduced journey times would allow rail to compete better with the road network. Some respondents suggested that additional high-speed services should be introduced to provide passengers with a greater choice of services (an initiative that might also help reduce crowding).

A.71 On the contrary, many respondents commented that many smaller stations would be disadvantaged by this approach. Respondents were opposed to reducing the number of services at intermediate stops because rural areas are already isolated and reducing services could adversely impact tourism, causing negative effects on local economies. There was concern that this approach would increase reliance on private vehicles for commuting and, indeed, some respondents argued that more services were needed at these stations.

A.72 The stations most cited by respondents as likely to be disadvantaged by this proposal are intermediate stations in the South West Peninsula (e.g. Tiverton Parkway, Totnes, Newton Abbot) and stations on the Berks and Hants line between Reading and Taunton (e.g. Newbury, Westbury and Castle Cary). Respondents expressing concern about this proposal point out that these stations would experience reduced connectivity to the South West Peninsula as well as to London.

Figure A.33: Top ten reasons provided by respondents that stations will be benefit from (green) or be disadvantaged by (red) reducing stops at intermediate stations on long distance services



Are there any locations or routes elsewhere where it could be appropriate to reduce station stops to speed up long-distance journeys? Why?

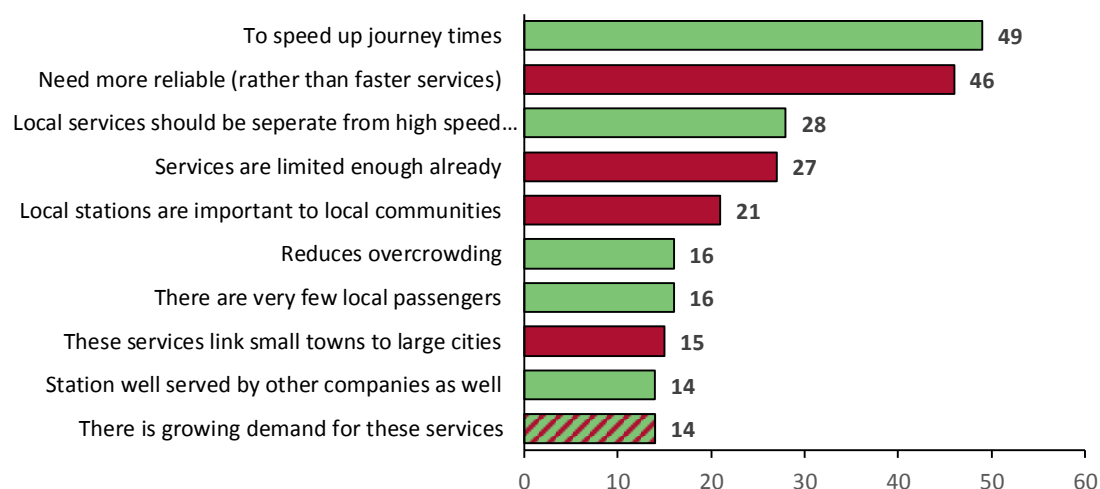
A.73 419 comments (citing 101 locations) were drawn from responses to this question, covering a wide geographical area. The top ten locations are listed in **Table A.8**. We have excluded terminating stations (e.g. London Paddington), which were identified by many respondents, from this table.

Table A.8: Stations and routes where respondents suggested it could be appropriate to remove intermediate station stops

Rank	Location	Responses
1	Reading	28
2	North Cotswolds line (smaller stations)	18
3	Didcot	14
4	Taunton	12
4	Castle Cary	12
5	Oxford	11
6	Exeter	10
7	Pewsey	9
8	Westbury	8
8	Swindon	8
	Other	289

A.74 Some respondents suggested that high speed services should be separated from local services to cater for long distance passengers. Others reaffirmed their concerns about limiting service levels at intermediate stations and the potential impacts on rural communities and their economies. Some respondents believe priority should be placed on improving service reliability over reducing journey times. It was noted that, thanks to technological improvements to on-board passenger services, commuters and business travellers can use their time more productively while on the train. These respondents therefore place higher value on reliable services.

Figure A.34: Top ten reasons for (green) or against (red) limiting the number of stops to reduce journey times



Consultation Question 8

Which direct services should be preserved in the next franchise? Why?

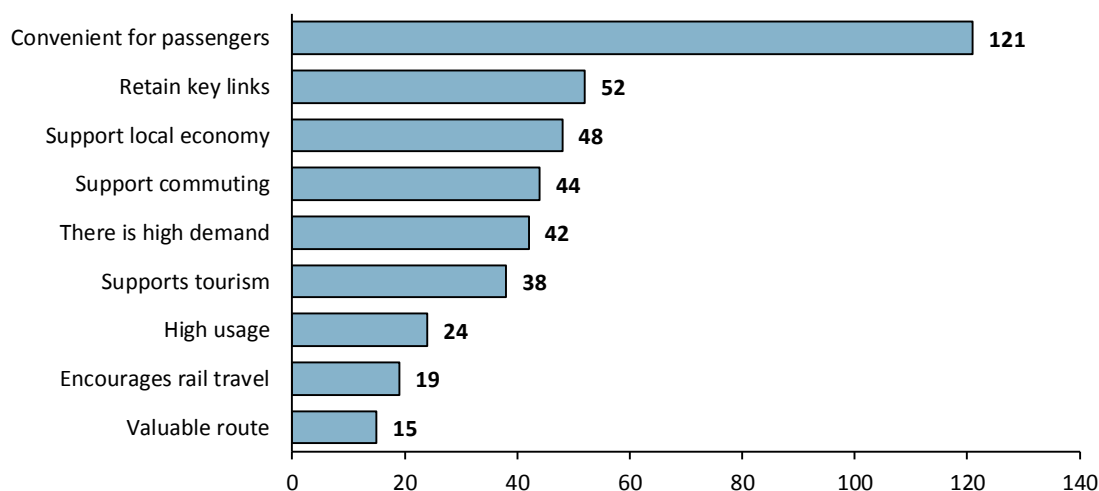
A.75 490 comments were drawn from the responses to this question. These are summarised by service group in **Table A.9**.

Table A.9: Direct services to be preserved

Rank	Service	Responses
1	London – West of England	304
2	London – South Wales	299
3	London – Swindon – Bristol	270
4	Bristol – Gloucester/Worcester/Malvern	190
5	Cardiff – Taunton – Weston-super-Mare	186
6	London – Oxford – North Cotswold Line	182
7	London – Cheltenham Spa	179
8	Bristol local services	168
9	Brighton/Portsmouth – Cardiff	166
10	Thames Valley London – Didcot and Branch lines, plus Newbury/Basingstoke/Bedwyn	165
11	Weymouth – Bristol and Swindon – Westbury	109
12	Devon and Cornwall branch lines	97
13	Devon and Cornwall local (Tiverton – Penzance)	91
14	Oxford locals (Didcot – Banbury)	46
	Other	68

Many respondents wish to retain direct services to and from London and to and from the West of England, South Wales, Bristol. Long distance regional services (e.g. Bristol-Gloucester and Cardiff-Taunton) were also mentioned by a relatively large number of respondents. All the services identified in section 4.11 of the Consultation Document featured in comments, although some more frequently than others. Reasons for preserving direct services derived from passenger convenience and meeting demand for these services. The most mentioned reasons are summarised in A.76 **Figure A.35**.

Figure A.35: Top reasons provided by respondents for preserving direct services



Are there any other stations between which you feel direct services should be provided? Why?

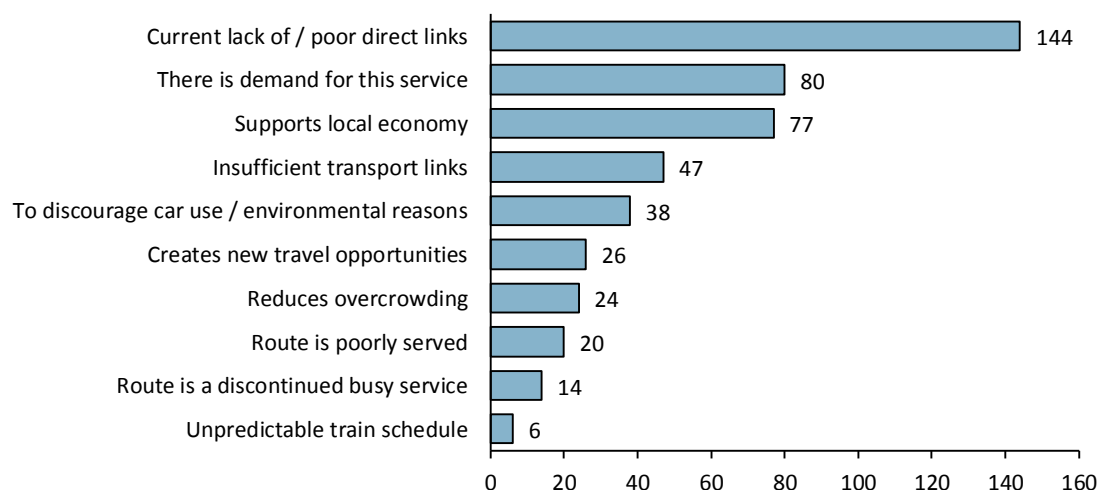
A.77 501 comments, citing 362 different routes/station-pairs, were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Table A.10**. Many respondents cited routes/station-pairs already served by the Great Western franchise (here we have interpreted these responses to mean frequency improvements are desired on these routes).

