



Department
for Transport



Supporting the Cities – Connecting Communities

West Midlands Rail Franchise

Stakeholder Briefing Document and Consultation Response

Moving Britain Ahead



August 2016

Contents

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Secretary of State Foreword



In December last year my Department and West Midlands Rail Limited (WMR) jointly launched the competition for the next West Midlands Franchise. It will deliver a rail service that is fit for modern life and supports the sustainable growth of the West Midlands and the country as a whole.

The response to the public consultation has been excellent, with over 1,800 passengers and Stakeholders taking the time to give us their views. These responses came from a cross-section of society including individual members of the public, businesses, rail passenger groups, Community Rail Partnerships, councils, parishes, MPs, unions and other interested parties. There was good representation from all areas covered by the franchise including Liverpool, London, Milton Keynes, Crewe, the branch lines out to Bedford and St Albans Abbey, and from people and Stakeholders throughout the West Midlands region.

The responses were well evidenced and clearly set out the needs and aspirations for the future of rail services and facilities in the franchise area. The quality and quantity of responses truly demonstrate the passion that our country has for its rail services.

When the competition was launched in December, the Department and WMR were clear about the need to provide a connected rail service that meets the needs of the West Midlands and beyond. We have made full use of the consultation responses to influence the specification so that it takes into account what customers and Stakeholders want and need.

It was clear from the consultation responses that we must focus on managing crowding and providing capacity. We have seen record-breaking numbers use the railways in the past year with over 1.65 billion journeys completed nationally in 2014/15 – more than double the number recorded a decade ago. This is why we are delivering a large number of additional carriages in the new West Midlands Franchise and continue to invest £38billion on improving and running the rail network in Great Britain.

People also asked for improvements to connectivity and frequency on a number of routes, and timetables that better reflect the needs of today's society. The new franchise will provide a substantial improvement in evening and Sunday services and more trains between key destinations such as Birmingham and Shrewsbury. All these improvements will be supported by improved customer experience, information, ticketing and quality of service.

To further ensure we have delivered the best possible rail services for the West Midlands region we have worked jointly with WMR – a partnership of 14 authorities in the region – throughout the development of the specification. This has enabled us to make sure the new franchise delivers our joint vision for an integrated transport network for communities and businesses – one which increases the contribution the region can make to the nation's economy.

The responses we received to the consultation have been enormously helpful in our development of the franchise specification. We have managed to take account of many of the issues raised by consultees and we expect our next private sector partner for the West Midlands to work with a wide range of local and regional Stakeholders to make sure that they deliver.


Chris Grayling
Secretary of State for Transport



Chair of West Midlands Rail Foreword



The rail network plays a vital role in supporting the economy and people's lives right across the West Midlands. The local and regional services provided by the West Midlands Franchise are at the heart of this network and I am delighted that West Midlands Rail and the Department for Transport have been able to address so many of the issues raised by both passengers and Stakeholders as part of the franchise specification.

This franchise competition has seen genuine collaboration between central and local government and I believe that the close working relationship that has developed between the Department and West Midlands Rail has resulted in a better outcome for rail passengers that will result in significant improvements in rail services being delivered over the coming years.

The consultation process has been an excellent example of the collaboration that is driving this franchise competition process forward. It saw both West Midlands Rail and Department for Transport staff out and about in the region undertaking both passenger and Stakeholder events and hearing first hand people's views of their rail services. I would like to thank everyone who responded. We greatly appreciate the amount of time and effort that was taken in drafting what were often very comprehensive and passionate responses.

We have carefully considered your views to inform the development of the Invitation to Tender and the other documentation that is being issued to the bidders to allow them to develop their proposals.

This document gives a detailed overview of how we have taken on board the feedback we have received including where we have been able to specify many improvements in service, which I am particularly pleased and excited about.

We are looking forward now to the next stage of the process where bidders will have the opportunity to use the feedback we have received to develop the best possible proposals that will hopefully go above and beyond what we are asking for, delivering some even better improvements for rail passengers in the West Midlands.



Councillor Mark Winnington
Chair of West Midlands Rail



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (the Department) and West Midlands Rail Limited (WMR) ran a joint public consultation between 15 December 2015 and 22 March 2016 seeking the views of all Stakeholders to help plan the future of rail services, stations and other supporting services provided in the West Midlands Rail Franchise (services currently operated by London Midland as shown in the maps in Appendix A).
- 1.2 This included passengers, communities, businesses, rail groups, Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, unions, rail industry employees and other organisations. Over 60 publicity events, drop in sessions and meetings were held for Stakeholders and the public across the network, with over 1,800 formal responses submitted.
- 1.3 The purpose of this Stakeholder Briefing Document is to provide the public and Stakeholders with a summary of the consultation process, outline the responses received and respond to the views expressed. It summarises what we are asking bidders to provide through the franchise specification that has been included in the Invitation to Tender (ITT). This document is not intended to replace the ITT, which in the case of inconsistencies takes precedence.
- 1.4 We are grateful to all the organisations and individuals who took the time and effort to respond to this consultation, and to those who attended the consultation events. The comments and views we have received have been carefully considered and used to inform the development of the new West Midlands Franchise specification.
- 1.5 We would also like to thank all the organisations including train companies, Network Rail, the West Midlands Combined Authority, Local Authorities and businesses that helped us to organise, promote and deliver the consultation events.



West Midlands Rail Limited (WMR)

- 1.6 WMR is a partnership of 14 local transport authorities in the West Midlands area working together to play a greater role in the specification, management and delivery of local rail services in collaboration with the Department. It has been established as a limited company, with a board of directors made up of the leaders or cabinet members of the local transport authorities involved. More information on WMR and its partners can be found in Appendix B.
- 1.7 The majority of rail services in the West Midlands Franchise operate in the West Midlands region, therefore WMR is playing a key role in specifying the train services and station facilities which must be delivered in the area in the new franchise.
- 1.8 This forms part of the collaboration between the Department and WMR announced by the Secretary of State for Transport (Secretary of State) in March 2015 and is a key step in the process towards having more control of planning and overseeing rail services in the region. This is in line with the Government's devolution agenda.

- 1.9 The new franchise specification supports rail devolution in the West Midlands in the future through:

A requirement for the franchisee to largely operate the franchise in two parts – the West Midlands Separable Business Unit made up of local and regional services in the area, and the West Coast Separable Business Unit made up of long distance, London commuter and branch line services. A map showing how this will work is provided in Appendix C. This includes reporting on each Separable Business Unit individually, and will help to allow for full devolution in the future by allowing the West Midlands services to be let separately should WMR and the Secretary of State agree to do so.

A separate WMR brand and identity will be introduced for the West Midlands Separable Business Unit services and stations with brand values that match the needs and aspirations of local users. This will become a brand that carries on into the future regardless of the company operating the services, providing a long lasting local identity.



A management team will be based within the West Midlands area with a West Midlands Separable Business Unit Manager, provided by WMR. They will ensure the operator is delivering services in line with the contract and providing improvements that are focussed, relevant and responsive to the individual needs of the areas served.

2. Background to the franchise

- 2.1 The West Midlands Franchise provides a combination of commuting, regional and long distance services in the West Midlands area and on the West Coast Main Line, serving three markets:

Services between Northampton and London Euston used by a high number of commuters and connecting branch lines between Bedford and Bletchley, and between St Albans and Watford;

Local and regional services in the West Midlands area used by commuter, business and leisure travellers; and

Long distance services along the West Coast Main Line from Liverpool to Birmingham (via Crewe and Stafford) and Crewe to London (via Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, Lichfield and Milton Keynes). The franchise also provides direct services between Birmingham, Coventry and London. Many of these services directly compete with those provided by the InterCity West Coast Franchise (services currently operated by Virgin Trains).

- 2.2 The franchise currently operates over 1,300 services every weekday and serves 177 stations (directly managing 149). A map showing where services run is provided in Appendix A.

- 2.3 The current operator of the West Midlands Franchise is London Midland, owned by Govia – a joint venture between Go-Ahead (65%) and Keolis (35%).



- 2.4 On 7 April 2016 the Department announced the shortlisted bidders for the West Midlands Franchise competition:

London and West Midlands Railway Ltd, a subsidiary of Govia Ltd (a joint venture between Keolis and Go-Ahead Group)

West Midlands Trains Ltd, currently a wholly owned subsidiary of Abellio Transport Group Ltd with East Japan Railway Company and Mitsui & Co Ltd as minority partners

MTR Corporation (West Midlands) Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of MTR Corporation (UK) Ltd

- 2.5 On 13 June 2016, MTR Corporation (UK) Ltd informed the Department that they would be withdrawing from the competition so that they could focus their resources on other work streams. Contact details for the remaining two bidders can be found in Appendix D.

- 2.6 The new operator is due to take over the franchise in October 2017. We expect to award the contract to the successful bidder in June 2017.

- 2.7 The new franchise will run for 8 ½ years until March 2026. There will also be an option to extend for up to two years, which can be requested in two parts if necessary.

3. Our joint vision and objectives

3.1 The Department and WMR are looking to the new West Midlands Franchise to deliver a rail service fit for modern life that can support the growth of the West Midlands, the rest of the franchise area and the country through enhancing the current rail offer.

3.2 Our joint key objectives are:

Better for the Economy – support the current and predicted growth in jobs, housing, industry, leisure and tourism and retail with a distinct focus on each of the following markets (see Appendix A for maps):

- West Midlands' local and regional services;
- Long distance services along the West Coast Main Line from Liverpool to Birmingham and from Crewe to London; and
- Services to/from London including branch lines.

Ensure there are the right services and capacity to cater for current users and future growth throughout the day and week.

Better for the Passenger – Deliver high quality services and stations, reduce delays and cancellations, and achieve significant improvements in customer satisfaction. Provide affordable, easy to use services at the times and to the places that people want to travel, both now and in the future supported by the provision of accurate and timely information.

Better for communities – Increase engagement between the operator of the new franchise and the communities it serves.

Better for staff – Deliver a franchise which demonstrates a genuine pride in recruiting and developing staff over the long term, improving staff satisfaction, motivation and retention to deliver best in class customer service.

Better for taxpayers – Make the most of the significant investment being made to make improvements to the rail network. Making sure the right level of service is provided to reflect travel patterns and demand, ensuring resources (funding, staff and trains) are used in the areas that need it most. Make improvements efficiently, providing value for money.

Maximising the benefits from investment in infrastructure – Supporting the development of a safe and accessible rail network to modernise and meet the requirements of a modern railway.

Supporting devolution – Develop a plan for the future specification and management of local services to pass to West Midlands Rail in the future, providing a structure for the delivery of those rail services that is focused on the needs of the West Midlands area.

Supporting HS2 – Work with HS2 and Network Rail as a partner on relevant works to enable the delivery of the new high speed rail line between London and the Midlands. Ensure that the foundations are in place for the West Midlands to be ready for the opening of HS2, supporting the HS2 Connectivity Programme being delivered through the West Midlands £8bn growth deal¹.

3.3 Both the Department and WMR are committed to ensuring that the West Midlands Franchise supports the rail industry's sustainability principles², for example by reducing its environmental impacts and carbon emissions and ensuring stations become an integral part of local communities. We will expect bidders to place these sustainability principles at the heart of their proposals.

3.4 We are looking for an ambitious train operator to work with us to deliver services that meet passengers' needs and aspirations. Delivering the objectives we have for this franchise will require significant levels of innovation: new ideas, new technologies and new approaches to delivering an outstanding train service. We are looking for a train operator that has the capability and appetite for embedding innovation throughout the franchise; an operator who can bring in great ideas from other industries or other parts of the rail sector and turn them into products and services that will benefit passengers; and an operator who listens and responds to suggestions from passengers, Stakeholders and staff.

3.5 The West Midlands Franchise requires significant subsidy through taxpayers' money – currently the second highest amount of any franchise in England – so we also need to ensure services provide value for money for the taxpayer and fare paying passenger.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/477421/West_Midlands_devolution_deal_unsigned_final_web.pdf

² <http://www.rssb.co.uk/Library/improving-industry-performance/2016-05-rail-sustainable-development-principles.pdf>

4. Consultation overview

- 4.1 The West Midlands Franchise consultation ran from 15 December 2015 to 22 March 2016. A series of public events were held for people to speak to the project team about the consultation and ask any questions to help inform their response. Separate events were also arranged so that Stakeholders could meet, express views and discuss the consultation ahead of submitting formal responses. The Stakeholder events were aimed at Local Authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local business and commerce representatives, local transport groups, Rail User Groups and other organisations. The team also met with rail unions.
- 4.2 In all, over 60 events were held to raise awareness of the opportunity for people and organisations to have their say. This was further supported by posters and announcements at franchise served stations and major West Midlands’ public transport interchanges, newspaper advertisements reaching four million people and the use of websites and social media. The franchise team also made direct contact with key Stakeholders including all MPs in the franchise area.
- 4.3 Formal Stakeholder consultation events were held in Birmingham, Crewe, Liverpool, London, Milton Keynes, Stafford, Watford, Worcester and Wolverhampton. A series of public events were also held at stations in Birmingham, Coventry, Crewe, Lichfield, Liverpool, London, Milton Keynes, Northampton, Shrewsbury, Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall, Watford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton. Attendees were able to ask questions about the franchising process and future specification, and put forward their views.
- 4.4 The consultation survey asked a series of questions to respondents to obtain comments and opinions on a wide range of issues affecting the next West Midlands Franchise, from how to improve the passenger experience to providing additional capacity and more services.
- 4.5 Formal responses to the consultation could be submitted online, by post, or by email. Over 1,800 responses to the consultation were received.



Transport Focus³ specifically commended the open nature of the consultation in its response, particularly the efforts to engage directly with individual passengers as well as wider Stakeholders.

| Response type | Number of respondents |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Online questionnaire | 1030 |
| Letters/emails | 165 |
| Stakeholder ⁴ responses | 108 |
| Campaign responses | 508 |
| TOTAL | 1811 |

Table 1: Breakdown of consultation responses

| Respondent category | Responses |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Individual | 1195 |
| Councils/Parishes/Political figures/LEPs | 51 |
| Rail passenger representatives/Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)/Rail User Groups | 30 |
| Other interest/lobby groups | 14 |
| Businesses | 9 |
| Rail Unions | 3 |
| Other | 1 |
| Campaigns | 508 |
| TOTAL | 1811 |

Table 2: Respondent categories (a full list of the Stakeholders that responded is provided in Appendix E)

3 Transport Focus is an independent organisation which gathers the views of public transport and road users across the country to understand what customers want, what works well and what could be improved. More information on Transport Focus can be found at www.transportfocus.org.uk

4 Stakeholders are organisations or individuals representing wider groups of people such as MPs and Councillors. Individual respondents are those representing their own personal views.

- 4.6 The campaigns were related to the Abbey Line, the town of Alsager and the Marston Vale Line with over 500 representations between them. The detail of these campaigns can be found in section 6.

Key response themes

- 4.7 A number of common themes were raised by both individuals and Stakeholders throughout responses to the consultation. These tended to focus on improving areas of core service provision, including:
- Increased capacity, especially on peak time trains;
 - A timetable that better represents the needs of today’s society;
 - More punctual and reliable services;
 - Reinstatement of previously operated services;
 - Connectivity between trains and reduced journey times between key centres as a result;
 - Improving the end to end journey, in particular parking and public transport interchange at stations;
 - Better information, especially during disruption;
 - Easier to understand, smarter and more flexible ticketing;
 - Increased staff visibility and more revenue protection;
 - Improved facilities at stations and on trains; and
 - More community involvement in the railway.
- 4.8 The Department and WMR have carefully considered responses to the consultation in the process of developing what the new franchisee will be asked to deliver in the specification.
- 4.9 Bidders also have the flexibility to put forward proposals that go beyond the specification, where it can be demonstrated that such proposals would provide passenger benefits in a way that is affordable. If any particular aspirations have not been met in the franchise specification, Stakeholders are welcome to engage with bidders directly as they develop their proposals.

5. What we are delivering for West Midlands Franchise customers

Summary of benefits

- 5.1 Based on the consultation outputs and the franchise objectives, the new franchisee will need to successfully transform the rail services provided in the West Midlands Franchise, with a focus on:
- Managing overcrowding and providing capacity for future growth;
 - Meeting the travel needs of today’s society and supporting the economy;
 - An enhanced customer experience;
 - Improved reliability, punctuality and management of disruption;
 - Supporting and developing staff in delivering services;
 - More engagement with customers and communities; and
 - Support for projects to improve the railway, including HS2.
- 5.2 The operator will be asked to deliver improvements with careful consideration for the different needs of each of the different markets served – London Commuter services, West Midlands Local and Regional services and Long Distance services (maps provided in Appendix A).
- 5.3 Table 3 sets out some of the improvements being delivered through the specification. A full list of service enhancements by railway line/service is provided in Appendix F.

The specification will require the following improvements as a minimum for passengers:

A significant number of extra vehicles provided to cater for demand, providing an increase of more than 30% in peak capacity on Birmingham services and an increase of more than 25% in peak capacity on London services.

Enhanced Sunday services by December 2021 including earlier first trains, later last trains and increases in frequency throughout the day on many lines.

More frequent and later evening services on some lines around Birmingham throughout the week by December 2018.

An additional hourly off peak daytime service between Birmingham and Shrewsbury Monday to Saturday from December 2018.

A new service to Birmingham and Wolverhampton serving the Stoke-on-Trent area.

New direct peak time services between Walsall and London (two AM peak journeys into London and two PM peak journeys returning from London).

A new Sunday service for the Marston Vale line and Acton Bridge station.

Increased frequency on the Chase line and between Birmingham and Bromsgrove following the completion of electrification projects on these routes.

An additional early morning service between Dorridge and Birmingham via Solihull from December 2021.

Additional morning and afternoon peak journeys between Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham via Solihull from December 2021.

Audio and visual passenger displays on all trains by the end of 2019.

Free Wi-Fi on all main line trains by the end of December 2019.

Refurbishment of all older trains by December 2021, unless they are being replaced before the end of 2022.

Improved connections between trains at key interchange stations.

A fund of £9.6 million for passenger improvements based on customer, community and stakeholder feedback during the franchise.

A £5 million Stations Improvement Fund.

More than £1.25 million for the development of community rail initiatives.

A revenue protection strategy to reduce ticketless travel.

A new better value ticket option for part-time travellers.

A Service Quality Regime in the West Midlands region and on branch lines to improve the presentation and delivery of stations, trains and customer service for passengers.

5.4 Bidders will be required to demonstrate how they will deliver the specification. They will also be encouraged to put forward improvements beyond those mentioned, giving them the opportunity to come up with innovative ideas and solutions to exceed the needs of passengers and Stakeholders.

5.5 When evaluated, each submission will be assessed on price, quality and deliverability. We will give credit to bidders who exceed the minimum requirements through 'quality' initiatives if they can demonstrate their additional improvements are deliverable and offer value for money. We expect to see high levels of innovation throughout bids and are supportive of demonstrations and trials of innovative ideas that will benefit this franchise as well as the wider rail industry.

5.6 While we have not been able to include everything in the specification that consultation respondents wished to see, we have shared the outputs of the consultation (anonymised for individual respondents) with the bidders. We are encouraging them to use this to help inform their proposals for delivering extra initiatives that will benefit passengers.

