



Call for Evidence
Summary of Responses

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Foreword

In September 2018, the Department for Transport launched a ‘root and branch review of the railway’. As independent Chair of the Review, my recommendations for ensuring the railway delivers for its customers and how the Government intends to implement them, are set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. I have focused on the needs of both passengers, freight customers and taxpayers, and I have identified tangible steps that can be taken towards putting customers at the centre of the railway and addressing the concerns we all have as passengers.

Getting the right evidence has been crucial to understanding what is valued in the current system along with the big challenges, and to build consensus around how we can tackle them and a vision for the future. The Call for Evidence played an important part in this and received over 750 representations. The volume of responses demonstrates the desire across the country and within the sector to change our railways for the better. I am pleased that summaries of those responses are published in this document.

Beyond the Call for Evidence, I, along with the expert challenge panel, have been able to consult widely by meeting with and listening to stakeholders and by testing my recommendations. We have met over 200 organisations and groups across Great Britain including the Scottish and Welsh Governments, passengers, members of the public, rail sector representatives, trade unions and local authorities.

I am grateful to every individual and organisation who has engaged with us or submitted evidence to be considered. It has been invaluable to the work of the Review.

Engagement will continue to be critical as the Review’s reforms are implemented. Government and the sector will need to work together to deliver the scale of change the Review envisions to deliver for the railway’s customers and taxpayers.

Keith Williams

Independent Chair

Introduction

The Williams Rail Review was established in September 2018 to look at the structure of the whole rail sector and the way passenger rail services are delivered. The Review's findings and the government's plan for transforming Britain's railways are set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail.

The Review was led by independent chair, Keith Williams. Keith is a non-executive chairman of Royal Mail and former chief executive of British Airways. Keith was supported by a panel of experts from across the country with expertise in rail, freight, business, and passenger interests:

- Dick Fearn, Independent Chair of Network Rail's Western Route Supervisory Board and former Chief Executive Officer of Irish Rail
- Tom Harris, former Transport Minister and Member of Parliament for Glasgow South
- Margaret Llewellyn OBE, Chair of Network Rail's Wales Route Supervisory Board and a non-executive director of the Development Bank of Wales, who has experience in the freight industry
- Roger Marsh OBE, Chair of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and of the NP11 Board, and a leading advocate for the North of England
- Dr Alice Maynard CBE, Transport for London board member and the former Chair of Scope, the disability equality charity, who has experience of passenger issues in the rail sector
- Tony Poulter, non-executive board member at the Department for Transport and Chair of the East Coast Partnership

The Review benefitted from significant engagement and detailed feedback that we received. These responses have been used to inform the Williams Rail Review which has formed the basis of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail white paper.

The Williams Rail Review was largely completed by the end of 2019 and was then extended in close partnership with the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, to ensure that its conclusions were still appropriate in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Call for Evidence

A Call for Evidence which began in December 2018 invited public responses and views on a series of previously published evidence papers. The Call for Evidence received over 750 submissions via email, letter and an online survey. They were received from a mixture of individuals and organisations and administrations, including local authorities, industry and passenger groups, trade unions, devolved administrations, and academia (see Figure 1). Submissions were reviewed by the Williams Rail Review Secretariat.

The call for evidence ran in two phases, both completed before the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. The first, which ran from December 2018 to 31 May 2019, sought views on the Review's terms of reference. Over 750 responses were received. Common themes emerging from these responses are summarised in section 3 below.