Table A.10: Top 15 routes/station-pairs cited by respondents where direct services should be introduced

Rank	Routes	Responses
1	Bristol – Oxford	14
2	Westbury – Frome – Bruton – Castle Cary – Taunton (6 responses also mention Bedwyn)	12
3	Swindon – Oxford	8
4	Swindon – Westbury	7
5	Swindon – Salisbury	5
5	Weymouth – Yeovil – Exeter	5
5	Paignton – Plymouth	5
5	Okehampton – Exeter – London Paddington	5
5	Henley – London Paddington	5
5	Gatwick Airport – Oxford	5
11	Bath Spa – Oxford	4
11	Bristol – Bridgend	4
11	Milford Haven / Fishguard – London	4
11	Okehampton – Exeter	4
11	Oxford – Swindon	4
	Other	346

A.78 The results shown in **Table A.10** share many similarities with the responses summarised in **Table A.2**, **Table A.5** and **Figure A.19**. The most requested direct connections were East-West services between Bristol/Bath Spa/Swindon and Oxford. Connections to Swindon also featured highly. The reasons respondents requested new (or improved) direct services are summarised in **Figure A.36**. These include perceived poor connectivity and high demand for these links, as well as economic and environmental reasons.

Figure A.36: Top ten reasons provided by respondents for introducing of new direct services



At which locations should connections between different services be improved? Why?

A.79 714 locations were cited in responses to this question and are shown in **Table A.11**.

Table A.11: Top ten locations provided by respondents where connections should be improved

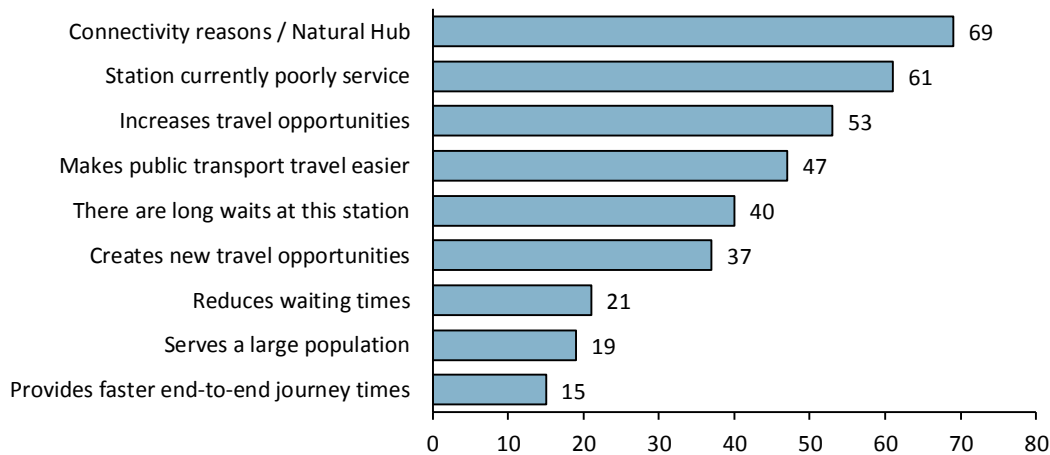
Rank	Stations	Responses
1	Westbury	58
2	Bristol Temple Meads	50
3	Exeter St David's	42
4	Plymouth	26
5	Bristol Parkway	26
6	Castle Cary	24
7	Worcester Shrub Hill	22
8	Taunton	21
9	Newton Abbot	21
10	Reading	20
	Other	404

A.80 The highest proportion of responses focussed on connections between services, where the number of people potentially impacted by poor interchanges at these stations is likely to be high. Routes around Westbury and Castle Cary were highlighted, as were some branch lines (e.g. Gunnislake - Plymouth). Some respondents chose to identify individual stations where connections are particularly challenging. These respondents expressed concerns around long interchange periods, particularly during periods of disruption. Liskeard and Par, which provide interchanges between mainlines and branch lines, were also mentioned.

A.81 Worcester Foregate Street, which is operated by West Midlands Railway, was also mentioned. This station is a hub for both long distance and local journeys, and respondents felt that there are opportunities to improve connections here through better co-ordinating timetabling between operators, specifically between Great Western and West Midlands Railway services. Additionally, many respondents raised concerns about the time of journeys requiring one or more connections.

A.82 491 comments providing reasons for improvements to connecting services were drawn from responses to the second part of this question. These are summarised in **Figure A.37**.

Figure A.37: Top ten reasons provided by respondents for improved connections



Seasonal Services

Consultation Question 9

What additional seasonal train services do you consider to be particularly important to retain or improve in the next franchise? Why?

A.83 Respondents were asked if there are any routes where existing seasonal services on the Great Western franchise network should be retained, or that could benefit from additional seasonal services. Respondents approached this question in different ways – some suggested events and times of the year, while others suggested routes and stations.

A.84 922 comments were drawn from responses to this question, providing 449 suggestions and reasons. A list of the locations most frequently identified by respondents where seasonal services should be retained or improved is provided in **Table A.12**. A list of the times of the year most frequently identified by respondents where seasonal services should be retained or improved is provided in **Table A.12**.

Table A.12: Top ten locations provided by respondents for seasonal service improvements

Rank	Location	Responses
1	Bristol	63
2	London Paddington	47
3	Cardiff	46
4	Weymouth	42
5	Cornwall	40
6	Devon	31
7	Newquay	23
8	Wales	17
9	Exeter	16
10	Pembroke Dock	14

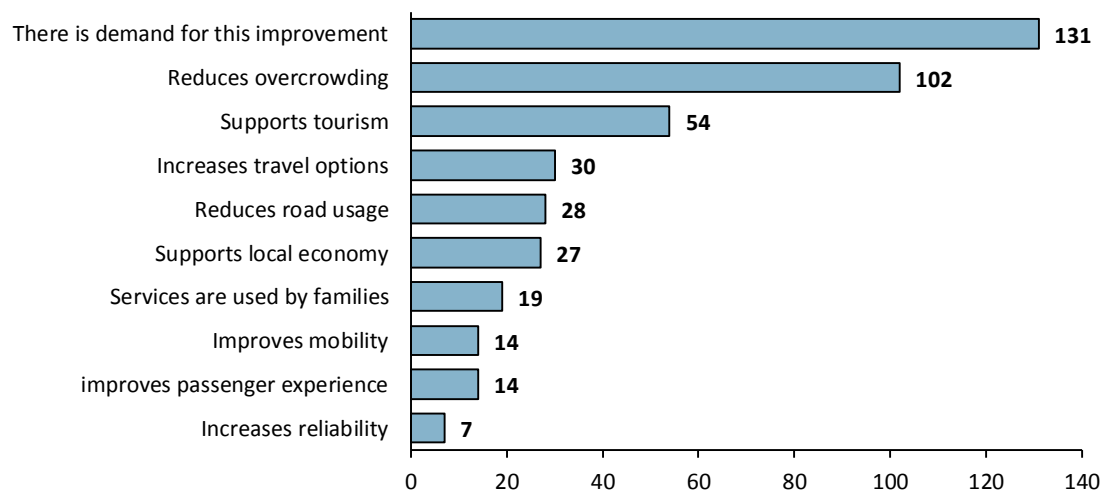
A.85 The times of the year most cited by respondents were those associated with high leisure and tourism travel – summer and Christmas. These are summarised in **Table A.13**. In this table, “Christmas Period” refers to the period leading up to Christmas Day, as well as the holiday period. We have included Boxing Day, which was specifically mentioned by six respondents, in this category. The Glastonbury festival was the most cited specific event, followed the Bath Christmas Market). Several respondents highlighted the need for additional seasonal services during the summer months in Cornwall and Devon (both local and serving London).

Table A.13: Top ten periods and events provided by respondents for seasonal service improvements

Rank	Times/Events	Responses
1	Glastonbury Festival	51
2	Summer	44
2	Christmas Period (including Boxing Day)	44
4	Bath Christmas Market	43
5	Sporting events	36
6	Special Events	19
7	Summer Weekends	15
8	Holiday periods	14
9	Cheltenham Races	12
9	Easter Weekend	12

A.86 Some locations had strong suggestions for improvements at certain times of the year. These included: Bristol during summer weekends; Cardiff for sporting and special events; Weymouth and Newquay during the summer and Devon, Cornwall and Pembroke Dock during holiday periods. The reasons provided for improvements to seasonal services related to enhancing the passenger experience and ensuring rail can compete with road travel.