5.7 A full question by question summary of consultation responses and how we have responded is provided in Appendix G.

What we are delivering

Increasing capacity

5.8 We know that many services particularly in the London and Birmingham area are very crowded and this was the biggest issue raised by respondents in the consultation. We will therefore be setting clear requirements for the franchisee to address this and also provide for future projected passenger growth.

5.9 We are requiring additional carriages/vehicles to be introduced so that more frequent services or longer trains can be provided on some routes. It includes providing extra capacity equivalent to:

27 extra vehicles in December 2018

24 extra vehicles in December 2019

60 extra vehicles in December 2021

26 extra vehicles in December 2022

Table 3: Improvements to be delivered through the next West Midlands Franchise



- 5.10 These carriages will provide more than 30% additional peak capacity in the West Midlands area and more than 25% additional peak capacity on services to/from London Euston and on the West Coast Main Line.
- 5.11 Following feedback from the public consultation, we are requiring the new operator to operate an extra off peak daytime service every hour Monday to Saturday between Birmingham and Shrewsbury from December 2018. This will provide two West Midlands Franchise services per hour on the route in addition to the current hourly service operated by Arriva Trains Wales. Between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, the new service has been specified to call at Wellington, Telford, Shifnal and Codsall as a minimum.
- 5.12 The section of railway between Birmingham and Wolverhampton is very busy, with a number of important local and national services running along it. There is limited capacity for any additional services beyond the new hourly Birmingham to Shrewsbury service.
- 5.13 However, we recognise that there are a number of other aspirations both locally and nationally for enhanced services along this line, for example improved links between Birmingham and Manchester or Shrewsbury and London. Therefore we will be ensuring that the new operator of the West Midlands Franchise works alongside the Department, West Midlands Rail, Network Rail and other train companies to ensure the best use of capacity along this line in the longer term to benefit passengers and Stakeholders across the country.

- 5.14 This could result in future changes to the routes or stopping patterns of West Midlands' and other franchise operators' services to maximise capacity and/or provide new services along this important corridor. Any further changes to services operating along the route will be determined by working closely with Stakeholders and customers to make sure that they meet the needs and aspirations of the many people and businesses that rely on them.
- 5.15 A regular hourly service will also be introduced between Birmingham – Shrewsbury on Sundays from December 2021, which will replace the existing less frequent service provided by Arriva Trains Wales on this route.
- 5.16 A higher frequency service will be delivered on the Chase Line (between Birmingham and Rugeley via Walsall) and between Bromsgrove and Birmingham when the electrification schemes on these lines are complete.
- 5.17 Additional peak services will also be provided between Leamington/Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham via Solihull to provide a more regular service for passengers in these areas. They will be introduced by December 2021 when the additional trains needed to provide these services have been introduced.
- 5.18 We will be asking bidders to explore and set out innovative approaches to improving the offer to the passenger between Worcester and Gloucester and Worcester and Birmingham. This will allow them to investigate if they can overcome constraints with train availability, station capacity, freight movements and engineering requirements to provide more services.
- 5.19 We will not be specifying the continuation of the current single weekly late evening Friday only West Midlands Franchise service between Worcester and Gloucester due to low usage. All other services on this line are currently provided by Great Western Railway (GWR).
- 5.20 We have provided bidders with details of other key lines (see Appendix G, questions 6 and 7) where frequency improvements have been requested through the consultation and welcome proposals from them as to how these can be delivered in addition to those mentioned above.
- 5.21 If longer trains or more regular services cannot be provided, respondents to the consultation suggested removal of First Class would be the most desirable way to increase capacity. This was followed by the removal of 3+2 seating and provision of wider aisles and more comfortable standing space, in particular on the Cross City line in Birmingham.
- 5.22 First Class provides an income source for the operator which in turn could reduce overall costs to the taxpayer or lead to extra improvements being delivered. Bidders will need to consider their approach to First Class taking into account both responses to the consultation and revenue generation.

5.23 We have also let bidders know about people’s comments about changes to seating layouts and the removal of 3+2 seating including the concerns raised about how narrow aisles can cause difficulties getting on and off trains, especially on the Cross City line through Birmingham. We will allow bidders to propose alternative seating layouts on the Cross City line, where the consultation has outlined it as a suitable option.

The Euston to Crewe service

- 5.24 The West Midlands Franchise service between Euston and Crewe is only operated by four carriage trains for most of the day so that it can stop at Stone, Kidsgrove and Alsager in the Stoke-on-Trent area. This is due to short platforms and other infrastructure constraints such as level crossings, signals and railway junctions at these stations. There is often overcrowding on these services.
- 5.25 During peak times trains run non-stop between Stafford and Crewe to allow eight carriage trains to operate to accommodate high levels of demand and manage crowding. This leaves a large gap in West Midlands Franchise services for those stations in the Stoke-on-Trent area. Journeys either side of the peak are getting increasingly busy so the current gap in service would need to become bigger if the growing demand is to be managed through train lengthening.
- 5.26 In the consultation we asked if people would prefer for the routing of the London Euston to Crewe service to stay the same and continue to operate via Stoke-on-Trent, or whether it should be altered to run directly at all times so that longer trains can operate, whilst providing an alternative and more consistent service to destinations south of Stafford for Stone, Stoke-on-Trent, Kidsgrove and Alsager.
- 5.27 Of the 555 individuals who answered the question, nearly two thirds (63%) were supportive of changing the route to be more direct between Stafford and Crewe. This was particularly supported by current users along the Birmingham – Wolverhampton – Stafford route (82%) and from people using the West Coast Main Line south of Stafford (73%).
- 5.28 Conversely, 90% of people who responded to this consultation question from the Stoke-on-Trent area wish to retain the direct link to London provided by the existing service. More detail on the consultation responses on this subject can be found under question 9 in Appendix G.
- 5.29 While we understand the concerns of people from the Stoke-on-Trent area, having carefully looked at feedback from respondents across the wider route and franchise, use of the service and the impacts of not altering the route, we believe that benefits would be felt by a larger number of people by changing the route between Stafford and Crewe.
- 5.30 We have therefore specified that all West Midlands Franchise services between Euston and Crewe run directly between Stafford and Crewe throughout the day from December 2018. At the same time, a new service will be provided from Crewe, Stoke-

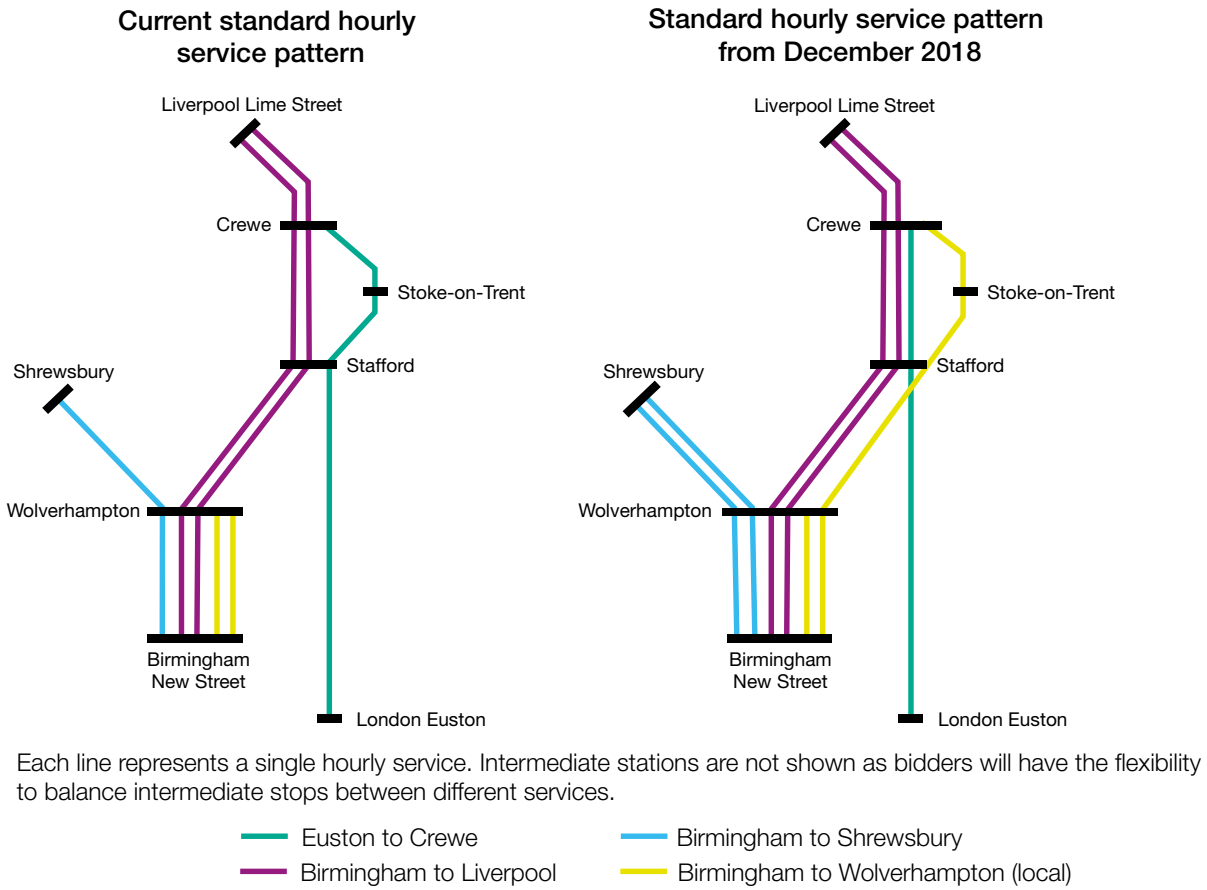
on-Trent and Stafford to Birmingham via Wolverhampton. The advantages of this include:

It will allow the use of longer trains (up to 12 carriages) all day on the London to Crewe route to cater for the increasing usage.

A new direct service will be provided to Birmingham New Street on the Stoke-on-Trent route giving Stone, Kidsgrove and Alsager regular hourly services throughout the day, including during the morning and evening peaks where there are long gaps at present.

In addition to this we have been able to provide improved evening and Sunday services for stations in the Stoke-on-Trent area, something that could not have been provided on the Euston service.

Stations on the West Coast Main Line between Rugby and Stafford will benefit from improved journey times to Crewe. This will improve connectivity between rail services as a result of the alternative journey opportunities available at Crewe.



Route diagrams showing the changes to the routing of West Midlands Franchise services north of Birmingham from December 2018

- 5.31 This does mean, that Stone, Kidsgrove and Alsager will lose their direct services to London and will have to make connections at Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent or Stafford onto other services to London. These stations will, however, gain new direct services to Birmingham and Wolverhampton. Stoke-on-Trent will lose its hourly West Midlands Franchise (current London Midland) service to London as a result, gaining a new Birmingham service instead. This change does not affect the current Virgin InterCity West Coast services that call at Stoke-on-Trent.
- 5.32 Analysis of ticket sales data indicates that typically fewer than 70 passengers per day make a direct journey between Alsager, Kidsgrove or Stone and London Euston. Approximately twice as many tickets are sold for journeys between these stations and either Stoke-on-Trent or Stafford. These passengers will have an enhanced level of service as a result of the route changes.
- 5.33 We will be asking the franchisee to make sure there are high-quality connections and interchange arrangements available at Stafford between the Crewe – Euston and Crewe – Birmingham services.

Providing services to meet today's travel needs⁵

- 5.34 In addition to the improvements outlined above, we are asking for a number of additional enhancements to services to better meet the needs of today's society.
- 5.35 Sunday services will be enhanced to run at a Saturday frequency on many routes. This will mean a significant increase in the number of services running on this day of the week.
- 5.36 Earlier and later services will also be introduced on Sundays on many routes to allow better access to major centres, leisure activities, employment and train connections.
- 5.37 A regular hourly service will be introduced on the Birmingham – Shrewsbury route on Sundays, which will replace the existing less frequent service provided by Arriva Trains Wales on this route.
- 5.38 The Marston Vale line will also be provided with a new hourly Sunday service between Bletchley and Bedford from December 2021.
- 5.39 On the Liverpool to Birmingham route, trains will start calling at Acton Bridge on a Sunday.
- 5.40 In addition to the Sunday improvements, there will be enhancements to morning and evening journeys on many routes Monday to Saturday. This includes more trains after 19:00 as well as earlier morning and later evening services on some routes.

- 5.41 There was Stakeholder and passenger support for a direct service connecting Walsall to London. We are therefore requiring the provision of two morning peak journeys from Walsall into London, and two afternoon peak journeys returning from London back to Walsall from December 2018.
- 5.42 The biggest general (non-line specific) request was for provision of Boxing Day services. We are inviting proposals from bidders as to how they might deliver Boxing Day services, and offering credit where they are able to do so. Sunday services (including the improvements outlined above) will operate on New Year's Day.
- 5.43 Another key theme was improved services for special events such as football matches, concerts and shows at the National Exhibition Centre (NEC). We will be asking bidders to explain how they will work with other train companies, rail industry bodies and event organisers to provide better services, customer experience and information.

Delivering better performing services

- 5.44 We are asking the new operator to meet challenging targets to reduce delays on West Midlands Franchise services.
- 5.45 We will measure punctuality (the number of trains that run on time) in two ways; the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which records how many trains arrive at their final destination within five minutes of the scheduled time; and Right-Time which measures the number of trains that arrive at their terminating station early or within 59 seconds of their scheduled arrival time.
- 5.46 For reliability (the number of trains that are cancelled, miss any scheduled stations, run significantly late or are shorter than they should be) we will be contracting stretching targets that the new operator will be required to meet, by area rather than across the franchise. We will require the operator to analyse the failures to root cause and work with Network Rail and other train companies to improve performance as an industry. The operator will also be required to work more closely with Network Rail, and other passenger and freight train companies to manage planned engineering work and unexpected delays in ways that minimise disruption to the passenger. We are asking bidders to set out how they will approach this.
- 5.47 Consultation respondents were particularly concerned about the number of trains cancelled due to staff related issues. We are asking bidders to set out how they will provide resilience to avoid this issue occurring in future.
- 5.48 The franchisee will need to provide a quick and simple Delay Repay compensation system for passengers. This will include a requirement to provide compensation for delays of 15 minutes or more. The new operator will have to actively promote to passengers how they can claim compensation due to delays.

⁵ A full list of service enhancements by railway line/service is provided in Appendix F.

Reinstatement of previously operated services

- 5.49 Some respondents to the consultation asked for a number of specific new, more frequent or reinstated services to be provided. Many of these are only deliverable with significant investment and infrastructure work. These include:

The Camp Hill Line (Birmingham to Kings Norton via Moseley);

Walsall to Stourbridge;

Lichfield to Burton-on-Trent/Derby;

The Sutton Park Line (Walsall to Birmingham via Sutton Coldfield); and

Walsall to Lichfield.

- 5.50 We are requiring that the franchisee work with WMR, Network Rail, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Authorities and other organisations to see how these schemes could be progressed and delivered in the future. Appendix H sets out the work Network Rail, WMR, its Local Authority partners and other organisations are doing to progress these schemes.

- 5.51 There have been calls from both Stakeholders and individuals for the reinstatement of services on the direct line between Walsall and Wolverhampton.

- 5.52 Due to capacity constraints on the network it would not be possible to operate more than an hourly service without requiring significant infrastructure investment, in particular at Wolverhampton station. Unfortunately, an hourly level of frequency is unlikely to generate sufficient demand to meet value for money criteria.

- 5.53 We recognise, however, that this service remains a strong aspiration and understand that work is being commissioned by Walsall Council and the WMCA to look at the feasibility of the required infrastructure works so that the scheme can be further developed.

- 5.54 Bidders can be awarded credit for proposing such a service, and should work with Walsall Council, the WMCA and WMR on developing proposals for a service which meets the requirements of passengers and Stakeholders.

- 5.55 Services at Barlaston, Norton Bridge and Wedgwood stations are currently provided by a rail-replacement bus service. There have been calls for the reinstatement of a train service at these stations. We are asking bidders to develop proposals and costs to reinstate rail services at Wedgwood/Barlaston stations. We will evaluate each submission to determine whether reinstating train services at either station is deliverable and affordable. We will then seek to run a formal closure consultation process for any stations where train services are not proposed to be reinstated. We are considering the next steps to take regarding Norton Bridge.

Enhancing connections

- 5.56 Due to the complexity of the rail network on the West Midlands Franchise there will always be a requirement for people to change trains to reach some destinations.
- 5.57 In the consultation respondents set out a number of ways in which connecting between services could be made easier.
- 5.58 We have asked the bidders to set out how they will work with other train companies at key locations to improve timetabling between services to key destinations to reduce overall journey times. There will also be a specific requirement to focus on making connections better between West Midlands Franchise services at Bletchley, Lichfield Trent Valley, Stafford and Watford Junction.
- 5.59 This will need to be supported by other measures including enhanced signage and information and ensuring platform allocations make it easier for people to change between trains. We have asked bidders how they will deliver this.

Improved facilities on trains and stations

- 5.60 While the biggest general concern on board trains was the aforementioned crowding, outside of this area the items that most people wished to have introduced or improved on both long and short distance services were audio and visual passenger displays.
- 5.61 These will be delivered through requirements to improve accessibility on trains by the end of 2019.
- 5.62 We are requiring a full refurbishment of all older trains by December 2021, unless they are being replaced before the end of 2022, incorporating the replacement of seats and other interior fittings, replacement lighting and installation of CCTV where not already fitted.
- 5.63 Improved luggage space on long distance and airport services, and plug sockets on both long and short journeys were also a priority for respondents. Bidders have been made aware of this so they can take it into account when considering their plans for train refurbishment. Free Wi-Fi was considered to be important, and the Government is mandating its roll out on all services in England and Wales by the end of 2019.
- 5.64 At stations the main facility people wished to see introduced or improved were waiting rooms and/or shelters. This was raised by a third of respondents. The provision and quality of toilets was also a key concern raised by over a quarter of customers.
- 5.65 The operator will be required to provide a £5m Stations Improvement Fund, which is to be used to deliver improvements to facilities at stations in the first few years of the franchise. This will be succeeded by a £1.6m per annum Customers & Communities Improvement Fund from April 2020 onwards. This initiative is designed to support

schemes that are of real benefit to the community and meet a social need, though are not for commercial gain.

- 5.66 There was Stakeholder support for improved access to stations for all. The new operator will be required to provide a minor works fund of £300,000 a year to improve accessibility at stations. They will also be required to work alongside Network Rail and other Stakeholders on the delivery of larger schemes to improve access to the railway for all.
- 5.67 Cleanliness and maintenance has come out as a key issue on stations and on trains. When customers were asked about what represents good value on their rail journey, the need for increased cleanliness was in the top four responses. Cleanliness was also frequently mentioned by Stakeholders.
- 5.68 We are specifying the introduction of a Service Quality Regime in the West Midlands and on Branch Lines where passenger revenue is lower. In these areas the operator will be required to meet certain targets for presentation (cleanliness and maintenance) and customer service, with penalties for under-performance. These will work hand in hand with stretching customer satisfaction targets across the franchise area.