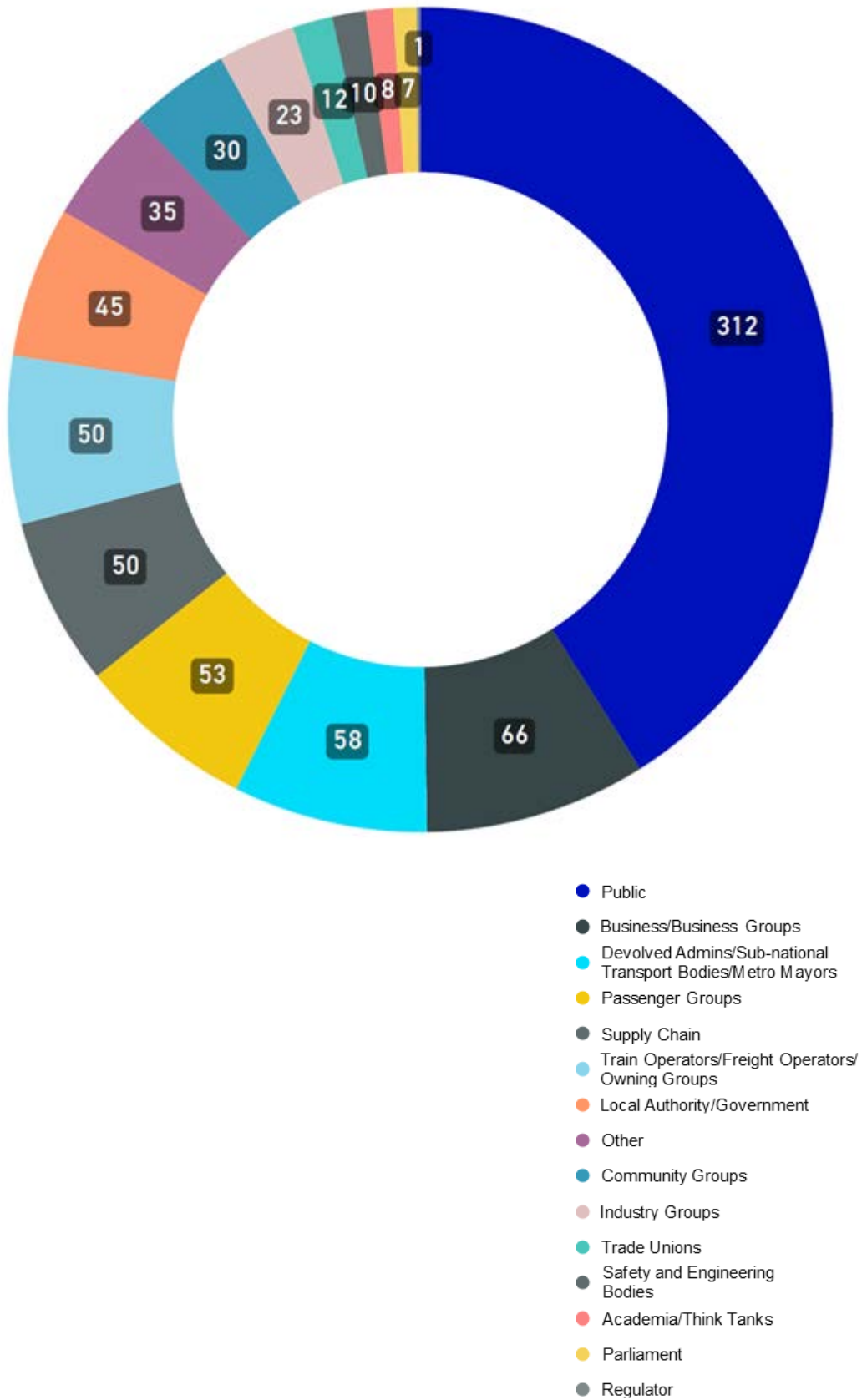


Figure 1. Respondents to Williams Rail Review call for evidence

The second phase, which ran from 19 March 2019 to 30 April 2019, sought views on the Review's objectives, evidence base, and draft assessment criteria. 105 responses were received. These are summarised in section 4 below.

During the call for evidence period, Keith Williams and the Williams Rail Review Secretariat, including the expert challenge panel, engaged widely. This included passengers, universities, members of the public, rail sector stakeholders, Trade Unions, local authorities and Welsh and Scottish governments. Two events were held to support the Review's call for evidence, in London and Leeds.

The Review received two petitions during the call for evidence period. One called on the Review to 'include a full and fair assessment of different forms of public ownership'. The second called on the Review to support the campaign to keep guards on trains.