Figure A.38: Top ten reasons provided by respondents for seasonal service improvements



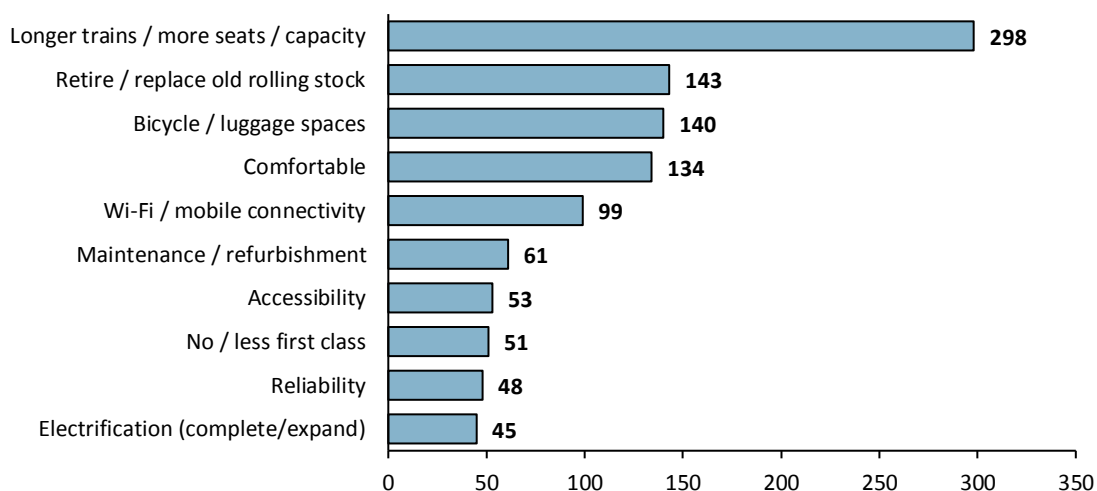
Rolling Stock

Consultation Question 12

What do you think are the main priorities that we should seek to address in relation to rolling stock?

A.87 1,395 comments were drawn from responses to this question. **Figure A.39** presents the top responses.

Figure A.39: Top ten priorities provided by respondents for rolling stock



A.88 The key priorities to emerge from responses to this question related to modernisation, comfort and cleanliness. Some respondents stressed their desire for new rolling stock, especially on West services, which once new train fleets are fully introduced, will be served by much older rolling stock than High Speed and most Thames Valley services. There were also multiple requests for refurbished rolling stock. Respondents identified capacity and crowding as key priorities to be addressed. There were also requests for more comfortable seats and table seating, as well as improved disabled access and bicycle storage. Although CCTV was mentioned in the consultation document, safety was only mentioned by 1.4% of respondents. Some suggested there should be more on-hand staff resources available.

Are there any routes which do not currently have First Class accommodation where you think it should be provided?

A.89 Respondents chose to answer this question in two different ways. Some identified services while others suggested metrics to determine which services should have First Class accommodation. In total, 359 comments were drawn from responses to this question, which are shown in **Table A.14**. Some respondents cited routes that already operate First Class (for example, London – South Wales and London – West of England). There were requests that standard class passengers be permitted to use First Class during periods of overcrowding.

A.90 Some respondents believe First Class should exist on all non-suburban routes, while others suggested it should be an option offered on all services. Some respondents offered criteria for having First Class on trains (the most frequent suggestion being services longer than two hours). Other criteria cited by respondents included distance, train length, and train capacity.

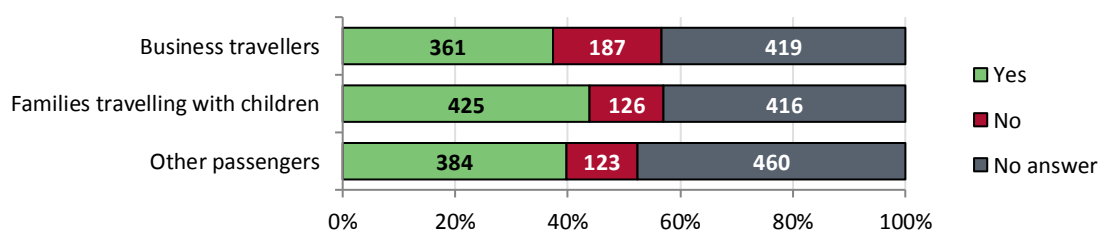
Table A.14: Top ten routes provided by respondents where First Class accommodation should be provided

Rank	Route	Responses
1	Cardiff – Brighton/Portsmouth	68
2	Cardiff – Taunton/Weston-super-Mare	67
3	London – South Wales	57
4	Bristol – Weymouth and Swindon – Westbury	24
5	London – West of England	22
6	Bristol – Gloucester/Worcester/Malvern	21
7	London – Bristol	19
8	Bristol local	18
9	Thames Valley	17
10	Devon and Cornwall local	16
	Other	30

Should the franchisee provide specific services and facilities for i) business travellers ii) families traveling with children or iii) other passengers?

A.91 As shown in **Figure A.40**, 38% of respondents to this question agreed that the franchisee should provide specific services and facilities for business travellers. 44% of respondents agreed that specific facilities should be provided for families and passengers travelling with children. 40% supported facilities for other travellers.

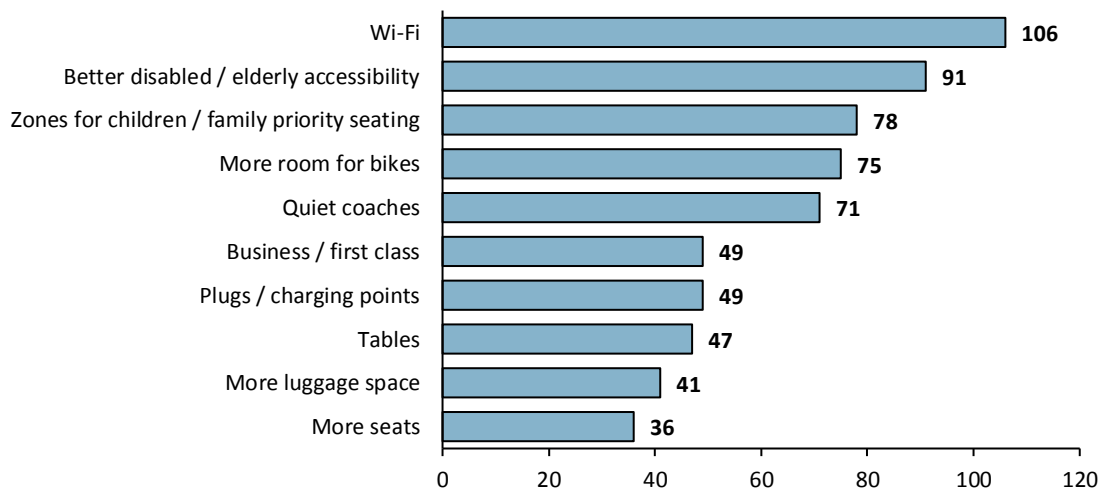
Figure A.40: Agreement with provision of specific services or facilities



If [you believe more facilities should be provided], please provide more information on what you think should be provided.

A.92 880 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.41**.

Figure A.41: Top ten suggested provisions provided by respondents

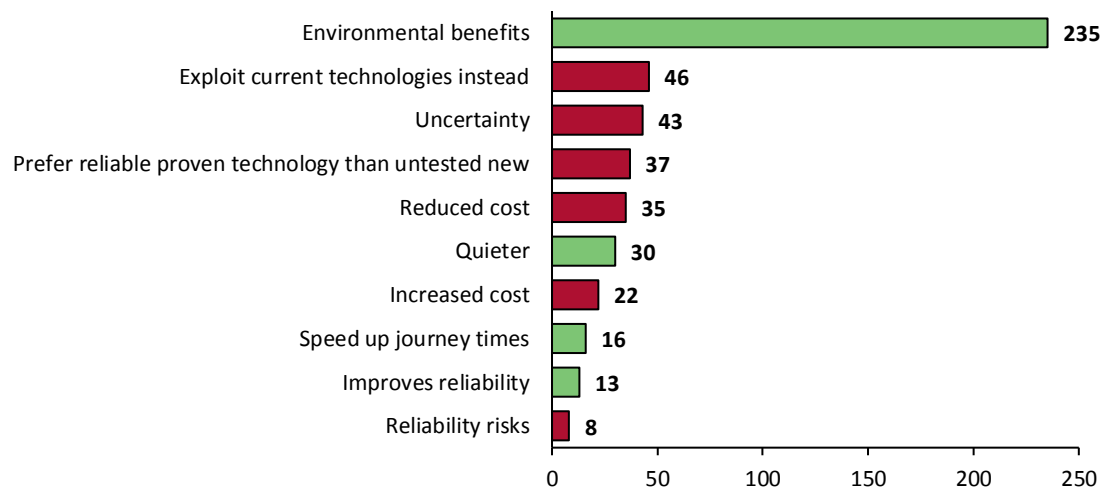


A.93 The key suggestions to emerge from responses to this question included Wi-Fi connectivity and facilities for children, the elderly and disabled passengers.

What benefits or disadvantages do you think innovative technologies for rolling stock, for example hydrogen or battery power, could bring?

A.94 540 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.42**. The key themes to emerge were around the environmental benefits that innovative rolling stock technologies could bring. Other comments suggested the increased speed of services and improved aesthetics as lesser benefits. Common disadvantages cited in responses were around uncertainty, reliability, efficiency and, with reference to hydrogen, safety.