Connectivity to stations

- 5.69 In the consultation, several people raised concerns about their ability to get to their local station, either due to a lack of sufficient/appropriate car parking or poor public transport connections. These were two of the key reasons why 15% of respondents did not use their nearest station.
- 5.70 We are aware that car park capacity is an issue, and are requiring bidders to set out their car parking strategy and how it will satisfy demand for parking across the day. This will include how they will work alongside Local Authorities and the WMCA, the latter of which provides over 8,000 free parking spaces at rail stations within the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.
- 5.71 We are also offering a Residual Value Mechanism to bidders. This means if they invest money in improvements, but do not get enough value from them during the franchise to recoup their costs they can get the equivalent amount of money they have missed out on back at the end of the franchise. This should encourage more investment during the franchise.
- 5.72 We have asked bidders how they will improve the end to end journey, especially by sustainable modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. This will benefit the environment, increase accessibility to the station and encourage those with alternative options to the private car to utilise them and free up spaces for those who have no choice other than to drive.

- 5.73 We have set out to improve public transport connections at all West Midlands Franchise stations. The franchisee will be specifically required to work with the Bus Alliance⁶ that has recently been formed in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, to achieve better bus rail integration including delivering a number of best in class pilot schemes within the region.

- 5.74 The operator will also have to work with local authorities to improve walking and cycling routes to the stations. The need for improved, secure cycle storage at stations was expressed through the consultation. We have asked bidders to set out what they will do to address this in the specification.

Better information, especially during disruption

- 5.75 The biggest driver of dissatisfaction in the West Midlands Franchise – and for rail travel in England as a whole – is the provision of information during disruption (as measured by Transport Focus in the National Rail Passenger Satisfaction Survey). This was also evident in responses to the consultation.
- 5.76 Through the consultation, customers and Stakeholders set out their requirements for what information they wished to receive during disruption and via what channels. This has been provided to bidders to utilise as they set out their proposals. Existing and emerging technology should be used alongside other media to improve information provision for all, including making it personalised to individual customers' needs where possible.

Clearer, smarter and more flexible ticketing

- 5.77 There was a strong desire within the public consultation for wider and more accessible ways for people to pay for their journey, in particular harnessing the use of technology and providing additional ticket machines.
- 5.78 We have therefore set out a requirement for an improved ticketing experience for customers including by:
- Developing and rolling out ticketing technology;
 - Providing widespread and easy access to the full range of tickets;
 - Delivering an efficient and high standard of ticket retailing service; and
 - Expanding the availability of smart ticketing across the franchise.

⁶ The Bus Alliance has been established to deliver improved bus services in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area. It is run by a board comprised of councillors and representatives from bodies including local authorities, bus operators, the West Midlands Combined Authority, West Midlands Police, Transport Focus and is supported by the Department for Transport.

- 5.79 The franchise will be specifically required to introduce a new smart ticketing product for commuters into London Euston on the Northampton line, and also for travellers on the Abbey Line.
- 5.80 A number of respondents flagged the need for more flexible ticketing to be available, particularly for people who don't travel every day e.g. people who work part-time. As a result, the new operator will be required to offer products that give customers who travel fewer than five days per week a better value option than buying multiple return journeys.

Increased staff visibility and more revenue protection

- 5.81 There were a number of concerns raised through the consultation from both individuals and Stakeholders about the lack of staff visibility at stations and on trains.
- 5.82 We are specifying that the new operator provides a member of staff to be contactable for passengers at every West Midlands Franchise operated station from first to last train, whether that be in person, via a help point, social media or by mobile telephone.
- 5.83 Consultation respondents mentioned in their answers to a number of questions their concerns that staff did not pass through the train carriages. This was most notably linked to feelings of security and lack of ticket checks.
- 5.84 In response to this we are asking bidders to set out how they will improve staff visibility on trains and also to provide a strategy to reduce ticketless travel.

More community involvement

- 5.85 There was a lot of support for more community involvement in the new franchise from both customers and Stakeholders.
- 5.86 From individuals this was around station sponsorship/adoption (including from local businesses), increased opportunities for passengers to give feedback and community involvement in stations e.g. use of station buildings by communities or station/garden maintenance schemes.
- 5.87 From community groups there was a strong view that more funding is required to support initiatives. Some felt that the lack of certainty around funding together with a lack of proactive engagement from train companies and Network Rail made community involvement difficult.
- 5.88 There are currently two formal Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) – the Marston Vale CRP and the Abbey Line CRP – in the West Midlands Franchise area and a small number of local station community schemes. However, there is scope for many more especially due to the ongoing collaboration with WMR and the large number of active Rail User Groups across the franchise area.

- 5.89 We have specified an increased amount of £150,000 per annum to be spent on developing community initiatives linked to the railway. This will give the two existing CRPs more security going forward and allow for the development of additional community involvement. This will be supported by the aforementioned Customers & Communities Improvement Fund which will fund rail related schemes that support social need using feedback from local Stakeholders and passengers. Furthermore, the two existing CRPs will play a key role in helping the new franchisee to understand the needs and aspirations of passengers on the two branch lines.



6. Campaigns

- 6.1 There were three campaigns in response to the consultation. These are summarised as follows:

Petition from the Alsager area

- 6.2 An 83 name petition was submitted requesting that the area retain its direct links to London through retention of the existing London to Crewe service routeing.
- 6.3 As mentioned previously under “increasing capacity” in section 5 and in our response to Question 9 within Appendix G, we do understand the local strength of feeling about the direct link to London, however having assessed the wider consultation responses and benefits and disadvantages of retaining the existing routeing, we are going to specify that the service is changed to run directly between Stafford and Crewe at all times. A new service will be provided for the stations between Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe linking to Wolverhampton and Birmingham. The benefits of this are outlined in paragraph 5.30.

Marston Vale Line petition

- 6.4 A 125 name petition was submitted calling for improvements to reliability and punctuality on the Marston Vale line and raising concerns about how the operator deals with delays.
- 6.5 This will be dealt with through the improved reliability and punctuality targets and the requirement for bidders to set out their approach to dealing with delays including the need for a member of train company staff to be contactable from first to last train at all stations.
- 6.6 The petition also called for the replacement of Class 153 single car trains on the line, in particular during peak with specific concerns raised about the ease of getting on and off the vehicles due to crowding and narrow doors.
- 6.7 This is something bidders will need to consider as part of their rolling stock strategy, however we have made them aware of the concerns about the use of these units. Any units brought into use prior to 1995 are required to have a full refurbishment by December 2021, unless they are being replaced before the end of 2022, and will be required to comply with accessibility requirements by the end of December 2019, which includes the Class 153s.

- 6.8 We will be introducing a new hourly Sunday service on the Marston Vale line from December 2021, one of the key requests which came from the Community Rail Partnership which represents the line.

The Abbey Line campaign

- 6.9 300 duplicates of the same letter were received calling for a range of improvements to the Abbey Line (Watford Junction to St Albans Abbey), most notably:

A clock-face frequency instead of the current 45 minute service –

Unfortunately this cannot be provided without significant and costly infrastructure work. Usage on the line means the business case is poor for such an expensive scheme so we cannot provide it as part of the franchise specification. Bidders are, however, being asked to look at schemes such as this with local Stakeholders and Network Rail during the franchise. We will be delivering an enhanced daytime frequency on a Sunday from December 2021, similar to that currently provided on a Saturday.

Later trains – From December 2016 some later services will be delivered through the current Direct Award contract, with last journeys departing after 23:00 and we have specified these to continue.

Smart ticketing – Bidders will be required to develop smart ticketing options for customers travelling on the Abbey Line.

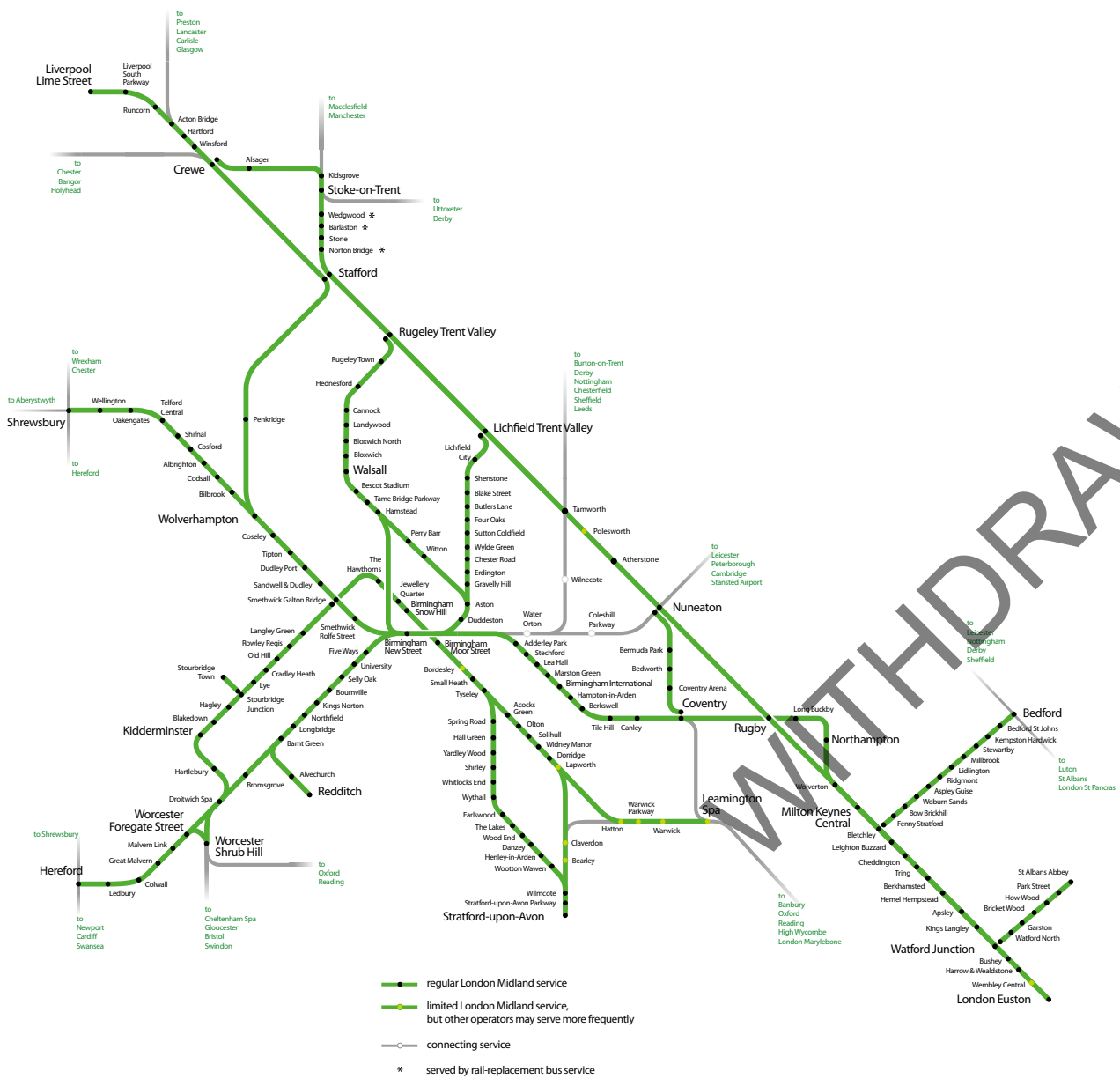
Revenue Protection – The ticketless travel survey has confirmed that many passengers are travelling without tickets and bidders will be required to demonstrate how they will manage ticketless travel on the route.

Improved staff visibility, more ticket machines, and improved interchange at Watford Junction – Bidders will have to provide funding to deliver these kinds of improvements across the network at locations they deem most suitable.

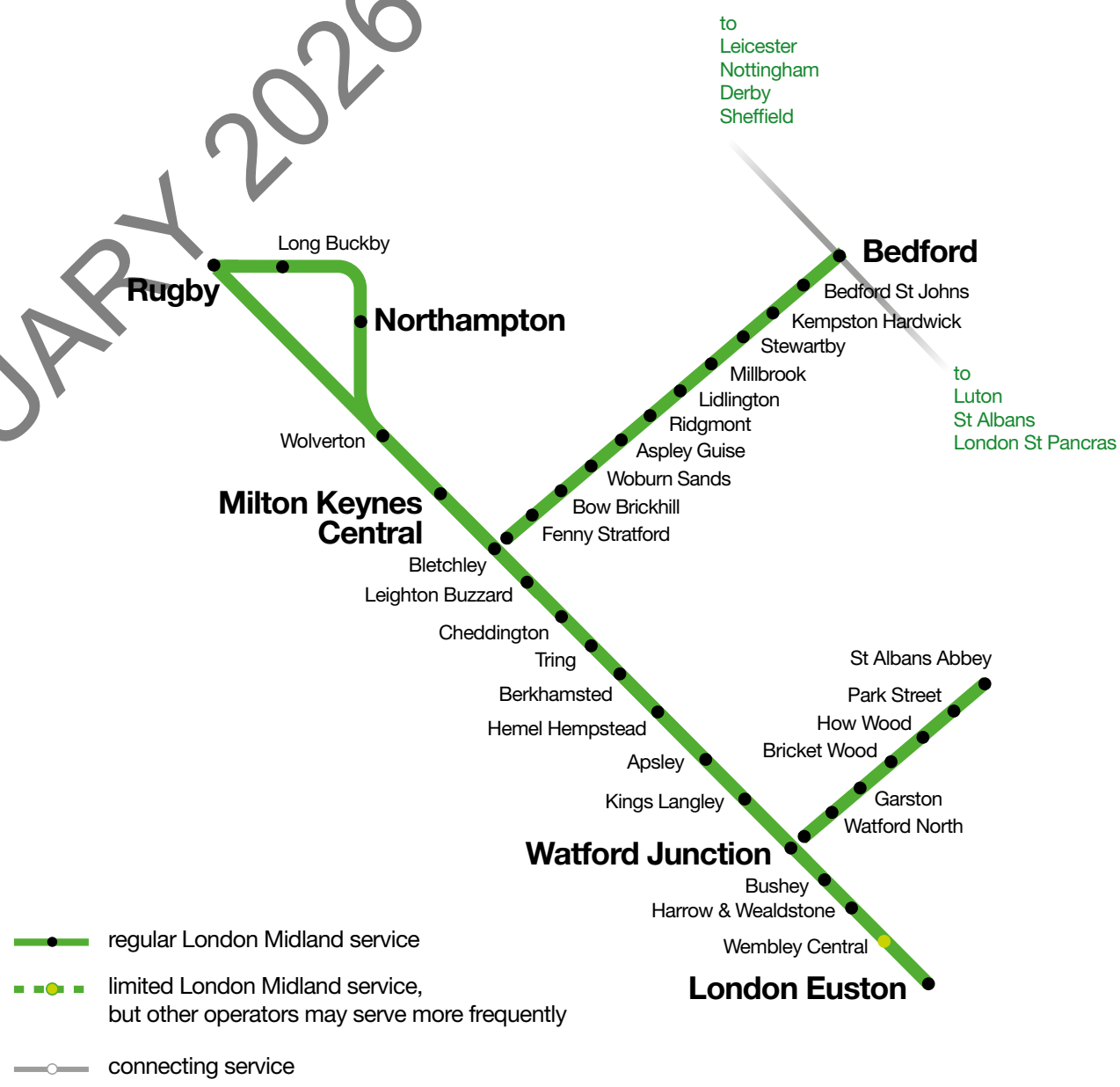
- 6.10 We recognise the value the Community Rail Partnerships on the Abbey Line and Marston Vale Line bring to the local network. To recognise this we are significantly increasing funding to support these two CRPs and roll out this best practice to other areas of the franchise. We are also requiring that the franchisee work closely with them to better understand the needs and aspirations of passengers on these lines.

Appendix A: Franchise maps

Whole franchise map



West Midlands Franchise route map – London Commuter services



This map shows the route of West Midlands Franchise Services as they currently operate as of August 2016.

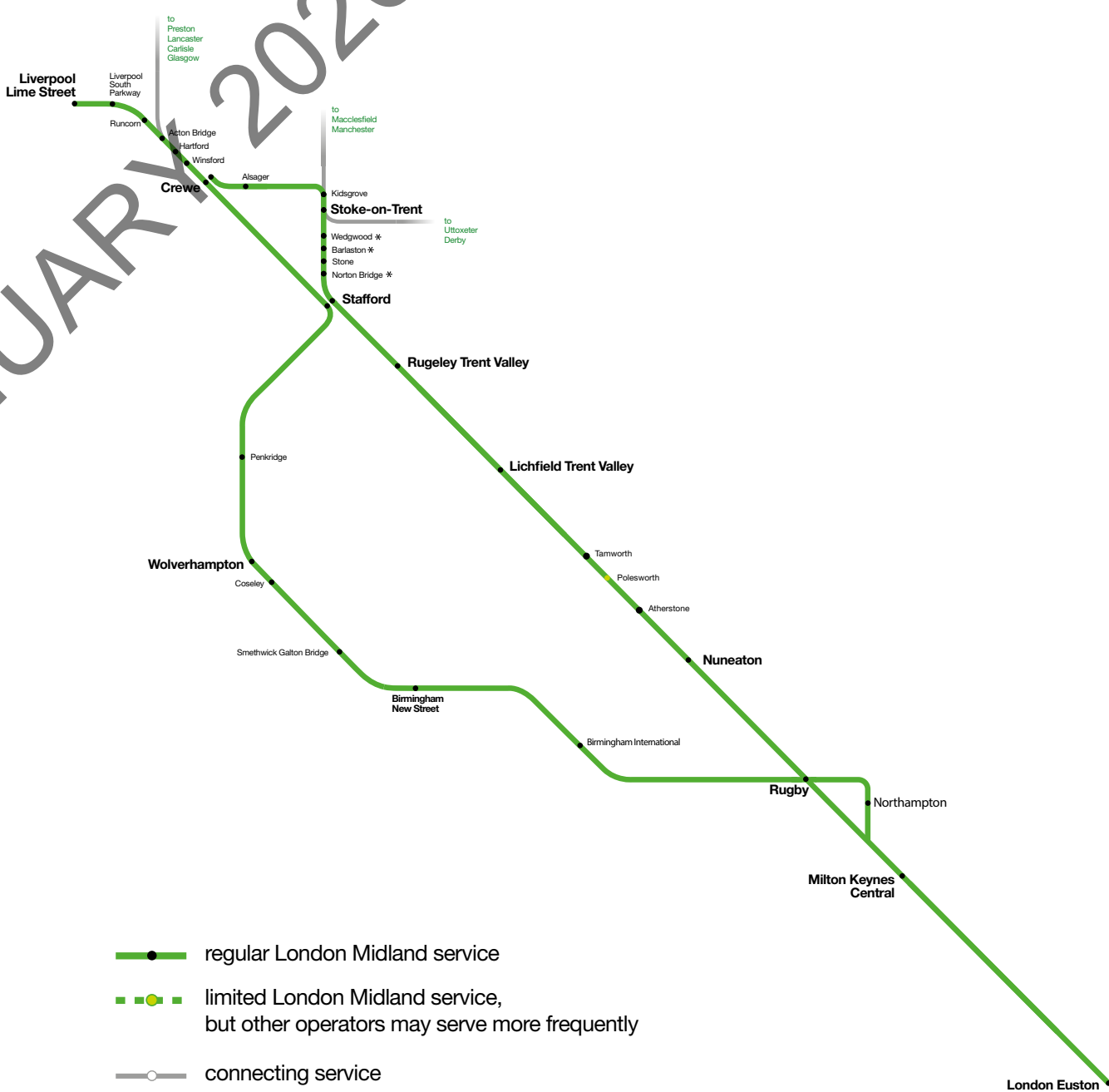
This map shows the route of West Midlands Franchise Services as they currently operate as of August 2016. For details of changes specified to routes shown in this map please refer to the diagram on page 23.