The Williams Rail Review released a series of evidence papers at the start of Phase 2 of the Call for Evidence:

- [The role of the railway in Great Britain](#)
- [The rail sector in numbers](#)
- [Current railway models \(Great Britain and overseas\)](#)
- [The user experience of the railway in Great Britain](#)
- [Rail in the future transport system](#)

Summary of Responses

Phase 1 of the Review's call for evidence asked how the Review can deliver its objectives:

- Commercial models for the provision of rail services that prioritise the interests of passengers and taxpayers.
- Rail sector structures that promote clear accountability and effective joint-working for both passengers and the freight sector.
- A system that is financially sustainable and able to address long-term cost pressures.
- A railway that is able to offer good value fares for passengers, while keeping costs down for taxpayers.
- Improved industrial relations, to reduce disruption and improve reliability for passengers.
- A rail sector with the agility to respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Based on an analysis of responses, we have summarised views expressed in this phase under the following common themes and issues:

- Passenger experience and perceptions
- Industry structure
- Local government & devolution
- The commercial model
- Fares, ticketing and retailing
- Rail freight
- Workforce and skills
- Social, economic and environmental benefits

Passenger experience and perceptions

Current challenges for passengers

Respondents to the call for evidence referenced issues that negatively impact the passenger experience and perceptions of the railway. These included poor performance and reliability, overcrowded trains, complex fares, the perception that train tickets are low value for money, and that the sector has been slow to adjust to changing work patterns and travel needs.

The passenger watchdog Transport Focus noted that different demographic groups experience different challenges in using the rail system and have different priorities for how it could be improved. For example, non-users and young users consider affordability, convenience, and frequency as priorities; car users value low costs of parking and journey time, as well as affordability, while retired passengers would particularly like a simpler fares system.

Many respondents highlighted an urgent need for improved accessibility and more widespread step-free access. The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) highlighted that inadequate information relating to accessibility is a deterrent to disabled people using public transport. In addition, they highlighted this as a barrier to effective long-term investment decisions. Several submissions said that better information, combined with well-trained staff who deliver on commitments such as Passenger Assist, are needed to enable access to the rail network for disabled people on an equal basis.

A number of submissions also said that the railway must better reflect changing passenger and business needs, including flexible working patterns. Some suggested amending the fares and ticketing system to introduce products that provide simplicity, greater freedom of choice and flexibility. The need for better Wi-fi connectivity at stations and on trains was also raised.

Performance and passenger engagement

The need to improve train operating performance was widely highlighted in submissions, along with suggestions for how this could be achieved. These included reviewing the compensation regime between operators and Network Rail for when there are delays, investing in better evaluation systems, publishing monthly performance data, using proactive risk management techniques and adopting new technology.

Engagement and communication with passengers were felt to be poor. Several improvements were suggested, including engagement to help prioritise passenger interests in both strategic planning and day-to-day operation. Areas where respondents felt greater passenger input could be beneficial included around planning engineering work and associated disruption, and improving the complaints handling procedure.

A number of responses also highlighted that, due to industry fragmentation, passengers lack clarity on who is responsible when things go wrong. This point was made explicitly in relation to the 2018 May timetabling disruption.

Stations

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) highlighted that passenger satisfaction is often highest where stations have recently undergone substantial refurbishment. It also highlighted that collaboration with retail developers on stations can both reduce costs and improve passenger experience.

Other suggestions included improved cycling infrastructure in and around stations, overhauling the Passenger Assist service and developing travel apps that complement face-to-face assistance.

Innovation and digital

Digital and rolling stock innovation were also noted as key priorities to improve passenger experience. The importance of more innovation at stations, with streamlined processes for implementing new initiatives was also highlighted.

There was a common view amongst respondents that the rail sector currently struggles to innovate and embrace new technology.

Industry structure

Overcoming fragmentation

There were calls for better vertical integration of track and train. This refers to bringing together the businesses or entities that are responsible both for the track infrastructure and the operation of the trains. Respondents described the benefits of vertical integration as better aligning incentives within the industry, increasing accountability and reducing interfaces in the industry.

A wide range of respondents added that the current industry structure is fragmented, and as a result was not delivering positive outcomes for passengers or freight.

Many felt that the role of government needed to be clearer and more focused on strategy and funding, rather than operational management of the railway. The importance of a stable long-term rail industry strategy and clear planning framework was highlighted.

A number of responses complained of overly prescriptive regulation and lack of accountability, along with little incentive for long-term investment or innovation. The lack of accountability during the May 2018 timetabling disruption was highlighted by several stakeholders.

Simplification of industry structures, better integration between track and train, aligning risks and incentives and setting clear objectives with clear lines of responsibility were offered by respondents as solutions to mitigate challenges.

A guiding mind

Establishing a clear guiding mind in a single organisation to set the overall strategic direction for the railways was a common proposal raised by respondents, on the basis that it would enable operational independence of the railways and drive up accountability and standards. It was also suggested that assigning responsibility to a single party with proper governance could remove duplication and better deliver customer expectations.