Figure A.42: Top ten benefits and disadvantages that could be brought by innovative technologies



Are there any routes which would be particularly suitable for these types of innovative technology?

A.95 This question drew 1,512 comments. The top ten responses are listed in **Table A.15**.

A.96 Generally, shorter routes and branch lines were suggested as suitable routes for innovative technology. Some respondents suggested these technologies could be deployed across the entire Great Western franchise. Others suggested trialling on routes across the Thames Valley. Some respondents suggested that lines yet to be electrified would be good candidates, while others suggested urban areas, which could benefit from any air quality improvements that could be delivered by hydrogen and/or battery powered trains.

Table A.15: Top ten most suitable routes for innovative technology, as suggested by respondents

Rank	Route	Responses
1	Thames Valley	90
2	Devon and Cornwall branch lines	79
3	Bristol locals	70
4	Devon and Cornwall local	42
5	Small branch lines	38
6	London – South Wales	34
7	Bristol – Weymouth and Swindon – Westbury	31
7	Cardiff – Taunton/Weston-super-Mare	31
8	Cardiff – Brighton/Portsmouth	30
9	Services passing through Bristol	25
	Other	1,042

Station Access and Facilities

Consultation Question 13

Which stations do you think should be a priority for improving accessibility?

A.97 Respondents were asked to highlight any stations on the Great Western rail franchise network that they believe should be a priority for investment in improving accessibility.

A.98 Over 150 stations were highlighted in response to this question (from 668 comments). The top 20 stations identified are shown in **Table A.16**.

Table A.16: Top priority stations for improving accessibility

Rank	Response	Responses
1	Worcester stations	25
2	Any without step free access to platforms	21
3	Nailsea & Backwell	19
4	Castle Cary	18
5	Lawrence Hill	16
6	Stapleton Road	14
7	Dawlish	12
7	Dorchester West	12
9	Bristol Temple Meads	11
9	Truro	11
9	Okehampton	11
13	Exeter St. Thomas	10
13	Ledbury	10
15	Bristol Parkway	9
15	Freshford	9
15	London Paddington	9
15	Parsons Street	9
19	Par	8
19	Bruton	8
	Other	339

A.99 In contrast to other station related questions, which tended to focus on larger stations, several medium/small sized stations were highlighted by respondents to this question. Worcester Foregate Street was the most cited station, followed by Nailsea & Backwell, Castle Cary and Lawrence Hill. Some respondents acknowledged that some of the stations they have suggested are not currently managed by the Great Western franchisee (e.g. Worcester stations, Cardiff Central, Okehampton or Ledbury), but maintain that the accessibility issues must be addressed.

A.100 Some respondents noted that Worcester Shrub Hill has no step free access to platforms 2 or 3 for services to London and were concerned that lifts may not be

installed until 2024, such that these are significant accessibility constraints at this station. Passengers requiring step-free access currently must cross rail tracks (under supervision) to transfer between platforms at this station. The size of the station and the challenges of negotiating stairs with luggage contribute the strong opinions of respondents who generally believe it is unacceptable. Nailsea & Backwell was frequently mentioned because access between platforms at this station is limited to a footbridge or to walking along the road underneath the railway line. The ramp to the eastbound platform has a steep gradient and there is no ramp access to the westbound platform. Respondents noted that the station is heavily used and the local population is likely to increase. Okehampton was also frequently identified as a station in need of improved accessibility. It should be noted that this station is not owned by Network Rail nor operated by the Great Western franchisee.

A.101 Respondents noted that good station accessibility doesn't just benefit passengers with disabilities. Many respondents noted that families with small children and people travelling with heavy luggage would also benefit from step-free access at certain stations across the Great Western rail franchise network. Some groups representing disabled persons (including the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee) raised concerns about unstaffed stations, noting that a number of Great Western stations are currently unstaffed or only staffed for part of the day, and only served by driver only operated trains. This means disabled passengers requiring assistance can only board and alight trains if they inform the operator in advance that they plan to use these stations (and if staff are available to assist them). These groups also commented that only 53% of Great Western rail franchise stations have adequate step-free access to platforms, and that while accessibility improvements are welcome, these should not be limited to high footfall stations. In addition to step-free access, the types of improvements sought include improving the quality of staircases, visual contrasting, heated waiting facilities and toilets.

A.102 Passenger Associations and Passenger Groups identified stations within their localities where they would like to see accessibility improvements. A summary (but not an exclusive list) of the stations cited by respondents include:

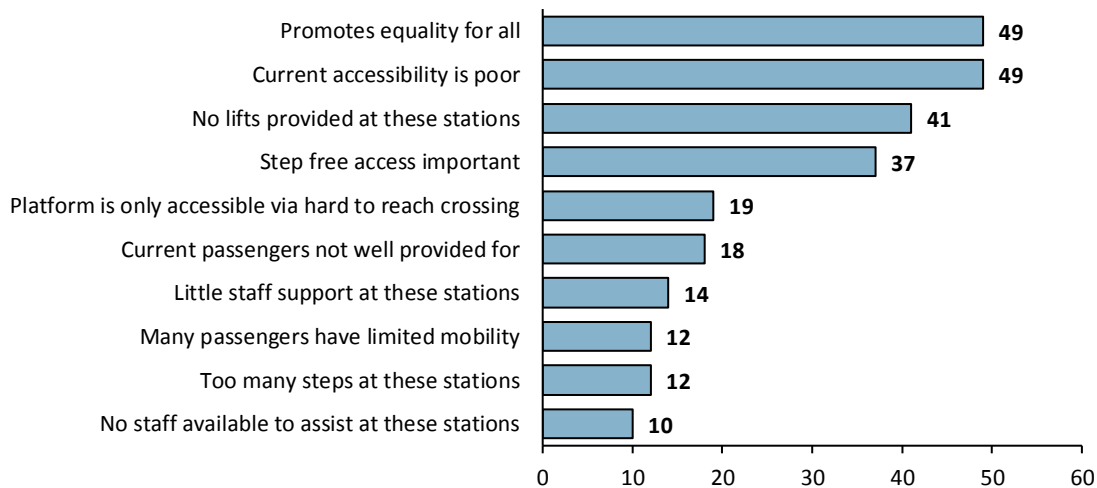
- Taplow – where pedestrian access is only possible by using a road tunnel with no footpaths which frequently floods;
- Many Devon and Cornwall stations – where wheelchair passengers cannot cross between platforms and there are many low platforms;
- Polsoe Bridge and St. James' Park – where no step free access is currently provided;
- Ivybridge station – where the gates are outward opening and spring-loaded, making it difficult for wheelchair passengers to use the station;
- Saltash – where the stepping distance between the platform and train on Platform 2 is very large;
- Torre and Dawlish stations – where there is currently no step-free access and wheelchair passengers must be escorted across the track to exit; and
- Exeter St. David's station – where respondents stated the lifts are too small and are located far from the main area of the station. Staircases are reportedly steep

at this station. Several respondents suggested that escalators are needed and signage could be improved.

Why [should there be improvements at these stations]?

A.103 A further 445 reasons were given in answer to this part of the question and are summarised in **Figure A.43**. Respondents identified concerns around the lack of step free access at stations and lack of assistance from station staff. The height and distance of the train from the platform was also noted as a problem for those with mobility issues. Station toilets were referred to as being unsuitable for some passengers. Many respondents took this opportunity to stress the importance of accessibility for all in general terms.

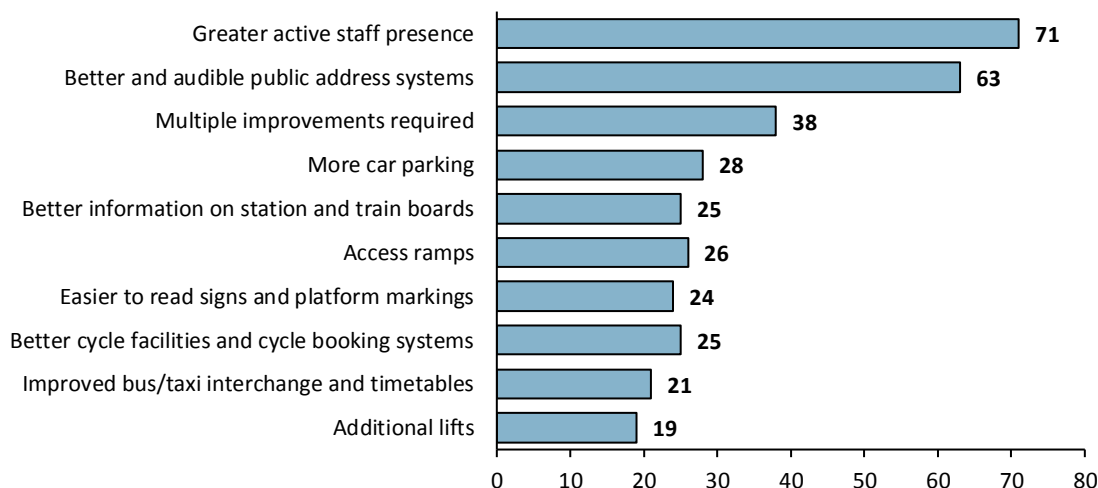
Figure A.43: Reasons for improved accessibility at stations



What other improvements could help to make rail services easier to access and use for all passengers?