West Midlands Franchise route map – West Midlands Local and Regional services



This map shows the route of West Midlands Franchise Services as they currently operate as of August 2016. For details of changes specified to routes shown in this map please refer to the diagram on page 23.

West Midlands Franchise route map – Long Distance West Coast Main Line services



This map shows the route of West Midlands Franchise Services as they currently operate as of August 2016. For details of changes specified to routes shown in this map please refer to the diagram on page 23.

Appendix B: West Midlands Rail partners

West Midlands Rail Limited (WMR) is made up of the seven metropolitan district authorities of the West Midlands and seven shire and unitary authorities:

- Birmingham
- Coventry
- Dudley
- Herefordshire
- Northamptonshire
- Sandwell
- Shropshire
- Solihull
- Staffordshire
- Telford and Wrekin
- Walsall
- Warwickshire
- Worcestershire
- Wolverhampton

Representatives from Local Enterprise Partnerships also attend meetings of the board.

More information on West Midlands Rail Limited can be found at:
www.westmidlandsrail.com

Appendix C: Business Unit map

The below map shows how the current franchise will be separated into two business units to allow for devolution of local and regional West Midlands services to West Midlands Rail.



West Midlands Franchise Separable Business Units

Appendix D: Shortlisted bidder details

| Bidding Enterprise | Contact |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| West Midlands Trains Ltd Currently a wholly owned subsidiary of Abellio Transport Group Ltd with East Japan Railway Company and Mitsui & Co Ltd as minority partners | Simon Pready, Bid Director Two Snow Hill Snow Hill Queensway Birmingham B4 6GA Email: westmidlandsbid@Abellio.com Tel: 0121 655 0075 |
| London and West Midlands Railway Ltd A subsidiary of Govia Ltd (a joint venture between Keolis SA and The Go-Ahead Group plc) | Andy Coulthurst, Bid Director 2nd Floor Westwing 344-354 Gray's Inn Road London WC1X 8BP Email: andy.coulthurst@go-ahead.com Tel: 020 7164 2022 |

West Midlands Franchise shortlisted bidder contact details

Appendix E: List of Stakeholder respondents

| Councils/Parishes/Political figures/LEPs |
|---------------------------------------------|
| Acton Bridge Parish Council |
| Aldbury Parish Council |
| Alsagar Town Council |
| Anne Main MP for St Albans |
| Bedford Borough Council |
| Birmingham City Council |
| Blackpool Council |
| Bow Brickhill Parish Council |
| Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council |
| Buckinghamshire County Council |
| Cannock Chase District Council |
| Central Bedfordshire Council |
| Cheshire East Council |
| Cheshire West & Chester Council |
| Cheslyn Hay Parish Council |
| Churchill & Blakedown Parish Council |
| Coventry & Warwickshire LEP |
| Coventry City Council |
| Daventry District Council |
| Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Fiona Bruce MP for Congleton |
| Gloucestershire County Council |
| Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council |
| Harriett Baldwin MP for West Worcestershire |
| Herefordshire County Council |
| Hertfordshire County Council |

| Councils/Parishes/Political figures/LEPs |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lichfield City Council |
| Lichfield District Council |
| Milton Keynes Council |
| Northampton Borough Council |
| Northamptonshire County Council |
| Oliver Dowden CBE MP for Hertsmere |
| Pitstone Parish Council |
| Richard Harrington MP for Watford |
| Ruth Smeeth MP for Stoke-on-Trent North |
| Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Shropshire Council |
| Sir William (Bill) Cash MP for Stone |
| South Shropshire Green Party |
| St Stephen Parish Council |
| Staffordshire County Council |
| Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP |
| Stoke-on-Trent Council (Cllr Jack Brereton) |
| Stone Town Council |
| Telford & Wrekin Council |
| The Marches Rail Study (Telford & Wrekin Council, Herefordshire Council and Shropshire Council) |
| The Liverpool City Region |
| The West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority |
| Transport for London |
| Tring & Berkhamstead Liberal Democrats |
| Tring Town Council |
| Walsall Council |
| Welsh Government |
| Warwickshire County Council |
| City of Wolverhampton Council |
| Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire LEP |
| Wrexham County Borough Council |

| Rail passenger representatives/Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs)/Rail User Groups |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abbey Flyers Users' Group |
| Abbey Line Group |
| Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) |
| Atherstone Rail Users' Group (ARUG) |
| Avon Rail Link |
| Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association |
| Campaign for Rail |
| Cannock Chase Rail Promotion Group |
| Cotswold Line Promotion Group |
| English Regional Transport Association |
| Friends of Alsager Station |
| Friends of Milbrook Station |
| Leominster Rail Users |
| Lichfield Rail Alliance |
| Lichfield Rail Promotion Group |
| Marches Rail User Alliance |
| Marches Strategic Rail Group |
| Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership |
| Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association |
| Northampton Rail Users' Group |
| North Staffs Rail Promotion Group |
| Rail Freight Group |
| Railfuture |
| Rugby Rail Users |
| Shakespeare Line Promotion Group |
| Shifnal Forward Transport Action Group |
| Shrewsbury Rail Users' Federation |
| Solihull and Leamington Rail Users' Association |
| Stourbridge Line User Group |
| Stratford Rail Transport Group |
| Transport Focus |
| Wellington Local Agenda 21 Group |

| Businesses |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| Barratt Developments |
| Bilfinger GVA on behalf of Barratt Developments |
| Birmingham Airport |
| Birmingham Children’s Hospital |
| Chiltern Railways |
| Freightliner Group Limited |
| Michael Byng & Alan Marshall (consultants) |
| NEC Group |
| St. Modwen |
| Wellington Chamber of Commerce |

| Other interest/lobby groups |
|------------------------------------------------------|
| Birmingham City University Students’ Union |
| Bricket Wood Society |
| British Transport Police |
| Campaign for Better Transport |
| Dorridge & District Residents’ Association |
| Go Travel Solutions |
| Mid Wales Transport Partnership |
| Motorcycle Action Group |
| North Staffordshire Pensioners Convention |
| North Wales Economic Ambition Board |
| Push Bikes Cycle Campaign Group, Birmingham |
| Sustrans |
| TravelWatch NorthWest |
| West Midlands Friends of the Earth |
| West Midlands Pensioners Convention UK |
| Wolves on Wheels Cycle Campaign Group, Wolverhampton |

| Rail Unions |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aslef |
| National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers (RMT) |
| Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association (TSSA) |
| Other |
| Birmingham Airport and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (combined) |

Stakeholder respondents by category

Appendix F: List of key service improvements by line

In addition to the general improvements delivered across the whole franchise area, the summary below outlines improvements delivered by railway line/service. These are the minimum service improvements we are specifying. Bidders can choose to propose enhancements above these and are being offered credit for doing so.

In particular, we have asked operators to look at proposals to provide additional earlier and later services, improved frequencies between Worcester and Gloucester and Worcester and Birmingham, and Boxing Day services. We have been restricted as to what we can specify in these areas due to operating constraints such as track possessions needed to do engineering works, but bidders may be able to propose improvements through dialogue with Network Rail and other parties.

On Bank Holidays a Saturday level of service will run with the exception of New Year's Day when a Sunday service will operate.

Please note service improvements are stated by the major destination they serve, not necessarily the terminating station e.g. the higher evening frequencies for Sutton Coldfield will need to terminate at either Four Oaks, Blake Street or Lichfield to enable the train to turn around.

The Abbey Line (St Albans Abbey to Watford Junction)

Later services will be provided on the Abbey Line from December 2016, with some journeys departing after 23:00. We have specified for these to continue in the new franchise.

Provision of an enhanced daytime Sunday frequency from December 2021, similar to that currently provided on a Saturday.

A new smart ticketing product will be required to be delivered for customers travelling on the Abbey Line.

All trains are required to be fitted with live tracking technology so that real time passenger information can be provided.

We are requiring the operator to provide a robust strategy to deliver services during the autumn leaf-fall period in collaboration with Network Rail. They will need to focus on delivering the normal level of service wherever possible, while ensuring that services operate reliably and punctually, meet demand, manage crowding and deliver customer satisfaction.

Increased Community Rail Partnership funding.

Delivery of a Service Quality Regime to improve cleanliness, maintenance, presentation and customer service for passengers.

Bedford to Bletchley (the Marston Vale Line)

Provision of a new hourly Sunday service from December 2021, offering 14 services in each direction.

Increased Community Rail Partnership funding.

Delivery of a Service Quality Regime to improve cleanliness, maintenance, presentation and customer service for passengers.

Refurbishment of older trains such as the Class 150s and 153s that currently operate on the line (if the operator chooses to retain these vehicles).

Birmingham Chase Line (Birmingham – Walsall – Cannock – Rugeley)

Increased frequency from one to two services an hour between Birmingham and Rugeley during the off-peak by December 2018.

New direct services between Walsall and London at peak times (two morning peak journeys into London and two evening peak journeys returning from London) by December 2018.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Saturday between Birmingham and Walsall to three services an hour by December 2018.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Friday between Birmingham and Rugeley to two services an hour by December 2018.

Later last services Monday to Friday from Birmingham to Rugeley as an extension from Hednesford, departing Birmingham at least one hour later by December 2018.

Increased Sunday frequency between Walsall and Birmingham from two to four services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Rugeley and Birmingham from one to two services an hour by December 2021.

Later last services from Cannock to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving in Birmingham two hours 45 minutes later by December 2018.

Later last services from Birmingham to Rugeley on Sunday, departing from Birmingham at least three hours 45 minutes later by December 2018.

Birmingham Cross City North (Birmingham to Sutton Coldfield and Lichfield)

Increased evening frequency Monday to Saturday between Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield to four services an hour by December 2018.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Friday between Birmingham and Lichfield City to four services an hour by December 2018.

Increased Sunday frequency between Sutton Coldfield and Birmingham from two to six services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Lichfield City and Birmingham from two to four services an hour by December 2021.

Bidders are being asked to consider changes to the 3+2 seating configuration on the Cross City line to provide more comfortable standing space and wider aisles for passengers following feedback from the consultation.

We are requiring the operator to provide a robust strategy to deliver services during the autumn leaf-fall period in collaboration with Network Rail. They will need to focus on delivering the normal level of service wherever possible, while ensuring that services operate reliably and punctually, meet demand, manage crowding and deliver customer satisfaction.

Birmingham Cross City South (Birmingham to Longbridge and Redditch)

Earlier first services from Longbridge to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving at least 30 minutes earlier by December 2018.

Increased Sunday frequency between Redditch and Birmingham from two to three services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Longbridge and Birmingham from two to four services an hour by December 2018 and a further increase to six services an hour by December 2021.

Direct journeys will be provided throughout the day between Barnt Green and Bromsgrove once the line is electrified.

Bidders are being asked to consider changes to the 3+2 seating configuration on the Cross City line to provide more comfortable standing space and wider aisles for passengers.

We are requiring the operator to provide a robust strategy to deliver services during the autumn leaf-fall period in collaboration with Network Rail. They will need to focus on delivering the normal level of service wherever possible, while ensuring that services operate reliably and punctually, meet demand, manage crowding and deliver customer satisfaction.

Birmingham – Bromsgrove – Worcester

Increased frequency from one to four services an hour between Birmingham and Bromsgrove Monday to Sunday during the day by December 2018.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Saturday between Birmingham and Bromsgrove to three services an hour by December 2018.

Earlier first services from Bromsgrove to Birmingham on Saturday, arriving at least 30 minutes earlier by December 2018.

The provision of a regular hourly evening service on Saturdays between Birmingham (New Street) and Worcester (in both directions) by December 2018.

Two additional evening services from Hereford to Birmingham on Saturdays, with the last service arriving at least 45 minutes later by December 2018.

Later last services from Birmingham to Bromsgrove on Saturdays, departing from Birmingham at least 45 minutes later by December 2018.

Earlier first services from Great Malvern to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving at least one hour 30 minutes earlier by December 2021.

Earlier first services from Hereford to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving at least 30 minutes earlier by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Bromsgrove and Birmingham from one train every two hours to four services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday service provision between Hereford and Birmingham rising from six services each way to 11 services each way throughout the day by December 2021.

Later last services from Bromsgrove to Birmingham on Sundays, arriving in Birmingham at least two hours later by December 2018.

Later last services from Birmingham to Bromsgrove on Sundays, departing Birmingham at least 45 minutes later by December 2018.

Later last services from Birmingham to Bromsgrove on Sundays, departing Birmingham at least 45 minutes later by December 2018 and at least one hour 15 minutes later by December 2021.

Bidders being offered credit for proposals to increase frequency between Birmingham New Street and Worcester subject to deliverability and cost.

Birmingham – Stourbridge – Kidderminster – Worcester

Increased evening frequency Monday to Saturday between Birmingham and Stourbridge Junction to three services an hour by December 2018.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Saturday from Birmingham to Kidderminster from one to three services an hour by December 2018.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Friday from Kidderminster to Birmingham from one to two services an hour by December 2018.

Increased Sunday frequency between Stourbridge Junction and Birmingham from two to six services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Kidderminster and Birmingham from one to four services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Worcester and Birmingham Snow Hill from one to two services an hour by December 2021.

Stourbridge Town – Stourbridge Junction

Increased Sunday frequency between Stourbridge Town and Stourbridge Junction from four to six services an hour by December 2021.

A requirement to address crowding problems encountered on the service.

Birmingham – Solihull/Shirley/Stratford-upon-Avon

An additional early morning service between Dorridge and Birmingham via Solihull Monday to Friday from December 2021.

By December 2021, additional weekday services will operate in the peak periods between Stratford-upon-Avon and Dorridge, creating a regular hourly service in both directions between Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham via Solihull.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Saturday from Birmingham to Solihull to two services an hour by December 2018.

Increased evening frequency Monday to Saturday from Birmingham to Shirley to two services an hour by December 2018.

Earlier first services from Solihull to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving at least one hour 15 minutes earlier by December 2018.

Earlier first services from Birmingham to Solihull on Sunday, starting two hours earlier by December 2021.

Earlier first services from Shirley to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving at least 30 minutes earlier by December 2018.

Increased Sunday frequency between Solihull and Birmingham from one to three services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham from one to two services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Shirley and Birmingham from one to three services an hour by December 2021.

Later last services from Solihull to Birmingham on Sundays, arriving in Birmingham at least three hours 45 minutes later by December 2021.

Later last services from Birmingham to Solihull on Sundays, departing Birmingham at least four hours later by December 2021.

Later last services from Birmingham to Stratford-upon-Avon on Sundays, departing Birmingham at least 45 minutes later by December 2021.

Later last services from Birmingham to Shirley on Sundays, departing Birmingham at least 45 minutes later by December 2021.

Birmingham – Marston Green – Birmingham International – Tile Hill - Coventry – Northampton

Earlier first services from Rugby to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving at least 30 minutes earlier by December 2018.

Increased Sunday frequency between Northampton and Birmingham from one to two services an hour by December 2021.

Birmingham – Wolverhampton – Shrewsbury

An extra train every hour Monday to Saturday during the daytime off peak period between Birmingham and Shrewsbury by December 2018. This will provide two West Midlands Franchise services an hour on the route in addition to the current hourly service operated by Arriva Trains Wales. Between Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton, the new service has been specified to call at Wellington, Telford, Shifnal and Codsall as a minimum.

A new hourly Sunday West Midlands Franchise service between Shrewsbury and Birmingham, replacing the less frequent Arriva Trains Wales service on this day by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency for stopping services between Birmingham and Wolverhampton from one to two services an hour by December 2021.

Birmingham – Wolverhampton – Stafford – Stoke-on-Trent – Crewe

New hourly train service between Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe commencing December 2018.

This replaces Euston to Crewe service for Stone, Kids Grove and Alsager.

The new service provides passengers at Stone, Kidsgrove and Alsager with a number of additional journeys compared with the London Euston – Crewe service, enhancing the service level for both local and longer distance users, including:

- Two additional morning peak journeys Monday to Friday into Birmingham (compared to no morning peak journeys on the Crewe to Euston service), with the first service arriving in Birmingham by 8:15am;
- Two additional evening peak journeys Monday to Friday from Birmingham (compared to no evening peak journeys on the Euston to Crewe service);
- Two extra Monday to Friday evening journeys from Crewe to Birmingham, including one after 10pm;
- Three extra Monday to Friday evening journeys from Birmingham to Crewe, including one after 10pm;
- Two extra morning journeys between 07:00 and 09:59 on Saturday into Birmingham, with the first service arriving by 08:15;
- One extra late afternoon journey and two extra evening journeys on Saturday out of Birmingham, with the last service departing after 9pm;
- Two extra Saturday evening journeys from Crewe to Birmingham;
- Two extra Sunday daytime journeys between Crewe and Birmingham;
- Three extra Sunday evening journeys from Birmingham to Crewe, including one after 10pm; and
- One extra Sunday evening journey from Crewe to Birmingham after 10pm.

Connections will be specified between the Euston and Birmingham services at Stafford, maintaining the possibility of making through journeys to/from London.

Nuneaton – Coventry – Kenilworth – Leamington⁷

An hourly service will be provided between Coventry and Leamington calling at the new station at Kenilworth.

One additional evening service on Saturday between Coventry and Nuneaton by December 2018.

Earlier first services from Coventry to Nuneaton on Sunday, departing from Coventry at least two hours earlier by December 2021.

Earlier first services from Nuneaton to Coventry on Sunday, arriving in Coventry at least two hours earlier by December 2021.

Two additional evening services on Sunday from Nuneaton to Coventry by December 2021.

Liverpool – Crewe – Birmingham

Later last services from Birmingham to Liverpool on Saturdays, departing Birmingham at least 45 minutes later by December 2018.

Four additional station calls at Acton Bridge Monday to Saturday from December 2018

A new Sunday service for Acton Bridge from December 2021.

Earlier first services from Liverpool to Birmingham on Sunday, arriving at least three hours 30 minutes earlier by December 2021.

Earlier first services from Birmingham to Liverpool on Sunday, departing at least 45 minutes earlier by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency between Birmingham and Liverpool from one to two services an hour by December 2021.

London – Tring – Milton Keynes – Northampton

Increased Sunday frequency from midday onwards between London Euston and Milton Keynes from three to four services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency from midday onwards between London Euston and Tring from two to three services an hour by December 2021.

Increased Sunday frequency from midday onwards between London Euston and Berkhamsted from three to four services an hour by December 2021

Increased Sunday frequency between London Euston and Northampton from two to three services an hour by December 2021.