This reflected a common theme in submissions, urging the rail sector to work in a more joined up way. Multiple responses argued that the industry must align processes, structures, and flows of money between all industry parties. Examples included encouraging private investment and better aligning government policy across different transport modes.

Stations were highlighted as a key example of industry fragmentation. The boundary between train operators and Network Rail responsibilities is not always clear-cut, which can result in duplicated processes and wasted time.

Local government & devolution

The depth of devolved or localised decision making varies across the country and this was reflected in the response to the call for evidence from local, regional and devolved governments where appetite for the level of involvement in the railway varied.

Many local authorities wanted better channels for meaningful engagement, but no formal responsibilities. Bigger combined authorities and sub-national transport bodies wanted, as a minimum, more of a role in setting the direction of the railway and what it delivers, while a small number would like to operate services (and in some cases infrastructure) locally.

However, there was commonality in responses that the railway needs to be more responsive to local needs, including integration with local transport, housing and spatial planning and operators need to be less short term focussed. Other common themes included the view that bringing track and train closer together was an important way to improve performance as well as make more joined up decisions on change.

The Local Government Association commented that the rail industry needs to understand and respond to the evolving picture of local government, including sub-national transport bodies and local enterprise partnerships and should engage constructively with local government as partners, particularly with respect to stations and the use of non-operational land assets.

The Urban Transport Group, who represent the public-sector transport authorities for the country's largest city regions, supported greater devolution of responsibilities. In their submission, they argued that giving responsibilities for rail services to devolved administrations or authorities has overall led to better performance, higher levels of investment and increased passenger satisfaction. Other respondents added that this puts accountability for performance in the areas served, rather than remotely in Whitehall, providing greater incentive to resolve problems in more agile and concerted ways.

Alongside calls for further devolution, respondents emphasised the importance of maintaining an inter-connected national network, particularly to passengers. It was noted that passengers do not necessarily recognise regional boundaries when they travel, with the national network of far more importance. Further, some respondents highlighted the benefits of a national rail network around timetabling and planning of engineering works.

Scotland and Wales

In their response to the call for evidence, the Scottish Government called for full devolution to Scotland. This included transferring accountability for much of Scotland's Railway, and the Office of Rail and Road's economic regulatory role, to the Scottish Government. Other Scottish stakeholders also argued for further devolution.

The Welsh Government also called for more devolution, particularly the transfer of ownership of rail infrastructure in Wales. They called for accountability to the Welsh Government for all organisations responsible for delivering passenger services and rail infrastructure in Wales. As well as this, they expressed an ambition for a role in planning the infrastructure used by cross-border services.

The Review has not considered the network in Northern Ireland, which is an entirely devolved matter.

Passenger Services

Franchising

It was felt by many respondents that the franchising model was not putting passengers first and that it was too inflexible. Some TOCs highlighted that the creation of a longer-term contract could deliver better outcomes for passengers. Some respondents suggested the need for different commercial models or approaches for different types of service, to better reflect local or regional circumstances.

Many responses stated that the franchising system was not commercially sustainable because franchising relies on forecasting passenger revenues many years in advance. However, these are volatile, affected by many external factors and therefore require significant protections and financial policies. Responses stated that the franchising approach does not provide a system which focuses on the passenger and performance and is not an effective system for managing risk.

Performance and passenger experience

Respondents advocated better incentives for operators to innovate, while rewarding good performance. Several respondents suggested that concession-style contracts, where the franchising authority takes on revenue risk and pays an operator based upon the quality of service they deliver, are a good way to deliver this, as they focus the operator on customer facing functions. Further, it was highlighted that concession-style contracts allow for more flexibility in-life to respond to changes in local demand factors.

Some respondents called for greater opportunities for open access operators as a means to encourage competition in the sector. Others suggested increasing the degree of on-track competition in the sector, for example by reducing barriers to entry for new participants and reducing the bidding costs of competitive procurement.

Some respondents, including trade unions and campaign groups, called for increased public ownership of the railways. Advocates of this approach argued it would be more efficient, reduce the need for public subsidy, improve accountability to staff, passengers and the public, enable planning for the long term, and encourage innovation.