A.104 This part of the question drew 568 comments and are summarised in **Figure A.44**.

Figure A.44: Top ten suggested improvements to allow easier use for all cited by respondents



A.105 Staff presence and training were highlighted by several respondents, in addition to suggestions of physical improvements to station facilities. Inter-modal access featured highly, as did data/information sharing and signage. Several respondents requested better information on boards at stations. There were also requests for more detailed information on trains, such as informing passengers of time to reach the next station. Some respondents believe current public-address systems are sometimes low quality and are often inaudible due to surrounding noise. Ticketing and affordability were also mentioned. There were some requests for provision of space for guide-dogs on carriages and seat reservation indicators for visually impaired passengers.

Consultation Question 14

Do you think the priorities, detailed in Sections 4.33 – 4.37 of the consultation document, are the right priorities for stations in the new franchise?

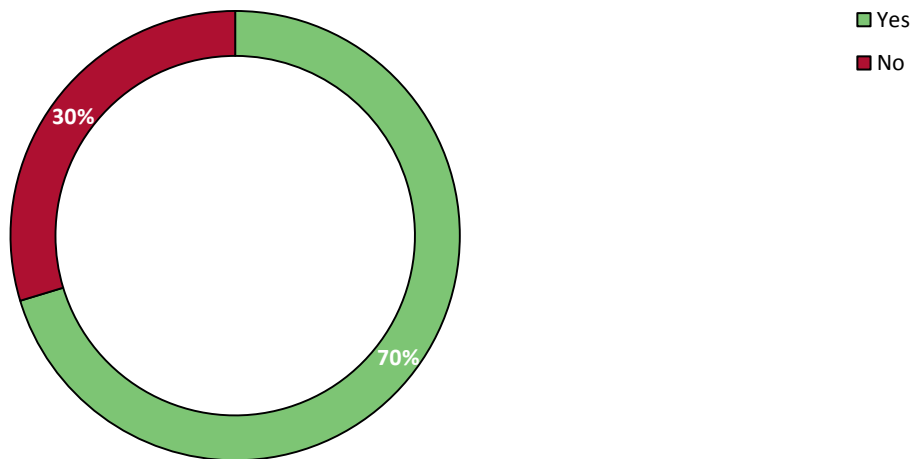
A.106 In the Consultation Document the Department lists potential priorities for stations in the future Great Western rail franchise. These include:

- Improving station facilities;
- Improving car and cycle parking;
- Improving access for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Improving accessibility, physical interchange and co-ordination between rail services and other modes of transport;

- Working with local communities to bring disused station buildings back into community use, e.g. as cafes or community hubs; and
- Co-operating with local authority schemes for station improvements.

A.107 Respondents were invited to comment on these priorities. Most respondents to this question (70%) agreed that the priorities were appropriate for stations in the new franchise, as shown in **Figure A.45**.

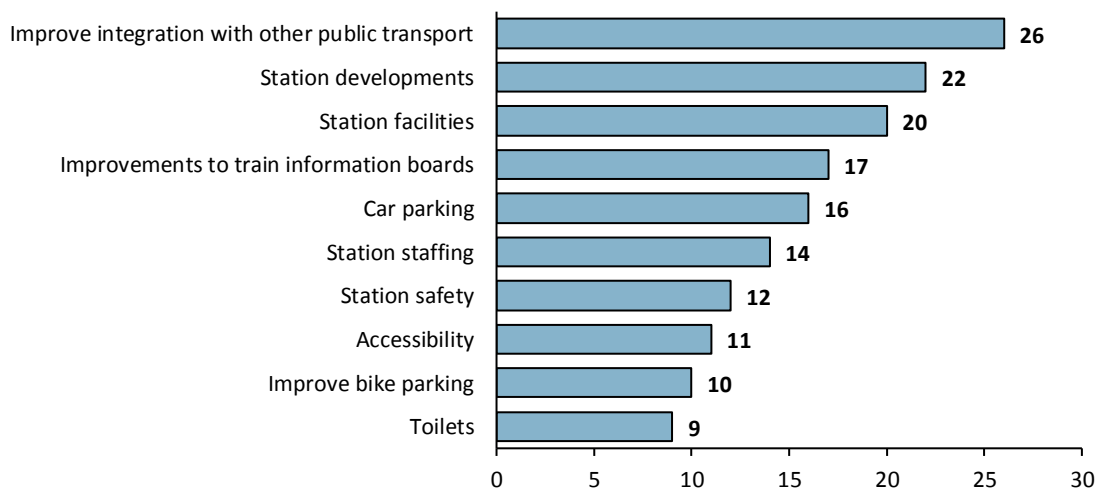
Figure A.45: Are the priorities for stations correct for the new franchise?



Which priorities would you change or add? Why?

A.108 259 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.46**. The key themes raised by respondents included better co-ordination between different transport modes, information sharing, parking provisions and accessibility. Many of these comments are consistent with the priorities set out in sections 4.33 to 4.37 in the Consultation Document. Some comments mentioned passenger safety, with requests for additional staff and guards.

Figure A.46: Suggestions of additional / altered priorities



At which stations do you think co-ordination between transport modes could be improved?

A.109 656 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Table A.16**. Over 140 stations were mentioned by respondents. The most frequent suggestion was that co-ordination between modes should be improved across all stations on the network. The stations most cited in responses were major stations (such as Bristol Temple Meads), followed by some smaller stations, including some not currently served (or served only occasionally) by the Great Western rail franchise.

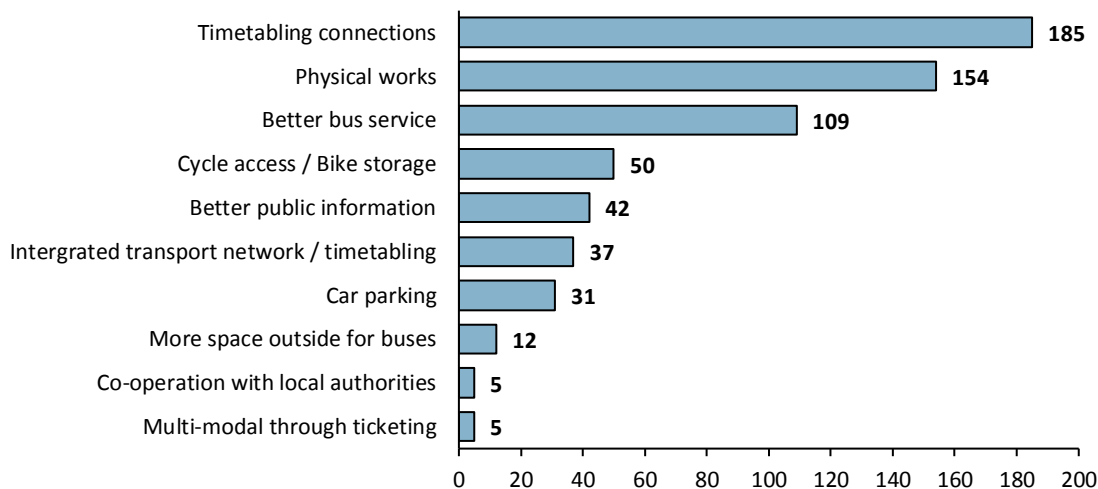
Table A.17: Top stations cited by respondents where co-ordination between transport modes could be improved

Rank	Station	Responses
1	Bristol Temple Meads	31
2	Taunton	29
3	Swindon	26
4	Exeter St. David's	22
5	Cardiff	19
6	Okehampton	18
7	Plymouth	17
7	Westbury	17
9	Oxford	13
9	Reading	13
11	Bristol Parkway	12
11	Truro	12
13	Worcester Shrub Hill	11
13	Charlbury	11
15	Gloucester	10
15	Salisbury	10
15	Twyford	10
15	Cheltenham Spa	10
15	Newport	10
	Other	364

How do you believe these areas could be improved, for example through timetabling connections or through physical works at the location?

A.110 639 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.47**. Respondents suggested integrated timetabling across the transport network was important and that cooperation between the franchisee and local authorities would improve overall journey experience. Physical works were also mentioned, as these could enable easier transfer between platforms and services. Some respondents provided suggestions which are largely out of the franchisee's control, such as improved bus services. Clock-face timetables were suggested to reduce the complexity of planning inter-modal travel.