A new smart ticketing product will be required to be delivered for customers travelling between London and Northampton.

London – Crewe

An additional late evening service from London Euston to Crewe via the Trent Valley on Monday to Friday, departing London at least 30 minutes later by December 2018.

Two additional late evening services from London Euston to Crewe on Saturdays, the last one departing London at least one hour 45 minutes later by December 2018.

Earlier first services from Crewe to London Euston on Sundays, arriving at least two hours earlier by December 2021.

⁷ For information on increased frequency between Nuneaton and Coventry please see our responses to questions 6 and 7 in Appendix G.

Appendix G: Question by Question summary

Respondent data

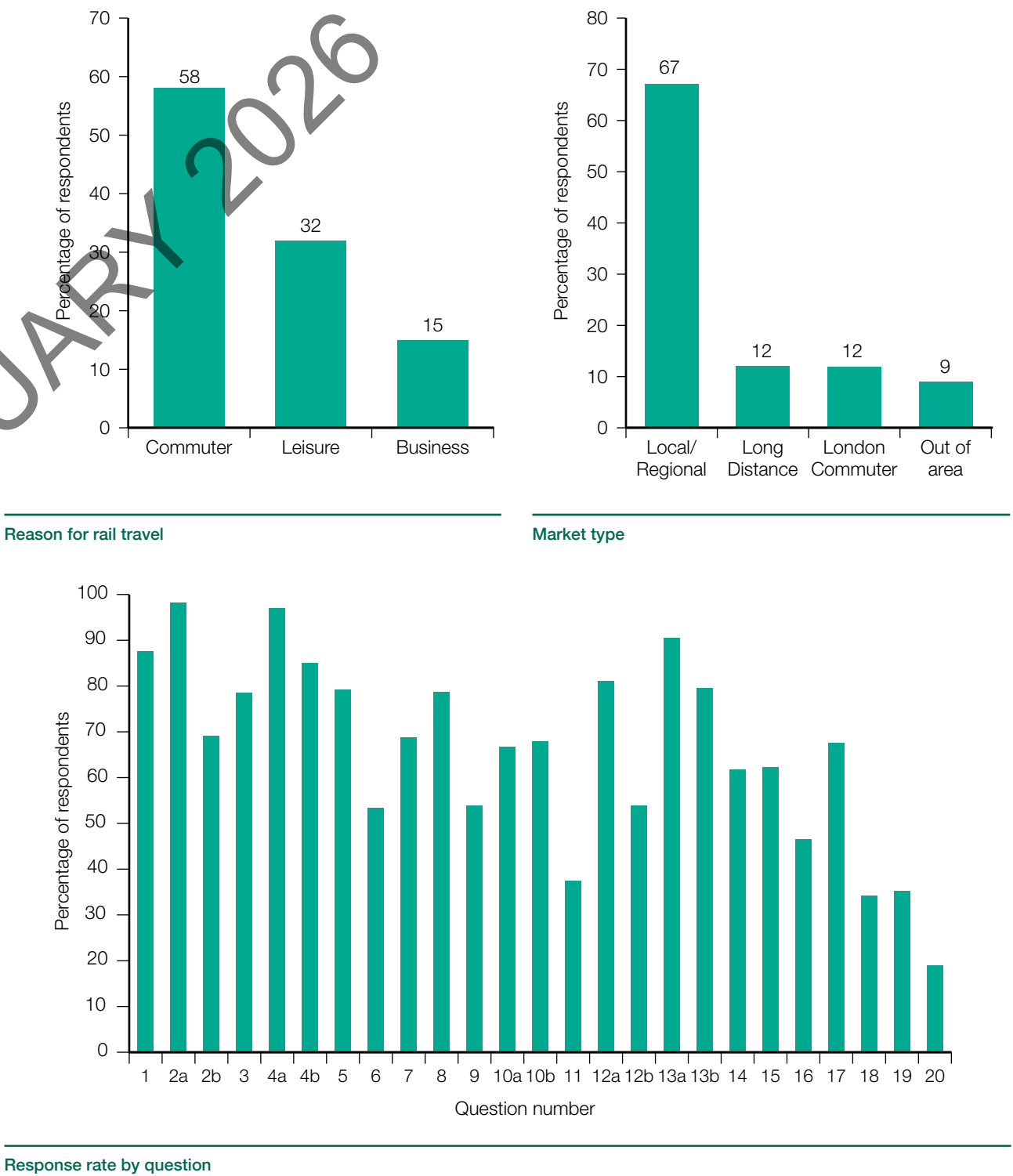
In total 1303 responses⁸ were submitted comprising of:

- 1030 via the online survey
- 108 Stakeholder responses⁹
- 165 letters/emails from individuals

Most individuals used the online survey and followed the templated questions. Their responses have been analysed collectively with written responses wherever possible to provide a robust evaluation of respondents’ needs. Stakeholders tended to respond in a free form manner and on behalf of groups/organisations. As such these responses have been reported separately.

With regards to the individual respondents using the online survey:

- Commuting was the main reason for travel (58%), followed by leisure (32%) and business travel (15%).¹⁰
- 67% were users of local/regional services in the West Midlands area, with 12% each being users of long distance services on the West Coast Main Line and London commuter services. 9% of responses were from outside the area.¹¹
- 3% of respondents had a disability or were a carer for someone who had accessibility issues.



⁸ This does not include the 508 campaign responses.
⁹ Stakeholders are organisations or individuals representing wider groups of people such as MPs and Councillors. Individual respondents are those representing their own personal views.
¹⁰ The total adds up to more than 100% as some respondents cited more than one main reason for travel.
¹¹ Throughout this appendix we have referred to these three types of users as West Midlands Local/Regional, Long Distance and London Commuter service users.

Response rate by question

Not all questions were answered evenly. The average response over the consultation was 66%, with response rate per question ranging between 19% and 98%.

Closed questions such as Question 4 and 13 had some of the highest response rates as did questions involving operational issues.

Areas that had less direct operational impact such as branding and community rail tended to achieve lower response rates.



Question by Question responses

Where graphs or tables in the following section show percentage of respondents, please note this is the percentage of people that responded to the specific question, not of overall respondents to the consultation.

Q1 – Thinking of the journeys you make by train, or journeys you could make by train but where you decide to use an alternative transport mode instead: what specific changes could be made to make the railway easier and more attractive to use for all; and why do you think these changes would help? Please provide your reasons why and details of the journeys you refer to where possible.

Response rate – 88%

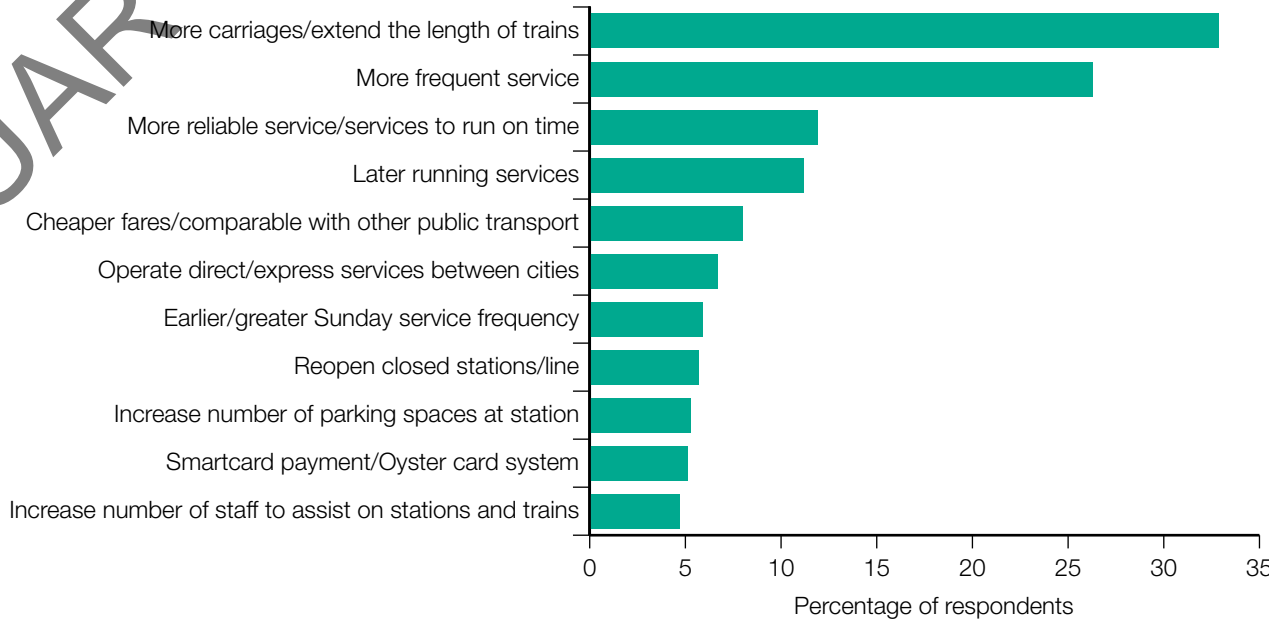
Response synopsis:

This was the open ended question which generated the largest response. Being at the start of the survey and not knowing what issues were to be covered later it generated a wide range of suggestions.

There was a clear emphasis on core service provision in particular increased capacity. Frequency and reliability were the next most important changes followed by later running services and cheaper fares.

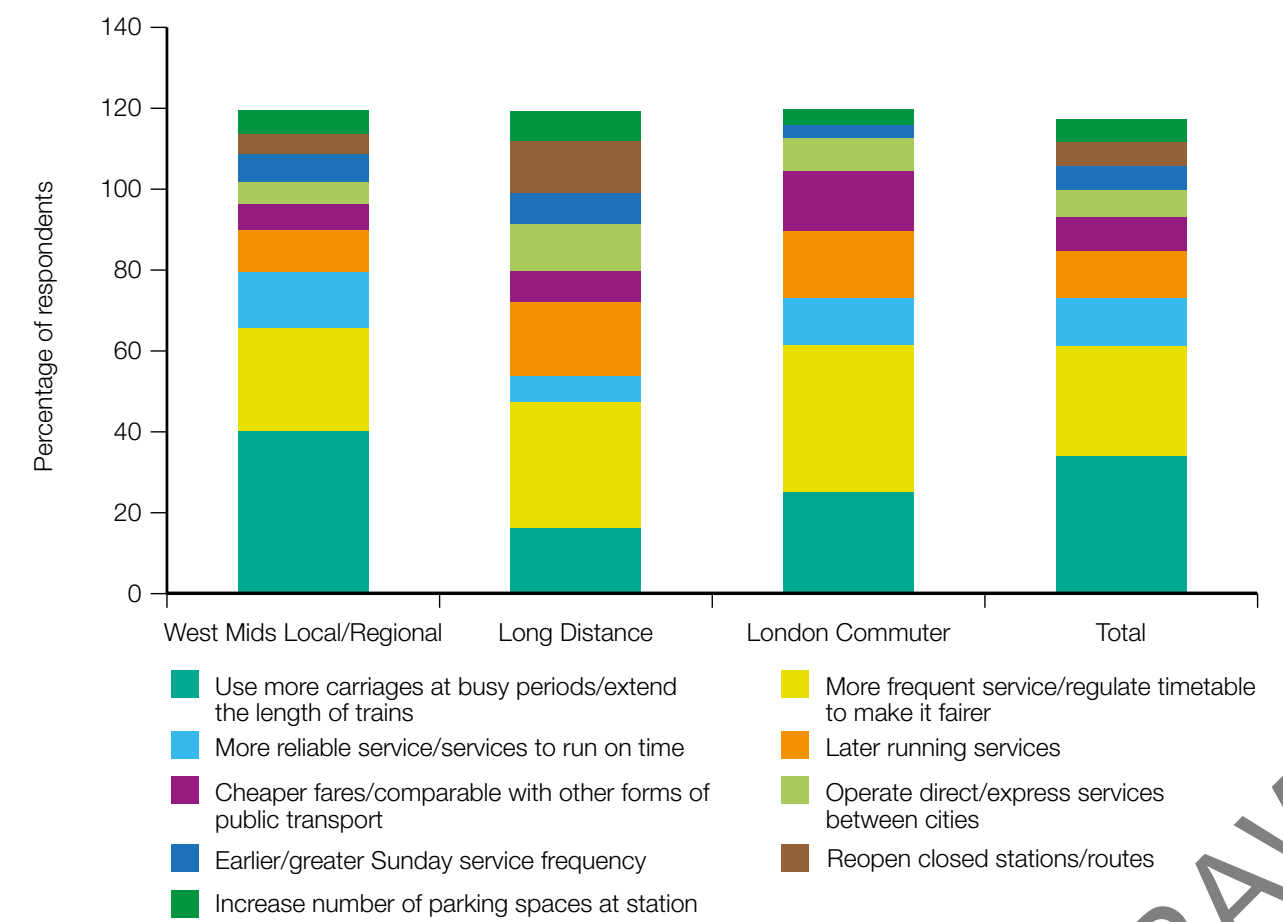
There were also requests to operate more direct services between cities, for earlier and more frequent Sunday services, to reopen old stations/routes, increase car parking spaces, introduce a Smartcard/Oyster card system and increase staffing.

Responses differed by type of service used and by commuter/leisure market.



Changes to make train journey easier

Further details:



Priorities by service type

The primary reason given for why the changes proposed in responses would help was that they would reduce crowding. Other reasons involved quicker journey times/less need for connections and allowing people to attend events late at night.

Users of West Midlands Local and Regional services were most likely to request additional carriages while users of Long Distance and London Commuter services were more likely to request more frequent services.

Commuters were more likely to request additional carriages rather than leisure users who were more likely to want more frequent services and later running services. Leisure users were also more likely to make additional requests to reopen closed stations/routes.

The Cross City line had the most requests for specific service changes, followed by the Snow Hill line, West Coast Main Line and Hereford via Worcester.

The main requests on all of these lines was for more carriages.

Amongst responses asking for the reopening of closed stations or lines, the reinstatement of rail services at Barlaston Station was one of the most common requests. The reopening of the Walsall to Wolverhampton line was also mentioned.

Stakeholder response:

In responses from Stakeholders, top priorities were that it should be easier to get to places by train, there should be more frequent services and more car parking. Quicker services, step free access and later services were also mentioned.

Our response:

We are asking bidders to provide a rolling stock strategy which includes the provision of a large number of additional trains to manage current crowding and cater for future growth as set out in Section 5. This will allow more carriages to be provided on some existing services and a higher frequency service to operate on some lines. We will also have capacity targets which the new operator will be required to meet.

A number of lines will have later and more frequent evening services. Most routes across the franchise will also have a much more frequent Sunday service including earlier first trains and later last trains. Further details of these enhancements are set out in Appendix F.

Punctuality and reliability will be addressed through enhanced targets that the new operator will be required to meet.

Bidders will be required to set out their parking strategy and work with other rail car park providers such as the West Midlands Combined Authority and Local Authorities to increase capacity and provide better alternative, more sustainable ways to travel to the station.

The operator of the new franchise will be required to improve the ticketing experience for customers through smart technology. We are asking bidders to set out how they will make staff more visible/available to customers.

Bidders have to work with partners to explore opportunities for more direct rail services, improved connections and railway infrastructure schemes which would allow new routes to operate.

A minor works fund of £300,000 a year will be provided specifically to improve accessibility at railway stations. The operator of the new franchise will also be required to work alongside Network Rail and other parties on larger schemes to improve access to the railway for all.

Q2a – Do you use your nearest railway station? If you do not, please let us know the reasons why.

Response rate – 98%

Response synopsis:

The majority of respondents travelled from their their local station.

Further details:

As a simple yes and no response this question generated the highest response rate.

The majority of respondents (85%) used their local station. However this still demonstrates that three in 20 people do not.

There was a long list of stations that people used rather than their local one. Watford Junction, Alsager, Lichfield Trent Valley, Wolverhampton and Stoke-on-Trent were the most frequently mentioned.

The main reasons for using an alternative station were: more frequent service; cheaper tickets; poor parking provision at the nearest station; not all services stopping at the local station; free parking at the chosen station; and quicker services at the chosen station. Others mentioned lack of ticket machines/manned ticket offices at their local station or the lack of a direct bus route to their nearest station.

Our response:

We are asking bidders to set out their approach to the end to end journey including how they will address car park capacity issues and work with partners to provide better alternative, more environmentally friendly ways to travel to the station.

Ticket prices are generally cheaper for shorter journeys, although they can often be cheaper on a per-mile basis for longer journeys. A number of fares in the West Midlands Franchise are regulated (controlled and capped) by the Department. This will protect the choices available to passengers so they can continue to be able to balance the cost of driving to a more distant station with the fare and service available at a closer station.

We are providing a Train Service Requirement document to bidders which sets out the minimum train service required. They then have the opportunity to look at providing improved services above this and will be awarded credit where they do. Bidders have been made aware of the stations where lower frequency services run which mean some people opt to travel further to an alternative station.

We are also asking bidders how they can improve connections between train services at key locations such as Milton Keynes and Nuneaton so that where direct services are not provided it's quick and easy for people to change trains.

Q2b – Thinking of your train journeys as a whole, how could we improve your experience of: finding information and planning your journey; accessing your railway station in an environmentally friendly way such as by walking, cycling, tram or bus; and accessing your railway station by private car (including car parking/drop off areas)? Please let us know the reasons why.

Response rate – 69%

Response synopsis:

Information provision: respondents emphasised the need for more information at stations regarding service disruption. The need for better display boards and more staff were also highlighted as important.

Sustainable access to station: the main suggestion was to improve bus/rail interchange. Other suggestions were to improve pedestrian access and cycle storage.

Private car access to station: the main response was to increase car parking provision at stations, followed by better facilities for cars to drop off passengers.