Fares and ticketing

Current complexity

A large number of responses highlighted the need for reform of the fares and ticketing system. A recurrent theme was that the underlying complexity of the current system, combined with other factors such as flexibility and value for money, have contributed to a decline in passenger trust.

Respondents highlighted that a lack of consistency between train operators has led to passenger confusion, which has undermined passenger trust in the system. Split ticketing was raised as one of the key symptoms of the inconsistency, complexity and misaligned incentives within the current ticketing system. This is where a passenger purchases multiple tickets for one journey, taking advantage of anomalies within the ticketing system to purchase a cheaper journey than if they used a single through ticket.

The inconsistency of off-peak tickets was another issue highlighted, with different operators and journeys having different definitions of peak and off-peak. Respondents argued, this leads to confusion and points to a need for greater central co-ordination.

The 'bundling' of fares was also raised as an issue which costs passengers money, forcing them to buy a peak return even if they only want to travel one leg in the peak.

Simpler fares

There was a broad consensus amongst stakeholders that a simpler fares system is required which matches the way people now travel, reflecting changing passenger needs and work patterns (e.g. season tickets for part-time workers).

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and Transport Focus set out proposals for a new system of fares and ticketing - "Easier fares for all" – suggesting three key changes to the fares system: the 'unbundling' of fares through a move to a single fare as the basic unit of all pricing in the new system; pricing reforms to ensure that all fares are priced appropriately and a move to the regulation of overall journey price levels rather regulating the cost of a limited number of specific fares.

Another set of proposals highlighted by the RDG and regional representatives was for the introduction of TfL-style contactless pay-as-you-go systems. They argued that this would provide simplicity and flexibility for consumers and enable multi-modal integration.

Some respondents said they valued reservations on long-distance services, and the use of advance ticketing to spread demand, whilst others valued the flexibility of walk-up fares.

Modern ticketing

Respondents were supportive of smart ticketing, though several recommended retaining paper tickets, especially for complex journeys. A number of respondents highlighted the need for future ticketing solutions to take account of passengers who may struggle with technology or not have bank accounts.

Responses also highlighted that third-party retailers (TPR) could play a key role in driving growth and innovation, by investing in online technology to sell tickets to consumers.

Rail freight

The economic and environmental opportunities presented by rail freight were widely acknowledged by respondents, with several calling for the industry to better recognise these opportunities and to give more prominence to freight users.

Although there were differences in the submissions from freight operating companies and freight customers, the main conclusions were broadly similar. They stated the Review's high-level objectives should explicitly support freight customers, they called for more appropriate legal and regulatory protections, a clearer governance framework and, referenced most of all, the need for a national co-ordinating body.

The strategic importance of good freight infrastructure was widely recognised. Respondents, including Freightliner and the Rail Freight Group, cited several issues facing the industry at present, most notably the lack of network capacity and the difficulties in obtaining track access rights.

Responses also called for increased flexibility in freight infrastructure and operation to help the sector respond to changing industrial and logistics demands. Suggestions included reserving access rights and capacity for freight to enable easier transfer between operators, together with setting specific freight performance targets for the infrastructure providers.

Reducing fragmentation

Respondents also raised the need for a national network for freight, with some highlighting the importance of having a national co-ordinating body that would have a strong central function in this regard.

In addition to calls for a national network, respondents outlined a need for the right legal, commercial and regulatory protections, as well as clearer governance arrangements for freight operating companies and freight users.

Example suggestions included having a national system operator to ensure that freight timetabling is coherent and nationally co-ordinated, along with having regional representation to reflect local needs. A national system operator is a function that could co-ordinate and de-conflict the priorities of different operators or funding bodies, to ensure the whole system functions effectively. There is currently a system operator function within Network Rail, which carries out some key system and network-level roles, including managing the timetabling process and managing the portfolio of enhancement projects and programmes.

The role of government was commented on, with respondents asking that freight is clearly included within the strategic vision for the industry. Respondents proposed that government could provide incentives for investment in development of faster freight vehicles to allow freight services to be easily pathed alongside higher speed passenger services.

Modal Shift from Road to Rail

Respondents highlighted the benefits rail freight can provide through modal shift away from road, which would lead to large reductions in emissions from haulage. Multiple respondents in the freight sector and beyond claimed that the projected increase in freight haulage could only be sustainably managed with a large growth in rail freight.