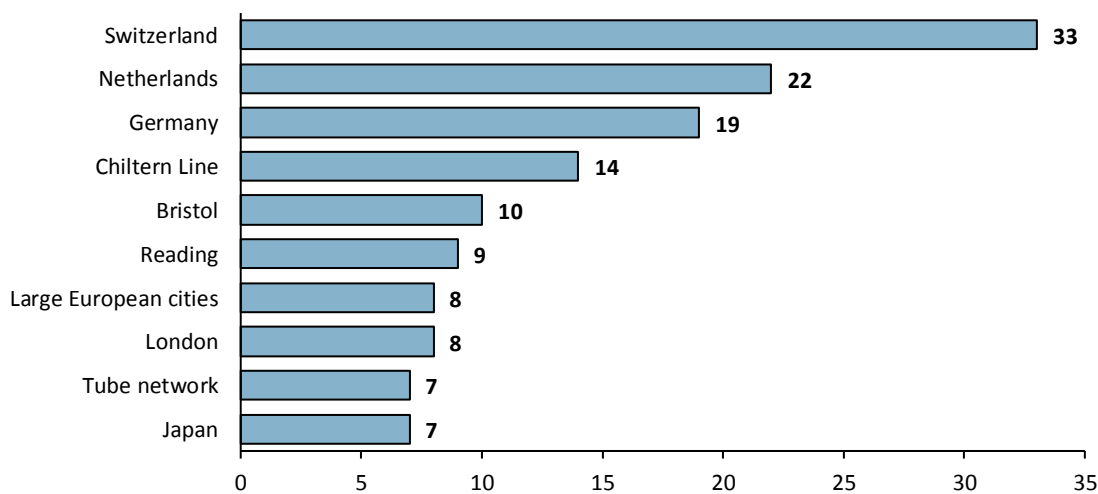
Figure A.47: Top ten suggestions by respondents to improve co-ordination between transport modes



What do you believe are examples of best practice elsewhere which could be relevant for stations on the Great Western rail franchise network?

A.111 465 comments were drawn from response to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.48**. There was a wide variety of responses. Some comments referenced international best practice, some noted other areas of the UK, others referenced specific stations (including light rail stations). Some respondents gave practical suggestions to follow best practice observed elsewhere. For example, some respondents recommended that bus stations should be adjacent to rail stations and that information systems should be integrated (including with air travel). Brompton cycle banks were also proposed.

Figure A.48: Top ten best practice examples cited by respondents



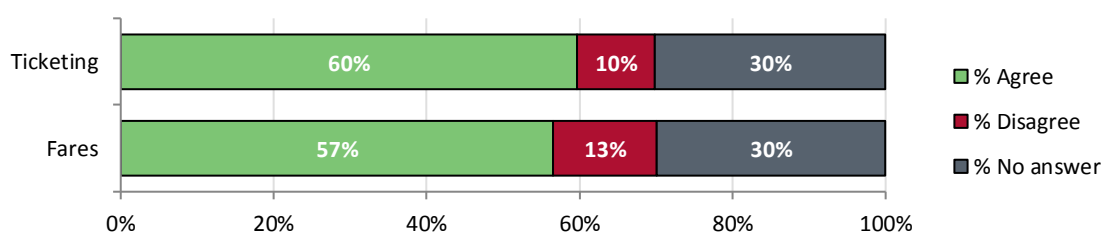
Fares

Consultation Question 15

Do you agree or disagree with these priorities for i) fares and ii) ticketing? Which priorities would you change or add? Why?

A.112 Respondents were invited to indicate the level to which they supported (or did not support) the Department for Transport's priorities for fares, as detailed on page 46 of the Consultation Document. Over 55% of survey respondents agreed with the priorities for both fares and ticketing and around 10% disagreed. The responses to this question are summarised in **Figure A.49**.

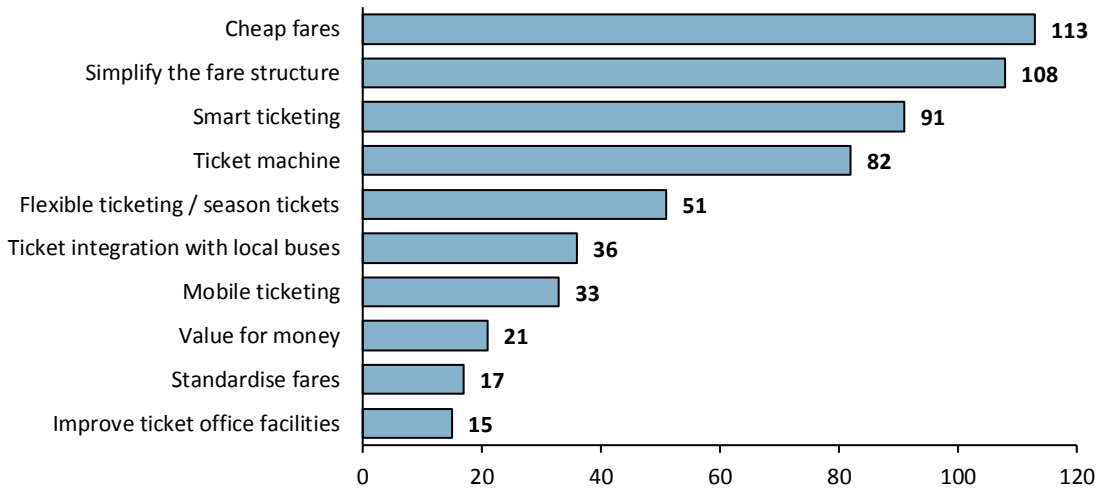
Figure A.49: Are the suggested priorities for fares and ticketing correct?



A.113 703 comments suggesting priorities to add or change were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.50**. The most common request was for the franchisee to introduce a simpler fares structure that is regularly reviewed to provide good value for money. Group discounted tickets, railcards and off-peak promotions were also mentioned. A few respondents stressed the importance of transparency around best priced tickets. Standardised and zoned fares were suggested by some respondents who cited some of the inconsistencies in fares across the Great Western rail franchise network.

A.114 Some respondents suggested adopting new technologies and highlighted the potential for more flexible ticketing arrangements incorporating multiple modes and/or wider geographic areas. Flexible season tickets were mentioned by several respondents, particularly those who work irregular shift patterns or part-time and who would like to benefit from season ticket discounts. Of these requests, 3-day season tickets were the most frequent suggestion, with others requesting carnet card payment options to prevent passenger from having to buy multiple single tickets. Other respondents requested that that traditional ticketing methods be retained and that ticket offices facilities be maintained and improved.

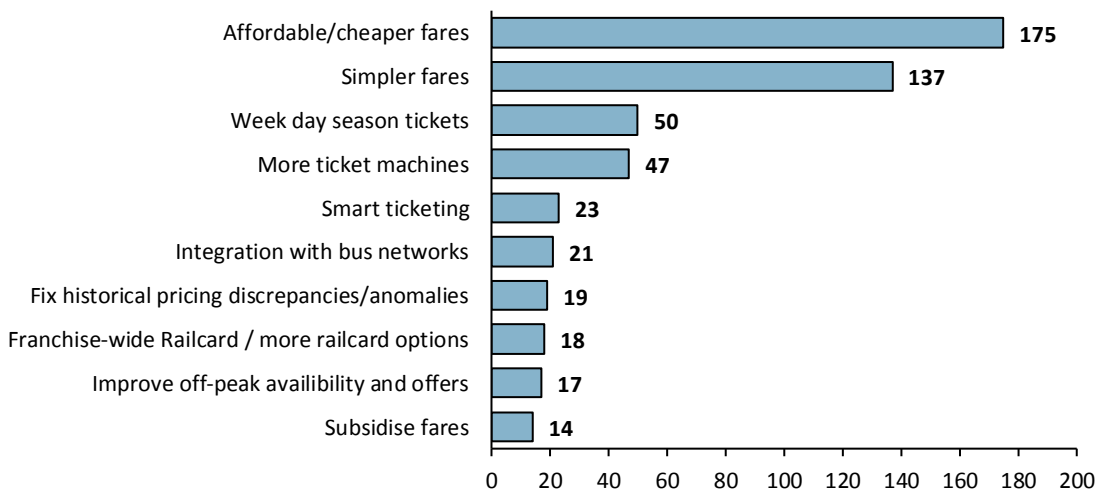
Figure A.50: Fares and ticketing priorities to add or change



What changes to the fares structure could be of benefit to you?

A.115 646 comments were drawn from responses to this part of the question and are summarised in **Figure A.51**. As with the responses to the first part of this question, respondents stated that the greatest benefits would result from cheaper and simpler fares structures. Respondents also expressed a clear desire for better integration of train and bus fares and ticketing. There were several requests for weekday only season tickets. A smaller number of respondents suggested miles-based fares, carnet tickets to and from London, and free travel for senior citizens.

Figure A.51: Top ten fares structure changes cited by respondents that could be of benefit



Freight Services

Consultation Question 11

If you are a freight operator or represent the freight industry, please set out your expectations of likely future demand for freight capacity across the routes served by the franchise.

A.116 Respondents from the freight industry were invited to set out their expectations of future demand for freight services on the Great Western rail franchise network.

A.117 This question drew 68 comments from 45 respondents and was left unanswered by most survey respondents. Most respondents confirmed that freight demand is increasing and that intermodal transport movements are becoming increasingly important.

A.118 Respondents noted that freight is particularly important across the Great Western rail franchise area because the road network is generally very congested and some areas (e.g. quarries) are not suited to large vehicles moving between rural areas.

A.119 Some respondents asked that existing freight paths be retained in the next franchise. Many respondents cited routes between Cardiff and Portsmouth (via Bristol and Westbury) and routes between Cornwall to Bristol. Four respondents suggesting allocating one intermodal train path per hour for on this route. A two-hourly timetable was also suggested on routes from London Paddington to Hereford, Cardiff and Penzance.