Further details:

| Information | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Provide more information at stations regarding service problems and accurate arrival times for late trains | 26% |
| Better display boards and clearer information | 9% |
| More staff present at stations | 8% |
| Improve website/apps | 8% |
| More visual information to enable multi-modal interchange | 7% |
| Improve fare information/ensure that users can obtain the cheapest fare | 6% |
| Increase number of ticket machines | 6% |
| Simplify ticketing system | 5% |
| More departure signage around station | 4% |

Top responses for information improvements (% of respondents)

| Sustainable access | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Improve bus/rail interchange | 34% |
| Improve pedestrian access to station | 21% |
| Improve cycle storage facilities | 19% |
| Provision of a dedicated bus link into station for Park & Ride facility | 12% |
| Improve cycle access to stations/cycle lanes | 11% |
| Ensure bus services to stations are more reliable/frequent | 9% |
| Improve provision to take bikes on trains | 5% |
| Improve ticketing options for those using multiple modes of transport | 3% |
| Install CCTV for walkways/cycle storage areas for safety | 2% |

Top responses for sustainable access improvements (% of respondents)

| Car access | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Increase car parking at local station | 39% |
| Improve car drop off points at stations | 24% |
| Keep/make car parking cheaper/free | 23% |
| Improve car access at stations | 17% |
| Improve car parking facilities | 15% |
| Restrict/fine people using the local area for free parking | 6% |
| Improve taxi drop off points | 4% |
| Enforce road markings/traffic restrictions | 2% |
| Closer parking to station | 2% |

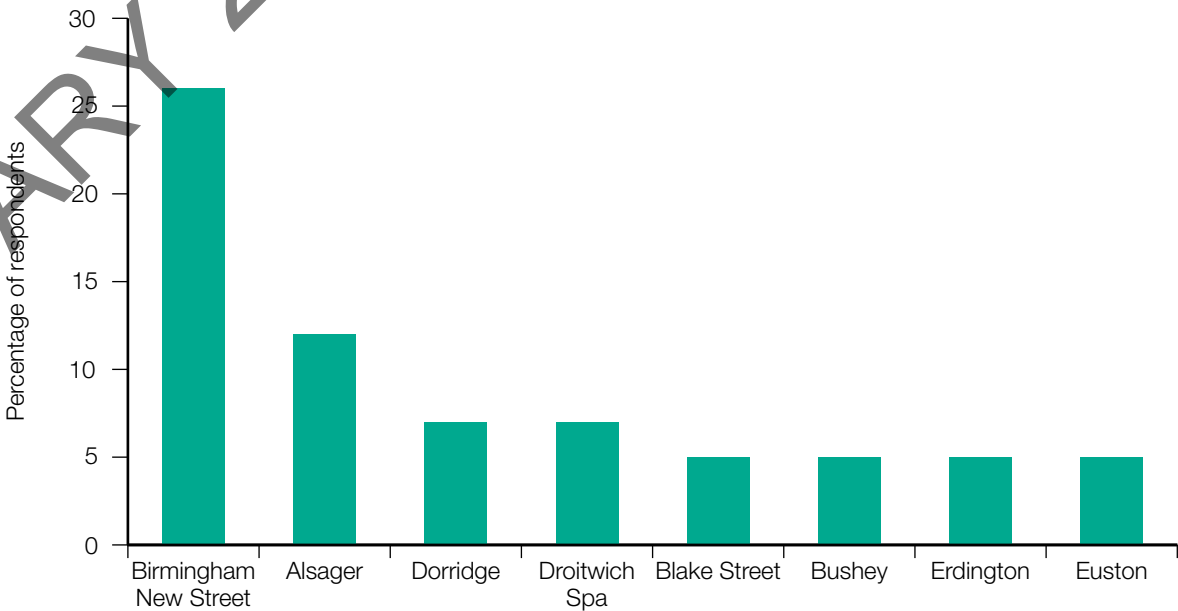
Top responses for car access improvements (% of respondents)

Of stations served by the West Midlands Franchise, Birmingham New Street, Alsager, Dorridge and Droitwich Spa had the most requests for better information.

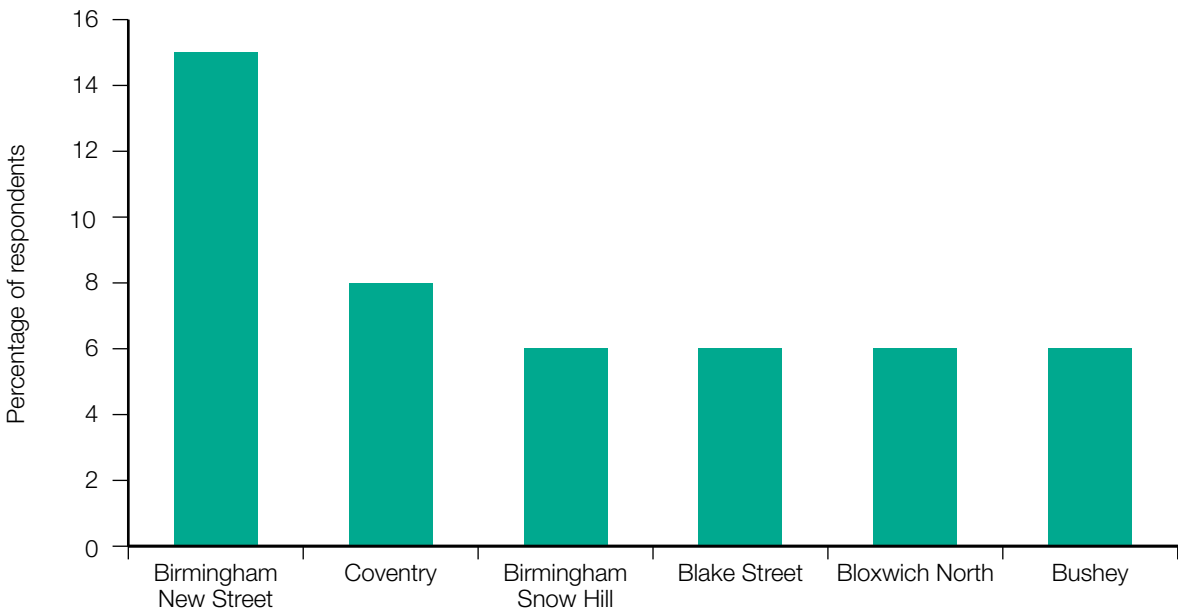
Birmingham Snow Hill, Blake Street, Bloxwich North and Bushey had the most requests for improved access by sustainable modes.

There were a high number of respondents that used Birmingham New Street which reflected the very large number of West Midlands Franchise users that pass through the station every day. Key requests here were for improved information and sustainable access.

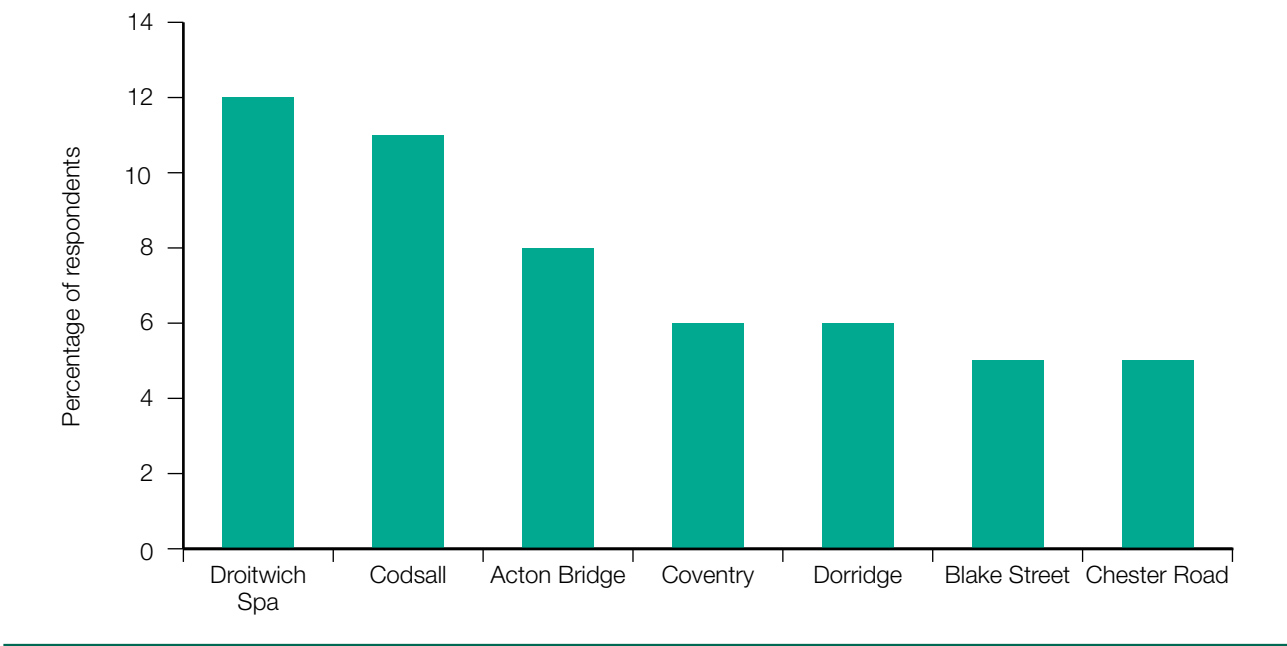
Droitwich Spa and Codsall had the most requests for improved access by car.



Key stations mentioned requiring better information



Key stations mentioned for improved sustainable access



Key stations mentioned for improved access by car

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders thought information could be improved with better use of mobile apps. There were also requests for better multi-modal information, improvements to websites and enhanced information regarding service problems.

Some Stakeholders requested improved cycle storage as a top priority for stations, followed by enhanced bus access and better cycle access.

In terms of car access, in line with individual respondents the main response was for more car parking.

Our response:

We have asked bidders to provide proposals for how they will improve information using current and evolving technology, including during times of disruption.

Real time train information will be available to passengers on all lines, including on the Abbey Line where live train tracking technology will be introduced.

A £5m Station Improvement Fund (2017-2020) and £1.6m a year Customers & Communities Investment Fund (2020 – 2026) will be provided to deliver enhancements which can include information (such as additional screens and public address systems), parking and access to stations by sustainable modes, including walking & cycling routes and bike storage.

Work is ongoing on the redevelopment of Birmingham New Street station following the opening of the concourse in September 2015. We will require the new operator to work

alongside the Department, Network Rail, West Midlands Rail, the West Midlands Combined Authority and other train operators to improve information at this key rail hub.

Bidders are asked to set out how they will provide clearer and more transparent information on fares so that it is simpler for customers to purchase tickets and find the cheapest fares.

We are asking bidders to set out how they will make staff more visible/available to customers.

Bidders must state how they will work with partners, including the Bus Alliance and West Midlands Rail in the West Midlands, to improve connections between bus and rail through better signage, information, ticketing, timetabling, walking routes and waiting facilities.

Bidders are required to provide a car parking strategy and set out how they will work to satisfy demand for parking across the day. A Residual Value Mechanism is being provided for the franchise. This means the operator will get some money back towards large projects at the end of the franchise if they have not covered their costs. This will help to encourage investment in parking schemes and other projects.

Q3 – Please list, in priority order, the facilities you would like improved or introduced at the station(s) you use or could use. For each point that you raise, please provide the name of the station(s) that you are referring to and why you think these improvements are needed.

Response rate – 79%

Response synopsis:

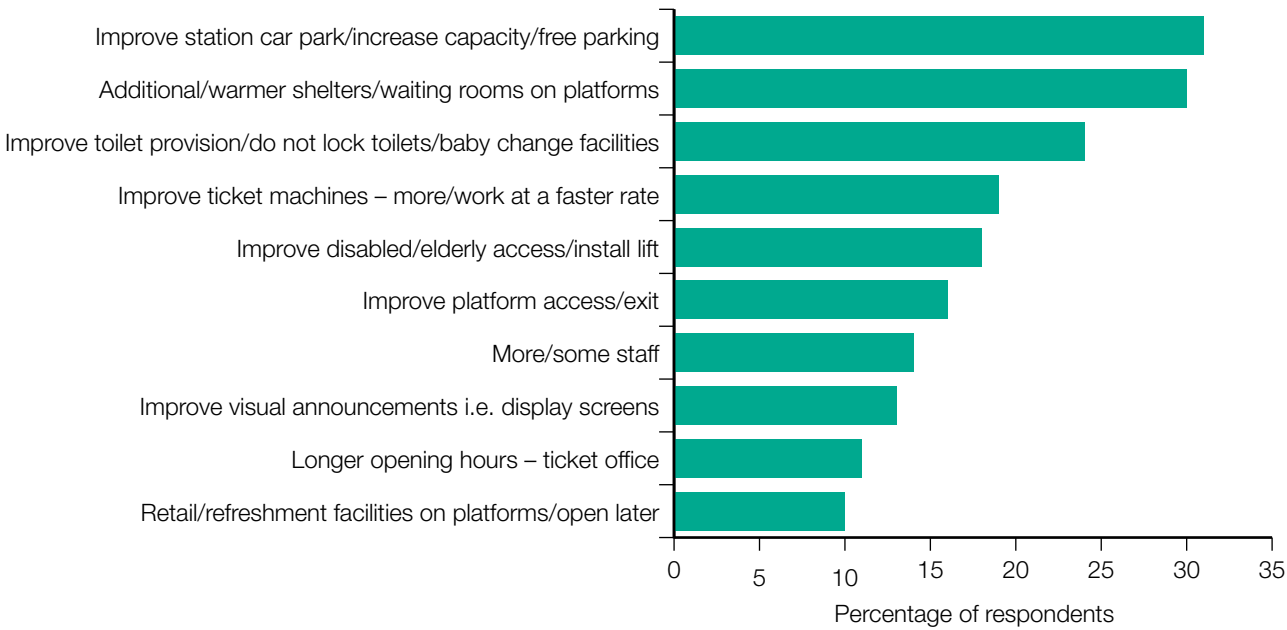
Few respondents actually listed facilities in order of priority while a wide range of stations (152) were referred to for improvement.

The most common facilities to be improved at stations were increased car parking, additional/warmer shelters and improved toilet provision.

Further details:

Of stations operated by the West Midlands Franchise, Lichfield City, Lichfield Trent Valley, Birmingham Snow Hill, Watford Junction, Worcester stations and University (Birmingham) had the most requests for improvements to facilities. Table 4 demonstrates the stations where there were higher numbers of respondents asking for the same improvement at specific stations.

There were also a number of specific requests for: more car parking at Sandwell & Dudley and Tipton; increased staff availability at Kings Norton; improved toilets at Smethwick Galton Bridge; improved ticket machines at Selly Oak; and better visual information at Birmingham Snow Hill.



Improvement of station facilities

| | Improve station car park/ increase capacity/ free | Additional/ warmer shelters/ waiting rooms on platforms | Improve toilet provision/ do not lock toilets/baby change facilities | Improve ticket machines- more/ work at a faster rate | Improve disabled/ elderly access/ install lift | Improve platform access/ exit |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Lichfield City | 3 | 6 | 22 | 8 | 6 | 0 |
| Watford Junction | 9 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 13 |
| Worcester Stations | 17 | 6 | 16 | 18 | 15 | 0 |
| University (Birmingham) | 3 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 5 |
| Lichfield Trent Valley | 0 | 11 | 12 | 1 | 11 | 3 |

Table 4: Key requested improvements at specific stations (significant responses are shown in green)

Stakeholder response:

Echoing the results of individual respondents, Stakeholders most commonly wanted to see an increase in car parking.

Following this there were requests for improvements in disabled access, better access by sustainable modes and improved cycle storage.

Improved shelter on platforms and improved toilet provision were also mentioned.

Our response:

Our response to car parking is set out under Questions 1 and 2 above.

The £5m Station Improvement Fund (2017-2020) and £1.6m a year Customers & Communities Improvement Fund (2020-2026) provides the new operator with a pot of money to provide facility improvements across the franchise including at stations. This could be used to improve waiting areas, toilets and ticket machines.

The new operator is required to work alongside Network Rail and other partners to promote and deliver schemes to improve access at stations including step free facilities. A £300,000 per annum minor works fund is being provided specifically to improve accessibility at stations. The operator of the new franchise will also be required to work alongside Network Rail and other parties on larger schemes to improve access to the railway for all.

A new 40 year asset plan and a Service Quality Regime are being introduced to ensure that stations are well maintained and presented for customers. The Service Quality Regime, which is being provided in the West Midlands region and on the branch lines, requires the operator to deliver maintenance, cleanliness, ambience and customer service to agreed targets which are audited against.

Q4a – Thinking of the journeys you make, how important are the following on board passenger facilities to you on short distance train services?

Response rate – 97%

Response synopsis:

The majority of respondents participated in this rating exercise, which involved ranking a number of on board facilities from 1-15.

The provision of audio/visual information was considered the most important, followed by staff presence.

Suitable toilets and luggage space both remain key priorities, with little desire to see them reduced.

Of lesser importance were provision of First Class carriages and baby changing facilities.

The top five requests varied little by the type of journey respondents were making or type of rail service they were using.

Further details:

Although there is little difference in the top five priorities when split by market; plug sockets and tables were more of a priority amongst Long Distance users while cycle storage and pushchair/wheelchair space was more of a priority on West Midlands Local and Regional services and London Commuter services.

Respondents were additionally asked to list any other facilities they deemed as important. Largely there was a tendency here to repeat the options already ranked. However, other suggestions tended to emphasise the need for more seats, improved cleanliness, more leg room, more litter bins and alternative train layouts.

Our response to Q4a is detailed under Q4b.

Q4b – Thinking of the journeys you make, how important are the following on board passenger facilities to you on long distance train services?

Response rate – 85%

Response synopsis:

The response rate was slightly lower for the rating of long distance trips compared to short distance journeys covered in Q4a.

However the top five priorities were similar to those for short distance services, albeit the order was somewhat different. Luggage space was considered the most important, followed by audio and visual information. Following this the priorities were suitable toilets and staff presence.

As with short distance journeys, the provision of First Class carriages and baby changing facilities were the lowest priorities given.

Further details:

Although luggage space was a key priority amongst all markets, suitable toilets rated more highly amongst Long Distance and London Commuter users. Tables/seat trays and plug sockets were also more important amongst Long Distance service users.

When respondents were asked what other facilities they would like on long distance services, they again tended to repeat those already rated. However in addition more leg room was noted as were requests for more seating and improved cleanliness.

Stakeholder response:

Few Stakeholders responded to this question.

Where they did, on short journeys audio and visual information were the most important facilities, followed by staff visibility, suitable toilets and pushchair/wheelchair space.

On long journeys suitable toilets were given top priority followed by audio/visual information. Following this the priority was for greater staff presence and more space for luggage.

Stakeholders rated First Class as being of lowest importance on both long and short distance journeys.



Our response:

All trains which entered service before 1995 will require a full refurbishment by December 2021 unless they are going to be replaced before the end of 2022. The Service Quality Regime being provided in the West Midlands area and on branch lines (mentioned under Question 3) will also apply to trains, ensuring they are clean and well maintained for passengers.

By the end of 2019 all trains are required to comply with standards to make them more accessible for people with reduced mobility. This includes the provision of visual and audio passenger information.

The new standards also require the provision of accessible toilets on trains. We will not be specifying any reduction in the number of toilets on services in the West Midlands Franchise.

We have made bidders aware of the requests for improved luggage space on long distance and airport services. The specification asks bidders to ensure that new trains and those which are undergoing a full refurbishment take account of the aspirations set out in the Department's 'Rolling Stock Perspective 2016' document. This covers facilities on board trains, appropriate seating, and interior layouts including provision of flexible space which can be used for the storage of cycles and pushchairs.

We have also asked bidders how they intend to ensure that train staff can be more available and visible to the passenger so that they can conduct ticket checks and provide assistance and information.

Our approach to provision of First Class is detailed under Question 5 below.

Q5 – We are looking carefully to see what opportunities there are to either extend or provide additional trains to deliver more space/standard class seating for passengers to help reduce overcrowding. If we cannot create all the additional capacity we need in this way, how do you think we could enable more people to travel and improve the railway’s ability to cater for passenger growth (e.g. altering carriages, removing/reducing on board facilities or introducing innovative solutions)?

Response rate – 79%

Response synopsis:

Although respondents were asked to think of different ways to create extra space on board services the most popular response was to simply suggest extra trains/carriages.

More specific responses to the question were to remove First Class, change seating configuration (for example removing 3 + 2 seating) or to improve space and comfort for standing passengers.



An example of an alternative seating layout to 3 + 2 which provides wider aisles and more comfortable standing space.

There were some suggestions for fold down seats and for removing tables.