In addition, submissions highlighted the challenges for the sector, including constrained infrastructure, erosion of financial incentives for modal shift from road to rail and industry fragmentation.

Workforce and skills

Skills and Leadership

Respondents across a variety of groups emphasised the need for a more skilled workforce. Rail suppliers pointed out that “boom and bust” in infrastructure created by the 5-year control period framework creates difficulties in building a skilled workforce.

Further, it was noted that due to the nature of infrastructure maintenance work, there is a need for specialist skills and a workforce able to work in pressured and difficult circumstances. Some argued that strategies should be developed to provide more resource and ensure an adequate supply of labour and skills into the sector.

A number of submissions flagged the need to increase the use of digital technology and to build the skills of the workforce in digital technology.

It was suggested that a potential benefit of devolution to local/regional bodies could be the ability for routes to build their workforce structure based on the needs of that route.

Responses advocating public ownership said that it would help enhance the skills of the workforce, enabling the industry to innovate and invest more successfully, while being democratic and accountable to its workforce and the public.

Employee Relations

A wide range of responses highlighted the need for a long-term strategy for employee relations. Responses also suggested that the difficult industrial relations environment has made improving levels of productivity more difficult.

Trade unions advocated a wider industry dialogue, for them and their members to be given more voice in the industry, to enable a step-change in engagement on the big issues and challenges facing the sector. Trade unions considered that the fragmented nature of the sector and limited tenure of train operators led to frequent change, poor morale and poor engagement. They also felt that fragmentation had contributed to a proliferation of different pay rates and different terms and conditions when greater standardisation would be preferable for some respondents.

Respondents also noted that the short-term nature of franchise contracts has led to employees feeling little affinity with the operator for whom they work. This type of employee engagement was noted by respondents to be vital in ensuring customer-facing staff provide the best possible service.

Diversity and inclusion

Respondents from the public, Parliament and train operators pointed out a lack of diversity within today's rail workforce and that a more diverse workforce would help to support improved engagement with passengers. The rail sector's workforce was noted to be ageing, which could have an impact on the sector in the future.

Social, economic and environmental benefits

A broad range of the responses highlighted the importance of the broader social, economic and environmental benefits of the railways for the UK, together with its role in place making.

A number of respondents highlighted the social benefits of the rail network, including enhanced mobility and accessibility to services, such as health services and schools.

Rail's economic contribution was also noted, with the network offering people access to jobs, leisure opportunities, and improved logistical efficiency.

Local impact

Several local authorities and other regional organisations felt that better local rail services could boost the local economy, productivity and create jobs. Respondents also noted stations' placemaking role within an area, and as a gateway to the wider rail network, providing wider economic, social and environmental benefits to local communities.

The wider implications of rail for other industries was also noted. These included better connectivity to airports and car parking on city fringes, and shorter journey times for bus and taxi firms.

Environmental benefits

A wide range of respondents highlighted the environmental benefits of rail. They referenced the lower emissions per kilometre compared to other forms of transport such as cars and aircraft, as well as the role of rail freight in moving heavy goods vehicles off the roads. Many respondents saw this as vital for hitting emissions targets and improving the air quality in cities.

Respondents broadly proposed three strategies to encourage a modal shift towards rail and reduce transport emissions; infrastructure investment, freight subsidies and increasing the convenience of end to end rail journeys.

Infrastructure investment was seen as key to encourage both more passenger and freight journeys by rail. Many respondents in the freight sector specifically highlighted the need to evaluate the need for subsidies to encourage freight modal shift. Several respondents also pointed to the need for cross-industry and cross-modal working to make end to end rail journeys more convenient in order to encourage more journeys by rail.

Alongside encouraging this modal shift, respondents also pointed towards the need to decarbonise rail itself to maximise the environmental benefits of rail. Respondents most frequently suggested further electrification to decarbonise the railway. Further, some respondents suggested a need to focus on alternative sources of traction power such as battery and hydrogen.

Digitalisation

Stakeholders from different groups also highlighted the potential gains of a more digital railway experience, including location signalling to improve safety, electronic ticketing, a private railway cloud facility to improve efficiency and 5G deployment to improve connectivity.