A.120 Other comments fell into three specific categories which have been detailed below.

Future freight demand

A.121 Respondents noted several developments that are likely to increase freight demand on the Great Western rail franchise network, including:

- Bristol Port Company's plans to construct a new container terminal at Avonmouth;
- The Hinkley Point C nuclear power station project in Somerset;
- The development of a new East-West Railway between Oxford and Milton Keynes should create a direct route from Southampton to distribution sites in the Midlands;
- Potential increase in demand for aggregates for future rail projects such as HS2;
- Increased demand in intermodal traffic from Southampton and automotive from Oxford and Swindon; and
- Rail freight increasing its capacity, and therefore attractiveness, across the network due to the partial doubling of the Felixstowe branch and gauge clearance resulting from the Great Western electrification programme.

A.122 One respondent recommended that the Okehampton line be maintained (for freight access), in case there is a need for Meldon Quarry to supply ballast again.

A.123 Some respondents provided quantified forecasts showing future growth in this sector. There is a consensus that coal movements will continue to decline.

Concerns

A.124 The principal concerns raised by respondents related largely to the provision for freight traffic on the railway and a perceived “lack of enthusiasm” for freight trains on the Great Western rail franchise network. Some respondents raised concerns about complete overnight or long blockades of the network for maintenance and/or enhancement, as this can have a disproportionate effect on freight. In these instances, respondents argued that consideration needs to be given to suitable diversionary routes. Some respondents expressed concerns about capacity constraints on the Great Western rail franchise network, particularly on sections between Didcot-Swindon and Oxford-Didcot-Reading, which provide an important east-west link between Bristol and the Midlands. Capacity constraints on these sections could prevent growth in the future, if not addressed.

A.125 Some questions were raised regarding Ashchurch, a Ministry of Defence facility near Tewkesbury. Some respondents questioned whether enough capacity will be provided in the future to facilitate movement of heavy plant and goods from this facility.

A.126 Some respondents raised concerns about slow average speeds of rail freight services, which are reportedly as low as 20mph. This slow speed is due to freight trains needing to be “looped” (i.e. held back in passing loops) to allow faster passenger trains to pass them.

Suggestions

A.127 Respondents suggested the following improvements to encourage freight use on the Great Western rail franchise network, including:

- Electrification between Bath, Westbury and Newbury;
- Freight access to Brize Norton via a new rail link;
- A local depot and distribution centre in the southern Cotswolds (no specific location was suggested);
- Re-opening the Tavistock route to Exeter – the gradients on this route are reportedly less steep than the current route via Dawlish, meaning there is a potential to direct more freight traffic along this line and free up capacity for passenger trains between Newton Abbot and Exeter (this route could also serve Meldon Quarry);
- Investment in freight trains would allow them to run at higher speeds.

A.128 Several respondents suggested that collaboration between Network Rail’s System Operator and virtual “Freight and National Passenger Operator” Route should be improved. One respondent suggested the franchisee should explore ways of developing a parcels business like the scheme operated by High Speed Freight on East Midlands Trains.

Wider Engagement and Equality

Consultation Question 16

What more do you feel that the franchisee could be doing to help the Community Rail sector increase its contribution to society and the railway, for example in harnessing local community relations and outreach into the community?

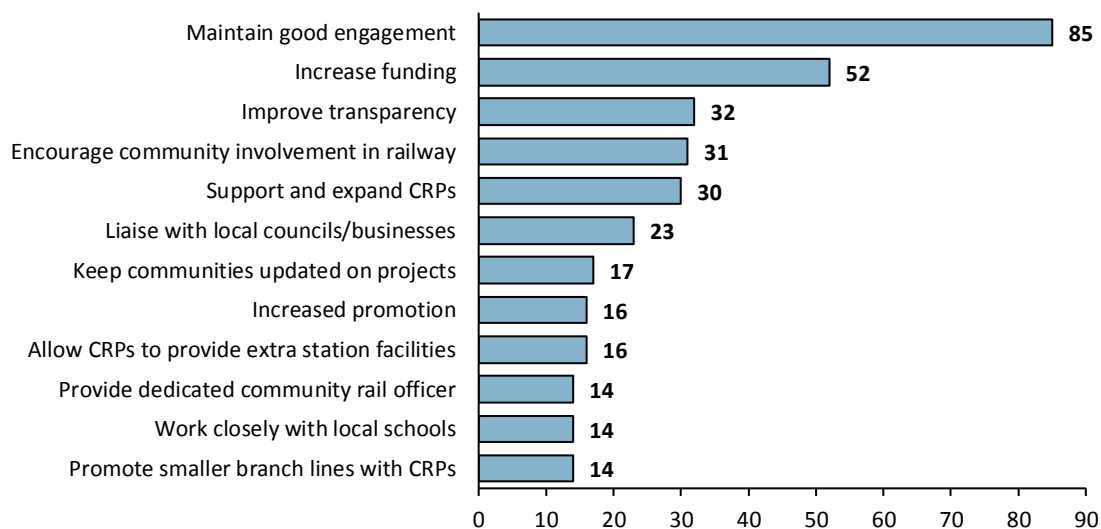
A.129 491 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.52**. A high number of respondents indicated that the current franchisee already engages well with the community, and that they would like this level of engagement to continue. Many respondents would like to see a future Great Western rail franchisee continuing to provide support for projects, including reopening closed stations and improving rural lines. Some respondents also think the franchisee could do more to promote tourism on smaller branch lines. Some asked for the appointment of a dedicated community rail officer and greater freedom for Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) to provide additional facilities at stations.

A.130 The Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACORP) put forward four primary recommendations that should be included in the franchise agreement to support the Community Rail sector.

- The operator should be required to provide core funding for each of the CRPs in the Great Western area;
- Separate funding should be made available for development of new community rail activity on other lines at border regions of the franchise geography;
- A fund should be established for CRPs to access to support project work; and
- The operator should appoint regional community rail managers to ensure clear lines of communication can be maintained to support continued collaboration.

A.131 The individual CRPs that contributed to this consultation were generally supportive of ACORP's recommendations, with some providing more detail on the amount of funding required and the number of regional managers needed for this recommendation to be effective. There were some requests for a dedicated person within the franchisee's property team to take on community rail schemes at stations. Some suggestions included increasing the visibility of community rail on the franchisee's website, sponsoring a yearly "Thank You" event for volunteers, encouraging station maintenance crews to liaise with community groups, and introducing Community Ambassadors (like those in the South Western franchise). A small number of CRPs expressed some frustration at problems they have recently experienced such as shortages in the current franchisee's resources and poor lines of communication.

Figure A.52: Top suggestions by respondents to help Community Rail

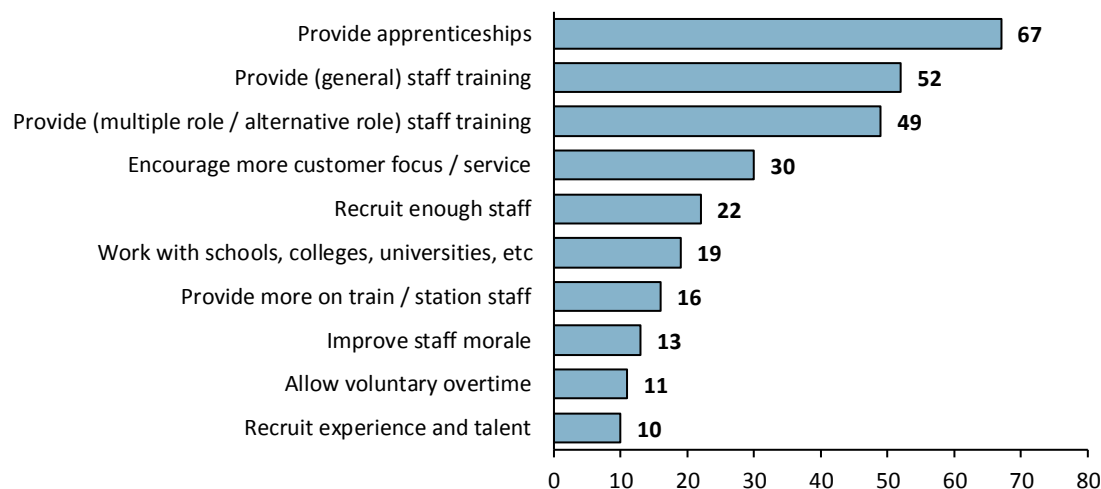


What more should the franchise do to invest in the workplace and wider industry skills?

A.132 416 comments were drawn from responses to this question and are summarised in **Figure A.53**. The most common response to this question related to apprenticeships. Several respondents suggested that the franchisee should work closely with schools, colleges and universities across the franchise geography to develop apprenticeship opportunities. Graduate schemes were also cited by some respondents. Respondents also cited staff training, personal development, recruitment and retaining talent as priorities in their responses. Staff specific schemes mentioned by respondents included voluntary overtime, union membership, improved pay, equality for disabilities and staff incentive schemes.