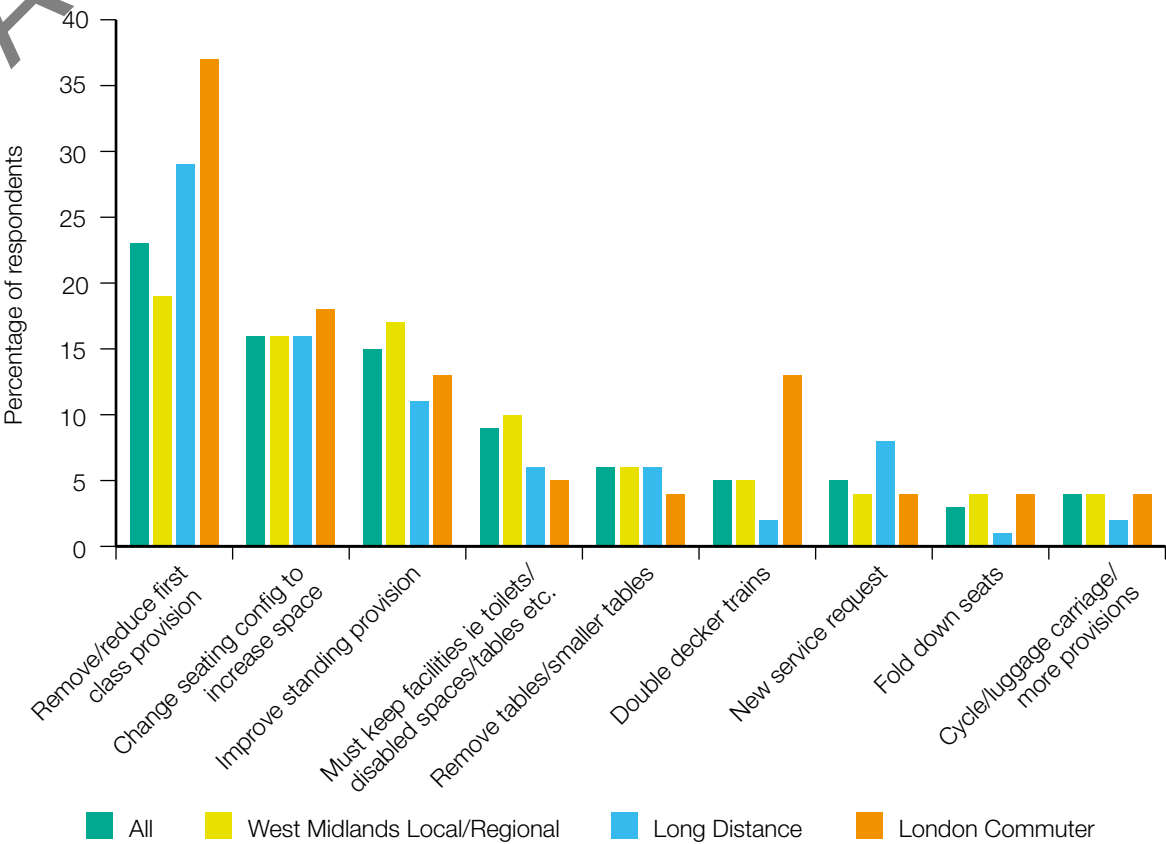
It should be noted that a significant proportion of respondents wanted to ensure facilities, the removal of which may save space, such as toilets, tables and cycle/luggage storage, were retained.

Further details:

The suggestion to remove First Class was more common amongst respondents using Long Distance and London Commuter services, which is where the majority of trains that provide this facility operate.

On West Midlands Local/Regional services there was more emphasis on improvements to standing room and changes to seating configurations.

The most frequently mentioned line with regards to improving space on board was the Cross City line. Here the most common request was for changes to the seating configuration to remove 3 + 2 seating.



Suggestions to increase on board space

Stakeholder response:

Like individual respondents, Stakeholders also placed weight on the need for more carriages and for ensuring provisions such as toilets and spaces for cycles were retained.

Where suggestions were made to increase space on board, Stakeholders suggested that changes could be made to seating layouts such as the removal of 3 + 2 seating. There were also suggestions for fare incentives to use less busy services followed by the removal of First Class areas.

Our response:

We recognise the issues with crowding on West Midlands Franchise services. As mentioned under Question 1, we are asking bidders to provide a rolling stock strategy which includes the provision of a large number of additional carriages/trains to manage current crowding and cater for future growth. This will allow more carriages to be provided on some existing services and increased frequencies to operate on some routes. We will also have capacity targets which the new operator will be required to meet.

First Class is currently only provided on longer distance services. It provides an income source for the operator which in turn could reduce overall costs to the taxpayer or lead to extra improvements being delivered. Bidders will need to consider their approach to First Class taking into account both responses to the consultation and revenue generation.



We have also let bidders know about people's comments about changes to seating layouts and the removal of 3+2 seating including the concerns raised about how narrow aisles can cause difficulties getting on and off trains, especially on the Cross City line through Birmingham. We will allow bidders to propose alternative seating layouts on this route.

We are aware of concerns raised by both cyclists and non-cyclists about the capacity to carry full size (non-folding) bicycles during the peak in the West Midlands. We recognise these concerns given the overcrowding in Birmingham at these times and will be asking bidders to consider how they will address this issue. Given the strength of customer and Stakeholder views and data that demonstrates the levels of crowding on trains in the West Midlands, reducing crowding and creating more space for passengers needs to be the priority for the operator. This may limit the capacity to carry unfolded cycles on trains at some times of day.

Q6 – Thinking about stations served by the West Midlands Franchise, are there any particular locations where you feel that connections between rail services could be improved? If relevant please provide specific details about the services, times and locations where train times are not coordinated as well as they could be. Please also provide information on any other factors at stations or on trains that would make changing between services easier and more attractive for you, including your reasons where possible.

Response rate – 53%

Response synopsis:

This question had one of the lowest response rates. However where responses were made a wide range of suggestions as to where connections could be improved were put forward, making trends hard to pinpoint.

In general the most common response to improve connections was for more frequent/regular services, followed by requests for the creation of a direct service, more reasonable time to change and more evenly spaced services.

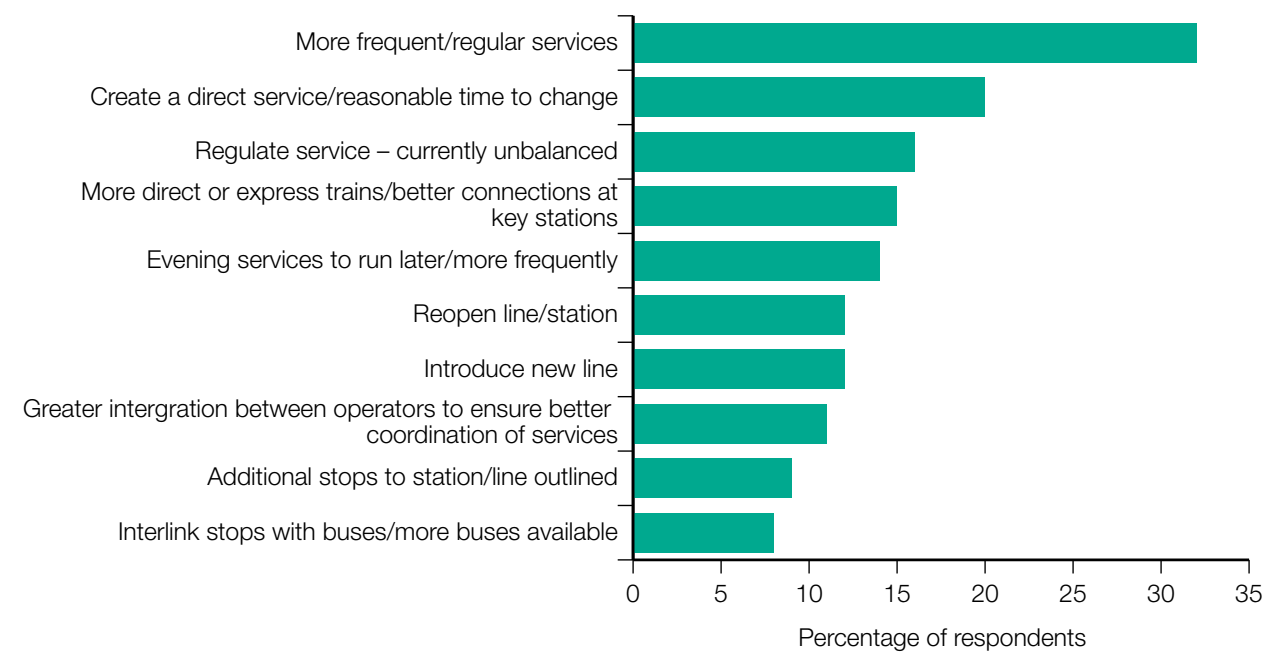
There were requests for more express trains and for more evening/late running services.

A significant proportion of respondents felt connections would be easier if old lines/stations were reopened.

Further details:

The key stations (out of the 110 mentioned) where interchange was thought to be poor were Birmingham New Street, Lichfield Trent Valley, Smethwick Galton Bridge, Stafford, Wolverhampton and Worcester stations.

In terms of connections, those most commonly mentioned (out of the 197 specifically raised) were Walsall to Wolverhampton, Worcester to Birmingham New Street, Nuneaton to Coventry, Coventry to Leamington and Walsall to Lichfield.



Ways to improve connections

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders thought connections could be improved by more regular services, more direct trains and greater integration between operators.

Stakeholders provided a wide variety of stations where connections could be improved. These were mostly on the Abbey Line; the Marston Vale Line; the Shrewsbury Line; and from key stations such as Coventry, Crewe, Stafford and Worcester Foregate Street/ Shrub Hill stations.

The most requested improvements were in relation to Marston Vale – Milton Keynes and Crewe – London.

| Key connection | Improvement | Our response |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Walsall and Wolverhampton | Reopen line/more direct express trains between stations | Due to capacity constraints on the network it would only be possible to operate an hourly service without requiring significant infrastructure investment. At this level of frequency the service is unlikely to generate sufficient demand to meet value for money criteria. However we recognise that this service remains a strong aspiration. Bidders will be encouraged to consider proposals for implementing such a service and to work alongside local authorities and other Stakeholders to look at the options for creating the capability for an enhanced frequency in the future. |
| Worcester and Birmingham | More frequent service | Due to freight train movements and other track and station capacity constraints it is very difficult to provide an extra service between Worcester and Birmingham. However we will be offering credit to bidders if they can propose a way to deliver such a service. |
| Coventry to Nuneaton | More frequent service/create a direct service/ reasonable time to change | Coventry City Council is leading on the delivery of an infrastructure scheme along this line which would allow a second train per hour to operate. As the timescales for the completion of this work have not been finalised we cannot specify the increase in service in the Train Service Requirement document, however it could be delivered through an in franchise change. |
| Coventry to Leamington | More frequent service/create a direct service/ reasonable time to change | A one train per hour service will be specified on this route calling at the new station at Kenilworth. |

Notable Key Connection to be improved – Individual responses



| Key connection | Improvement | Our response |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Walsall to Lichfield | Reopen line/more direct express trains between stations | Major works would be required to reopen the line between Walsall and Lichfield. The new operator will be required to work alongside West Midlands Rail, the West Midlands Combined Authority and Walsall and Staffordshire Councils to look at how this could be delivered in the future. |
| Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton/ Birmingham | Sunday service/ regulate services as currently unbalanced/ more frequent | We are requiring an additional off peak daytime train per hour between Shrewsbury and Birmingham Monday to Saturday from December 2018. This will provide two West Midlands Franchise services per hour on the route in addition to the current hourly service operated by Arriva Trains Wales. We are also specifying a regular hourly service on Sundays from 2021, which will replace the current less frequent service operated by Arriva Trains Wales on this day. |
| Smethwick Galton Bridge | Regulate services, currently unbalanced/turn station into an interchange/main connection/ create a direct service/ reasonable time to change | We are setting out a number of requirements for the new operator to improve connections between rail services both in terms of timetabling and information at key interchange stations. |
| Stafford | Create a reasonable time to change/direct service | We are setting out a number of requirements for the new operator to improve connections between rail services both in terms of timetabling and information at key interchange stations. |

Notable Key Connection to be improved – Individual responses (continued)

| Key connection | Improvement | Our response |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wolverhampton | Interlink with buses | The operation of Wolverhampton Station will be transferred from the InterCity West Coast Franchise (currently operated by Virgin) to the West Midlands Franchise during 2018. The new operator will be required to provide best in class interchange with bus services and the extended Metro at this station. |
| Lichfield Trent Valley | Integration between operators to ensure better time management of services/create a direct service/ reasonable time to change | We are setting out a number of requirements for the new operator to improve connections between rail services both in terms of timetabling and information at key interchange stations. |
| Birmingham New street | Barriers awkward to use/interchanging can be difficult/better signage | The new operator will be required to work alongside Network Rail and other operators to improve connectivity between train services at major stations including Birmingham New Street. |
| Worcester stations | Create a reasonable time to change/ turn station into an interchange/regulate services, currently unbalanced | We are setting out a number of requirements for the new operator to improve connections between rail services both in terms of timetabling and information at key interchange stations. |
| Barnt Green | Diversify current line further afield/ additional stops to station | Direct journeys will be provided throughout the day between Barnt Green and Bromsgrove once the line is electrified. |
| Solihull | Introduce new line/ additional stops to station | We have raised awareness of this with bidders. Some additional peak trains will be provided by December 2021 at the latest. |

Notable Key Connection to be improved – Individual responses (continued)

| Key area | Improvement | Our response |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Marston Vale to Milton Keynes | More direct or express trains/ connections between key stations/specified stations | We have looked carefully at opportunities for trains to run from Bletchley on to Milton Keynes, however on Monday to Saturday there is not enough track capacity to deliver this throughout the franchise term, especially due to the introduction of East West Rail. However Bletchley will be sited as a key location for improved train connections. A new Sunday service has been specified for the line, and bidders will be free to propose to extend this to/from Milton Keynes if there is capacity on the route. |
| Abbey Line | More direct or express trains/ connections between key stations/specified stations, more frequent in general, criticism of difficulty changing trains at Watford | There have been mixed views in the consultation about direct trains through to London, however this is not possible due to station and track capacity issues. We are asking bidders to set out how they will improve connections between trains at Watford Junction. We cannot increase the frequency of the service on the Abbey Line without providing a passing loop to allow two trains to pass each other. This would require a major capital investment and would not represent good value for the taxpayer given the number of users of the line. The new operator will be asked to look at the feasibility of developing schemes such as this with local Stakeholders and Network Rail. |
| Shrewsbury line | Increased frequency and connectivity | We are requiring an additional train per hour to be operated between Shrewsbury and Birmingham Monday to Saturday. This will provide two West Midlands Franchise services per hour on the route in addition to the current hourly service operated by Arriva Trains Wales. We are also specifying a regular hourly service on Sundays from 2021, which will replace the current less frequent service operated by Arriva Trains Wales on this day. |

Notable Key Connection to be improved – Stakeholder responses

| Key area | Improvement | Our response |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stafford | Additional stops to station/ line – improved connections/ wait time – more frequent – more direct/express trains between key stations | We have set out a number of requirements for the new operator to improve connections between rail services both in terms of timetabling and information at key interchange stations. |
| Crewe | Improve connections/ reduce waiting times – more frequent – improve on a Sunday – greater integration between operators | With regards to connections, we have set out a number of requirements for the new operator to improve connections between rail services both in terms of timetabling and information at key interchange stations. Due to capacity and demand on the West Coast Main Line unfortunately we are unable to specify an increased the frequency of service on this route between Crewe and London, however a new hourly service between Crewe and Birmingham via Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton is being introduced. |
| Coventry | More connectivity to East Midlands and beyond – improve connections/reduce waiting times | We have raised awareness of this with bidders and are requiring improved connections at stations including Nuneaton. |
| Rugeley | Improve connections/ reduce waiting times – more frequent | We have set out a number of requirements for the new operator to improve connections between rail services both in terms of timetabling and information at key interchange stations. Following the completion of the electrification scheme on the Chase line, there will be an increase in frequency between Birmingham and Rugeley off peak. |

Notable Key Connection to be improved – Stakeholder responses (continued)

| Key area | Improvement | Our response |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Worcester stations | Better connections to Stourbridge/ Blakedown/ Leamington Spa/ Bristol – improve connections/reduce waiting times – step free access | We have raised awareness of this with bidders and we are specifying improved connections at stations including Worcester Foregate Street and Shrub Hill. |

Notable Key Connection to be improved – Stakeholder responses (continued)

Our response:

Our responses to specific requests are set out in the table above.

Bidders have been asked to set out how they will improve connections at key stations including with other operators’ services as part of their submission, and awarded credit for positive initiatives that meet these aspirations. There will be a specific requirement to focus on making connections better between West Midlands Franchise services at Bletchley, Lichfield Trent Valley, Stafford and Watford Junction.

For new and reinstated services, further information is provided in Appendix H on work being undertaken by Network Rail, the West Midlands Combined Authority, West Midlands Rail, Local Authorities and other organisations to develop a number of the schemes raised.



Q7 – In order to make improvements to the network, we would like your views on how specific train services could be changed to better meet demand. Are you aware of any opportunities to improve, reduce or change rail services to make better use of resource and meet the needs of existing and prospective passengers?

Response Rate – 69%

Response synopsis:

Individual respondents’ key request was to adjust first/last services to better meet the travel needs of today’s society. After this were requests for increases to the frequency of services in the evening and at the weekend, in particular on Sundays. There were also requests for increases in frequency in the peak and increases in frequency in general.

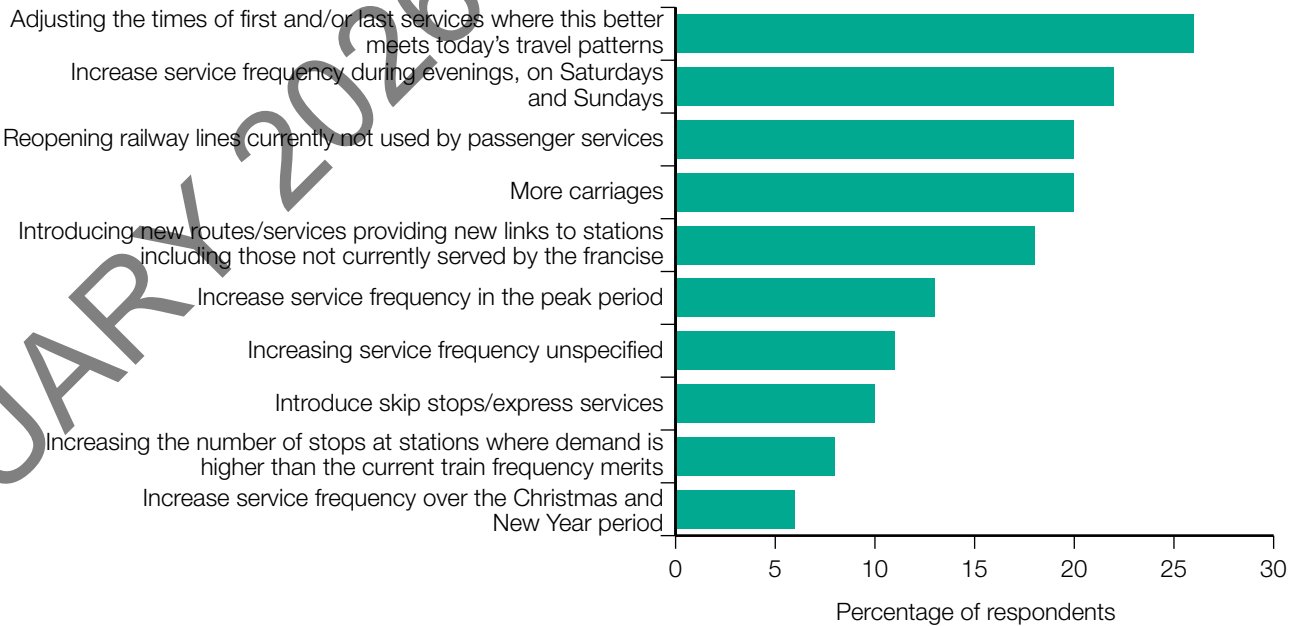
A number of respondents wanted new routes with old rail lines reopened or new services to stations not currently served by the franchise.