Summary of responses – Phase 2

Phase 2 of the Review's call for evidence focused on the following questions:

- The evidence papers summarise the key themes and evidence on which the Rail Review will draw in the subsequent phases of our work. Are there other themes or areas of evidence that we should consider? If so, what are they?
- Has the Review identified the right high-level objectives as set out in the call for evidence paper?
- Has the Review identified the key issues constraining the success of the railway in the call for evidence paper? What relative priority would you place on them?
- Do the broad assessment criteria in the call for evidence paper capture the right issues against which the Review should test its proposals? What priority should we attach to each and how should we balance trade-offs? Are there other issues we should consider?

The following commentary summarises the responses received against each question.

Question 1

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

Respondents highlighted several additional themes and emphasised areas of evidence to be considered. Analysis of the responses identified the following key themes:

- **Rail and other transport modes:** The railway’s role as part of an integrated transport system should be recognised, taking into account wider economic and societal objectives.
- **Devolution and decentralisation:** Greater focus should be placed on the benefits of a devolved or regional approach to decision-making, while accepting the need to preserve a national network.
- **Increasing competition:** The potential for greater competition within the sector and on-track should be considered.
- **International comparisons:** Analysis of European railways could provide useful examples of public-private partnerships to run the railway.
- **Public ownership:** Consideration should be given to public ownership of the railways.
- **Environment:** Rail should maximise its contribution to decarbonisation as a low-carbon alternative to road transport and in exploring alternative sources of energy to power trains.
- **Accessibility:** Accessibility should be prioritised.
- **Infrastructure and improvement:** Further consideration should be given to infrastructure, with specific reference to optimising capacity, enhancements and rolling stock.
- **Social and economic impact:** The railway’s contribution to the UK’s wider economic, social and environmental objectives should be taken into account.
- **Freight:** Further consideration should be given to freight subsidies, noting Government chooses to reflect benefits of taking HGVs off the road on a very specific basis.

Question 2

“Has the Review identified the right high-level objectives?”

Respondents highlighted a number of considerations in respect of the Review’s high-level objectives:

- **Passengers:** Respondents felt the Review’s objectives needed to recognise that passengers are not a homogenous group. Individual needs vary due to a number of factors such as journey type, personal and mobility needs. Some respondents highlighted the title “passengers” should be widened to “customers”, to account for all railway users such as freight.
- **Taxpayers:** Respondents suggested that the affordability and value objective could be expanded to include improving long-term affordability, equity of funding and value for the taxpayer.
- **Wider society:** Respondents highlighted that the Review’s objectives should pay greater attention to the social, environmental and economic benefits of rail, at both a national and local level. Within this, there was a specific ask that the Review considers the potential of rail in “placemaking”.
- **Training and staff:** Another common theme was that the Review needed to focus more on the industry itself and the staff within it. Respondents raised the need for the sector be able to offer staff a long-term career path and development opportunities. Further, respondents from the supply chain raised that the objectives needed to better reflect how the workforce can be developed to help with implementing a Digital Railway.

Question 3

“Has the Review identified the key issues constraining the success of the railway? What relative priority would you place on them?”

Respondents highlighted the following issues:

- **Franchising:** Respondents highlighted that the commercial model has become unsustainable, resulting in a worse customer experience. In particular, the length of franchises was cited as a barrier to investment and innovation.
- **Accountability:** The lack of clear accountability in the franchising model was identified as a key issue, resulting in a lack of a clear strategic view for decision-makers.
- **Decision making:** Respondents highlighted the misalignment of decision making and the insufficient consideration of trade-offs across strategy, specification and delivery. It was also felt that objectives are not adequately prioritised to focus on end-users.
- **Accessibility:** Delivering improved accessibility was highlighted as a significant challenge, which requires a paradigm shift in current culture and attitudes.

Question 4

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

Respondents highlighted the following points on the assessment criteria:

- **Accessibility:** Accessibility should be viewed as a fundamental requirement in the criteria, rather than as a subset of passenger issues.
- **Workforce:** The rail sector needs to ensure a productive, flexible, engaged and diverse workforce.
- **Leadership:** The industry should be supported by a strong leadership that puts the passenger first, has a positive approach to industrial relations, seeks to maintain a high standard of safety, and operates under fair terms and conditions.
- **Private sector financing:** It was highlighted that a new industry structure must be assessed on both commercial sustainability and its ability to facilitate greater private investment.
- **Technology:** Respondents were keen to highlight the need for rail reform to encourage productivity and digitalisation of the industry and the benefits from it.