A.133 Trade Union respondents stressed the importance of having appropriately trained staff to foster a safe passenger environment on the railway and ensure passengers can access assistance when purchasing tickets. They also supported methods to ensure the franchisee acts as a responsible employer. These respondents noted that investment in training for staff and having greater staff presence on the railway can improve the safety of passengers and passenger satisfaction. They would like to see the franchisee employ more staff at stations across the franchise geography and stressed the importance of the franchisee promoting a healthy work-life balance for its employees.

Figure A.53: Top ten suggestions by respondents to invest in the workplace and wider industry skills



Consultation Question 18

In what ways do you think that the franchise could promote equality of opportunities for people with i) disabilities and ii) other protected characteristics within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010?

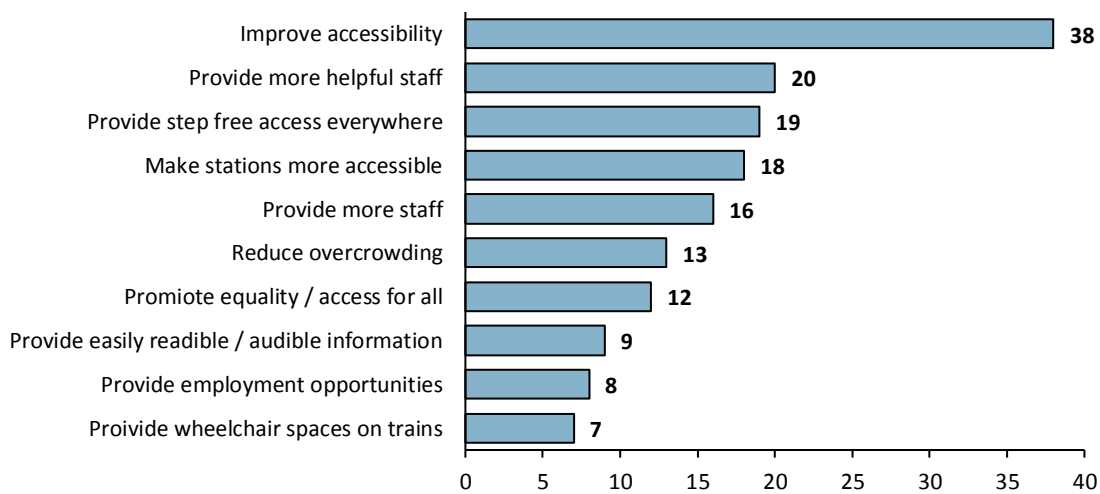
A.134 253 comments were drawn from responses on promoting equality of opportunities for people with disabilities, and 112 comments were drawn from responses on promoting equality of opportunities for people with other protected characteristics (as defined in the Equality Act 2010). These are summarised in **Figure A.54** and **Figure A.55**. There was some overlap between responses to the first and second parts of the question.

A.135 Respondents to the first part of the question highlighted the importance of helpful and respectful staff, trained appropriately to enable them to provide appropriate assistance to disabled passengers, recognising the differing needs of passengers with a wide range of visible and invisible disabilities and ensuring they are treated correctly. Many respondents highlighted the importance of providing opportunities for employment to people with disabilities and other protected characteristics. Some respondents requested more frequent consultation with these groups.

A.136 Those respondents with limited mobility who answered this question requested step-free access at all stations on the Great Western franchise network, wheelchair provisions on-board trains, and raised platforms to reduce the need for ramps. Overcrowding was frequently mentioned by these respondents, and there were requests for increased capacity on trains to allow disabled passengers space to travel comfortably. Other suggestions included providing more lifts, more disabled parking, and priority seating cards.

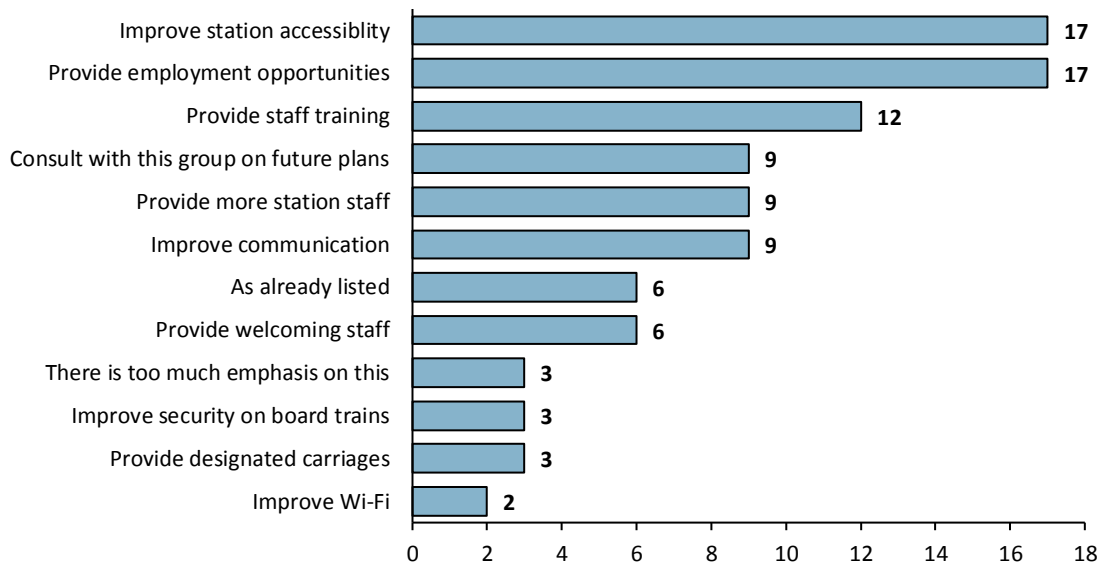
A.137 Respondents also highlighted challenges for those with other disabilities. For example, it was suggested that visually impaired passengers would benefit from greater provision of audible information and easier to read signage. These respondents requested that markings in stations should be easily visible and contrasting colours should be used to make them stand out better. It was also recommended that facilities and services for disabled people (both at stations and on trains) should be publicised more widely.

Figure A.54: Promotion of equal opportunities for disabled persons



A.138 Responses to the second part of the question highlighted the importance of well trained staff, both in terms of skills and attitude. Some respondents suggested there should be wider involvement of individuals with protected characteristics under the Equality Act in the railway and increased opportunities for employment. Several respondents requested improvements in staff communication during periods of disruption. Better on-board security (through increased staff presence) was requested by some respondents. There were also specific requests for provisions for the elderly, improved seating for assistant dogs, gender neutral toilets and step-free access.

Figure A.55: Promotion of equal opportunities under the Equality Act 2010



A.139 In its response, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee stated that it would like to see the adoption of the “Social Model” for disability and a commitment to identifying and removing barriers to access. They requested that the franchisee be required to provide assisted boarding and alighting at all stations on a turn-up-and-go basis. They would like to see an increase in the availability and visibility of staff at stations.

A.140 One representative group raised concerns that visually impaired passengers, who may be more dependent on walk-up fares, may be excluded from accessing cheaper fares that are only available through promotions, ticket vending machines, or online channels. This means these passengers are highly dependent on ticket offices staffed by well trained and informed staff. Some respondents recommended that communication devices should be made available at all stations and on all trains to enable visually impaired passengers to request assistance when staff are unavailable. Some respondents also raised concerns about the (current) widespread use of non PRM TSI compliant rolling stock on the Great Western rail franchise network.

Annex B: Proposed revised objectives for the franchise

B.1 In the light of the consultation we now propose the following revised objectives for the franchise in the 2020s:

- Provide safe, punctual and reliable services with enough seats and space for people who want to use them and at the times when people want to travel;
- Focus on the needs of the travelling public to provide an excellent and continually-improving customer experience for all passengers, whatever their particular needs and abilities, and improving ease of interchange between rail services and other modes;
- Maximise the benefits for passengers from the current transformational investment in the Great Western railway network, including by ensuring that enhanced services are delivered to a high standard of punctuality and reliability performance;
- Maximise the contribution of the railway to driving local and regional economic growth, enabling planned growth in housing, and meeting the wider needs of citizens and society across the whole of the franchise area;
- Be a responsible employer who invests in the welfare and the development of its workforce, motivating staff and equipping them with the right skills to provide the best possible customer service;
- Strengthen the connection between the railway and the communities it serves, supported by strong relationships with all those who have an interest in the franchise and the services it provides;
- Continue to improve the environmental performance of the railway including the environmental impact of older diesel rolling stock, support wider environmental objectives by providing an attractive alternative to more polluting modes, and improve measures such as energy and water consumption and recycling;
- Develop close collaborative working with Network Rail and other partners, bringing the operation of track and train closer together to deliver the best possible service for passengers, providing more coherent, integrated advice to local funders and promoters of schemes to improve the railway and drawing in funding from the widest possible range of sources;

Work with the Government and other agencies to support the development and delivery of other major rail investment schemes, such as the proposed western rail link to Heathrow, East-West Rail and the interface with HS2 at Old Oak Common; and

- Operate efficiently, providing best value for taxpayers' and passengers' money, thereby ensuring the maximum possible resources are available for further service improvements.