There were also requests for more frequent rail services during Bank Holiday periods such as Christmas and New Year, in particular on Boxing Day.

More carriages was again prevalent in responses to this question.

Among the top responses from users of the Cross City line in Birmingham were calls for the removal of (or changes to) the special leaf-fall timetable that operates for several weeks during the autumn in order to improve train performance. Views were very strongly negative due to the level of overcrowding and service frequency that is delivered and sought for it not to be included in the future franchise.

Further details:



Specific changes to current services

Most service changes were requested on the Cross City line, between Hereford, Worcester and Birmingham, on the Snow Hill lines, between Crewe and Euston and more generally on the West Coast Main Line.

| Station/ Connection | Priority one | Priority two | Priority three |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cross City line | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | Re-opening railway lines currently not used by passenger services |
| Hereford/ Worcester to Birmingham | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Increasing service frequency (general) |
| Snow Hill lines | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | Increase service frequency in the peak period | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns |
| Crewe to Euston | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Increase service frequency in the peak period |
| West Coast Main Line | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | Increasing the number of stops at stations where demand is higher than the current train frequency merits |
| Shrewsbury via Telford | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Increase service frequency in the peak period |
| Coventry via Birmingham International | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | | |

Key priorities for service changes – Individual respondents

| Station/ Connection | Priority one | Priority two | Priority three |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Walsall | Reopening railway lines currently not used by passenger services | Increasing service frequency (general) | |
| Crewe via Trent Valley | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays | |
| Northampton via Milton Keynes | Increase service frequency in the peak period | Introduce skip stopping express services | |
| Liverpool via Crewe | Adjusting the times of first and/or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Increasing service frequency (general) | Introducing new routes or services and providing new links to stations including those not currently served by the franchise |
| St Albans Abbey to Watford | Adjusting the times of first and or last services where this better meets today's travel patterns | Introducing new routes or services and providing new links to stations including those not currently served by the franchise | Increase service frequency during evenings, Saturdays and Sundays |

Key priorities for service changes – Individual respondents (continued)

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders wanted more services during evenings and at the weekend. As many Stakeholders represented specific interest groups, there were a large number of requests for the opening of old lines – namely Stratford-upon-Avon to Honeybourne, the Camp Hill line, the Walsall to Wolverhampton line and the Walsall to Aldridge line.

There were requests to reinstate rail services at Barlaston station.

| Key connection | Top priority |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abbey Line | Increase service frequency – increase frequency during evenings, Saturday, Sunday |
| Birmingham to Shrewsbury | Increase service frequency – increase frequency during evenings, Saturday, Sunday |
| Chase Line | Last service to go to Rugeley Trent Valley – introduce new routes/ new connections – increase service in off peak |
| Coventry to Coventry Arena | Increase service frequency – increase frequency during evenings, Saturday, Sunday |
| Cross City | Increase service frequency – increase frequency during evenings, Saturday, Sunday – introduce skip stops/express services – increased service over Christmas/New Year |
| Marston Vale | Increase service frequency during evening, Saturdays, Sundays – increased service frequency over Christmas and New Year |

Key priorities for service changes – Stakeholder respondents

Our response:

We recognise the strong desire for a service that meets the needs and aspirations of people travelling today while supporting the business and leisure economy. Our focus is on providing a seven day railway which meets the needs of passengers.

We have provided bidders with a Train Service Requirement (TSR) that sets out the minimum level of service we expect to be provided in the franchise. This provides a number of improvements to the level of service provided today which will be delivered in December 2018 or December 2021. Details of service enhancements by line are provided in Appendix F.

Key enhancements specified by December 2018 include:

- Later last trains and more frequent evening services on a number of routes. Further details can be found in Appendix F;
- A minimum of two direct journeys from Walsall to London arriving in the morning peak, and two direct journeys from London to Walsall departing in the evening peak;

- An extra off peak daytime train per hour between Birmingham and Shrewsbury Monday to Saturday. This will provide two West Midlands Franchise services per hour on the route in addition to the current hourly service operated by Arriva Trains Wales; and
- Increased frequency on the Chase Line (Birmingham – Rugeley) and between Bromsgrove and Birmingham following completion of the electrification schemes.

Key enhancements specified by December 2021 include:

- Introduction of additional Sunday services including earlier first trains, later last trains, and enhanced frequencies. This new Sunday level of service will also be provided on New Year’s Day. Saturday services will operate on other bank holidays. Further details can be found in Appendix F;
- Two additional peak trains in each direction between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon via Solihull to create a more regular service throughout the day; and
- An extra early morning train into Birmingham from Dorridge via Solihull, reducing the gap in service for intermediate stations at this time.

Bidders are also able to propose service improvements above those set out in the TSR, and we will give them credit for schemes that go above and beyond those specified if they are demonstrated to be deliverable and offer value for money. We will be asking for a specific focus on proposals for delivery of the following schemes which are difficult to deliver due to the availability of trains, station capacity, engineering requirements and space on the lines for a regular service to operate:

- Improved connectivity between Gloucester and Worcester to enhance the frequency on the line when provided alongside the Great Western Railway service;
- Improved connectivity between Birmingham and Worcester which is currently difficult to provide due to freight train movements;
- Improved services over the Christmas and New Year period including the introduction of services on Boxing Day; and
- The introduction of earlier morning and later evening services (on any lines within the franchise).

We are requiring the operator to provide a robust strategy to deliver services during the autumn leaf-fall period in collaboration with Network Rail. They will need to focus on delivering the normal timetable wherever possible, while ensuring that services operate reliably and punctually, meet demand, manage crowding and deliver customer satisfaction.

A number of specific requirements for new or reinstated services came through the consultation, many of which are only deliverable with significant and costly infrastructure work. We require the new franchisee to work alongside the Department, Network Rail, West Midlands Rail, West Midlands Combined Authority, Local Authorities and other

organisations to see how these schemes could be progressed. A summary of how these schemes are being worked towards locally is provided in Appendix H.

Bidders will be required to provide prices for the reinstatement of rail services at Barlaston/Wedgwood stations.

Responses to requests on the Abbey Line and connections between services are provided under Question 6.

As mentioned under our response to Question 6, it would be possible to offer a second train per hour between Coventry and Nuneaton (serving Coventry Arena) following completion of the necessary infrastructure work. We cannot specify this as the exact timescales for this work are not yet finalised, however the increase in service could be delivered through an in franchise change. We are also asking bidders to work with organisers of events at key locations such as Coventry Arena to improve services, capacity and information where this is needed and feasible.



Q8 – Some services between stations operate with irregular gaps between trains. In these situations, it may be possible to make changes to the service pattern in order to operate a service with a more evenly spaced timetable. In principle would you prefer either a service that operates at irregular times (with more trains an hour, however there may be a mixture of long and short gaps between services at some stations) or a more evenly spaced service (with regular gaps between trains but potentially fewer trains/longer journey times)?

Response rate – 79%

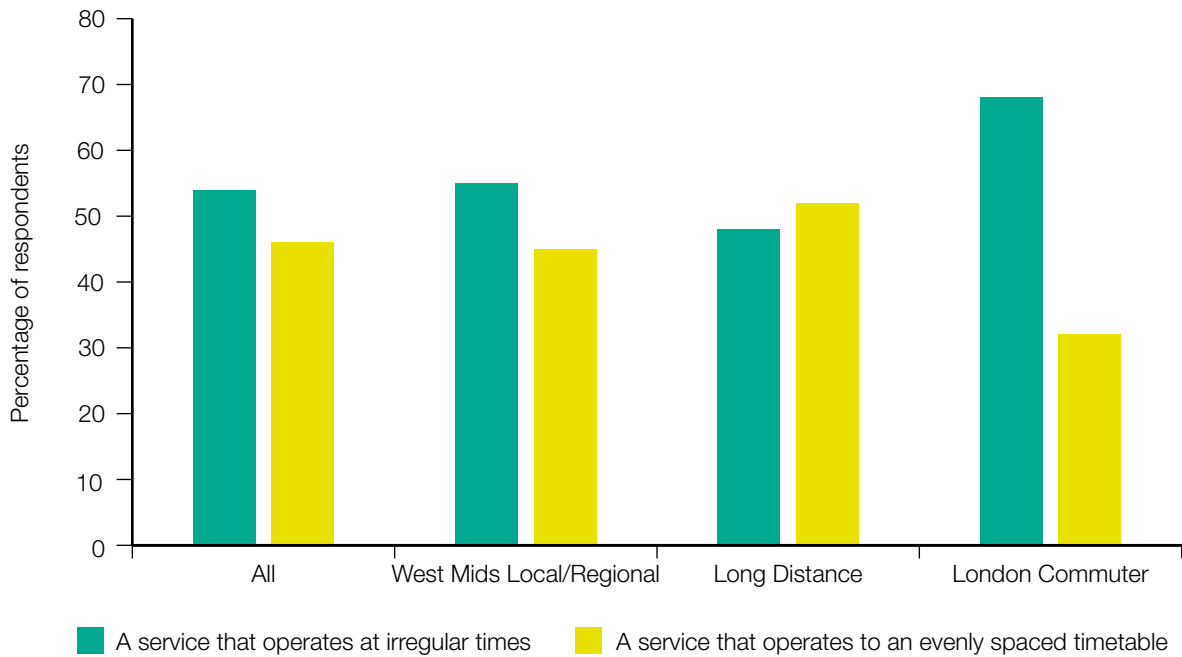
Response synopsis:

The results were fairly evenly split. 54% of individual respondents preferred irregular services, however 46% preferred evenly spaced services.

Commuters and Business users (59% each) tended to support irregular spaced services while Leisure users were more in favour of evenly spaced services (53%).

Users of West Midlands Local and Regional Services (55%) and London Commuter services (68%) were also more supportive of irregular services, while Long Distance users at 52% had a preference for evenly spaced services.

Further details:



Percentage for regular/irregular services

Most respondents who supported irregular services did so as more trains an hour means more possible journeys.

Those who wanted a regular spaced service generally did so as they thought having a more predictable service was valuable.

Stakeholder response:

Only 34 Stakeholders provided a response to this question.

Stakeholder responses contrasted to those of individuals; they favoured evenly spaced timetables strongly (79%).

Evenly spaced services were preferred as they were considered to be more user friendly. This was particularly the case on the Shrewsbury line where some Stakeholders saw unevenly spaced services as problematic.

Our response:

Due to the mixed responses to this question we will be asking bidders to decide the best timetable to operate on each specific route using data and consultation responses, as long as it meets the minimum frequency requirements we set out in the Train Service Requirement. However they are being encouraged to operate services at broadly regular frequencies except where bigger or smaller gaps between trains respond to demand more effectively.

The introduction of the additional hourly off peak daytime service between Birmingham and Shrewsbury will help to provide more even spacing between journeys on this line.

Q9 – Which of these options would you prefer and why?

- Maintaining the current direct West Midlands Franchise service from London Euston to Crewe via Stoke-on-Trent; or
- Operating the Euston to Crewe service directly from Stafford to Crewe, and providing an alternative service for stations between Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe which would provide new links to destinations south of Stafford.

Where possible please provide your reasons. If you have a priority for which new destinations an alternative service between Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe should serve please let us know.

Response rate – 54%

Response synopsis:

This question had a relatively low response rate, presumably as the changes to service had no direct effect on many respondents to the consultation.

Responses varied significantly by market and location.

Out of 555 individual respondents, 37% were in favour of retaining the existing route while 63% thought running directly from Stafford to Crewe – with an alternative service to a destination south of Stafford serving stations via Stoke-on-Trent – was the most desirable option.

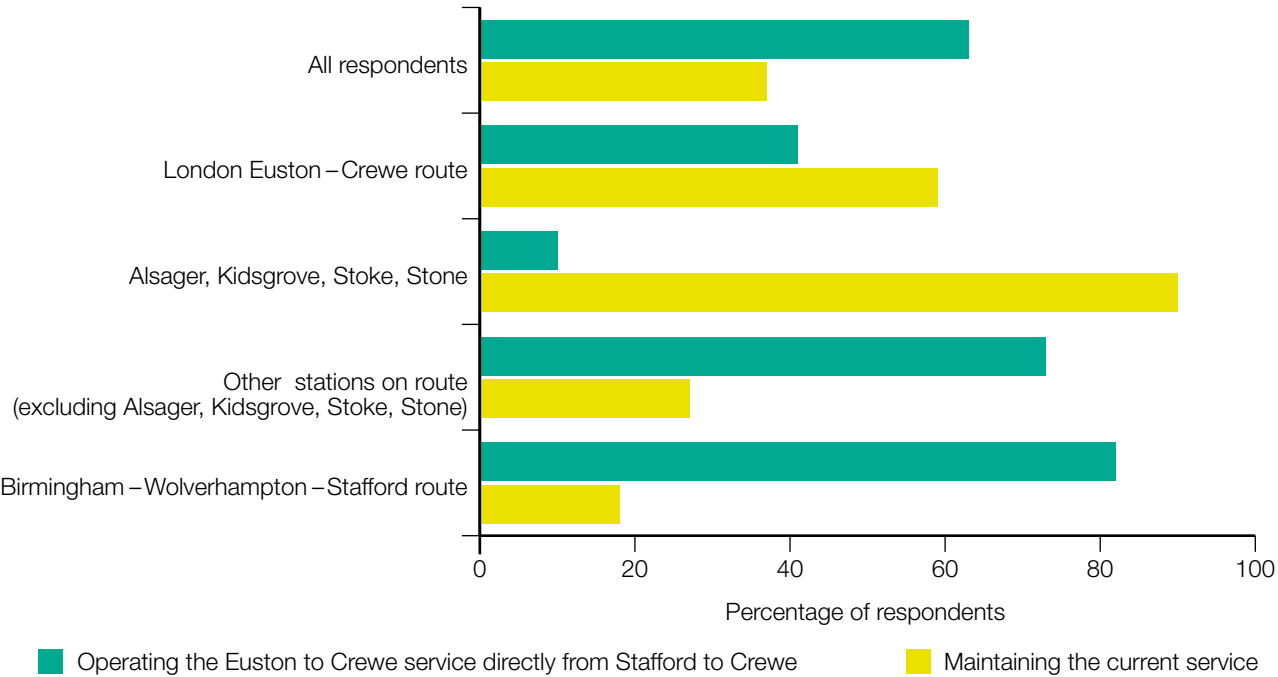
Of respondents using Stone, Stoke-on-Trent, Kidsgrove and Alsager stations, 90% wanted to retain the existing route. There was also an 83 name petition from the Alsager area calling for the service to remain as it is currently.

However at other stations along the current Euston – Crewe route (Crewe, Stafford and all stations south to London), only 27% of respondents wanted to maintain the current direct London Midland service from London Euston to Crewe via Stoke-on-Trent, with the preference being to operate the service directly from Stafford to Crewe (73%).

There was also more support to operate the current service directly from Stafford to Crewe, with an alternative service provided for the Stoke-on-Trent area amongst users of the Birmingham-Wolverhampton-Stafford route (82%).

Further details:

Respondents using stations in the Stoke-on-Trent area tended to state the current service should be maintained and stated the importance of Stoke-on-Trent as a major stop. A number also suggested ways around the issue such as platform lengthening or Selective Door Opening (where the doors on only certain carriages open at stations with shorter platforms, allowing longer trains to use them). Respondents also stated it was useful for small stations to have direct access to London/Crewe.



Opinion on service changes to London-Crewe via Stoke-on-Trent route

Stakeholder response:

Only 21 Stakeholders gave a response to this question

62% of those Stakeholders wanted to maintain the current service, while 38% wanted to operate the Euston to Crewe service directly from Stafford. Many of the Stakeholder respondents to this question were from the Stoke-on-Trent area.

Our response:

The strength of feeling about the benefits of a direct link to London for Alsager, Kidsgrove and Stone is understood. However, having carefully analysed the consultation responses, user data and the benefits and disadvantages of both options, we have decided to change the route of the existing London to Crewe service to run directly from Stafford to Crewe, and provide a new service for Kidsgrove, Alsager and Stone via Stoke-on-Trent to Birmingham. We believe this will provide benefits to a larger number of users of West Midlands Franchise services.

Analysis of ticket sales data indicates that typically fewer than 70 passengers per day make a direct journey between Alsager, Kidsgrove or Stone and London Euston. Approximately twice as many tickets are sold for journeys between these stations and either Stoke-on-Trent or Stafford. These passengers would have an enhanced level of service as a result of the route changes.

Alsager, Kidsgrove and Stone can only be served by four carriage trains due to platform lengths, crossings and railway junctions. This means there is a large gap in West Midlands Franchise services during peak, because eight car trains need to operate to cater for the high levels of usage. Journeys either side of the peak are getting increasingly busy so the current gap in service would need to become bigger if the growing demand is to be managed through train lengthening.

By requiring that all services between Euston and Crewe run directly between Stafford and Crewe throughout the day with a new service provided from Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford to Birmingham via Wolverhampton, longer trains can be used all day on the London to Crewe route to cater for the increasing usage, and a consistent, regular service can be provided for the stations around Stoke-on-Trent.

It also means we have been able to provide improved evening and Sunday services for stations in the Stoke-on-Trent area, something that could not have been provided on the Euston service. It will also meet demand for services into Birmingham.

We will be asking bidders to ensure that changing between trains at Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent, both of which retain direct services to London, is as easy as possible. At Stafford people will still be able to change onto West Midlands Franchise services and access lower price fares when available.

Services at Barlaston, Norton Bridge and Wedgwood stations are currently provided by a rail replacement bus service. There have been requests for the reinstatement of train services at these stations. We are asking bidders to develop proposals and costs to

reinstate train services at Wedgwood/Barlaston stations. We will evaluate each submission to determine whether reinstating train services at either station is deliverable and we will then seek to run a formal closure consultation process for any stations where train services are not proposed to be reinstated. We are considering the next steps to take with regards to Norton Bridge.

Q10a – During railway disruption what information would you like to know, and when and how would you like to receive it during known disruption such as engineering works?

Response rate – 67%

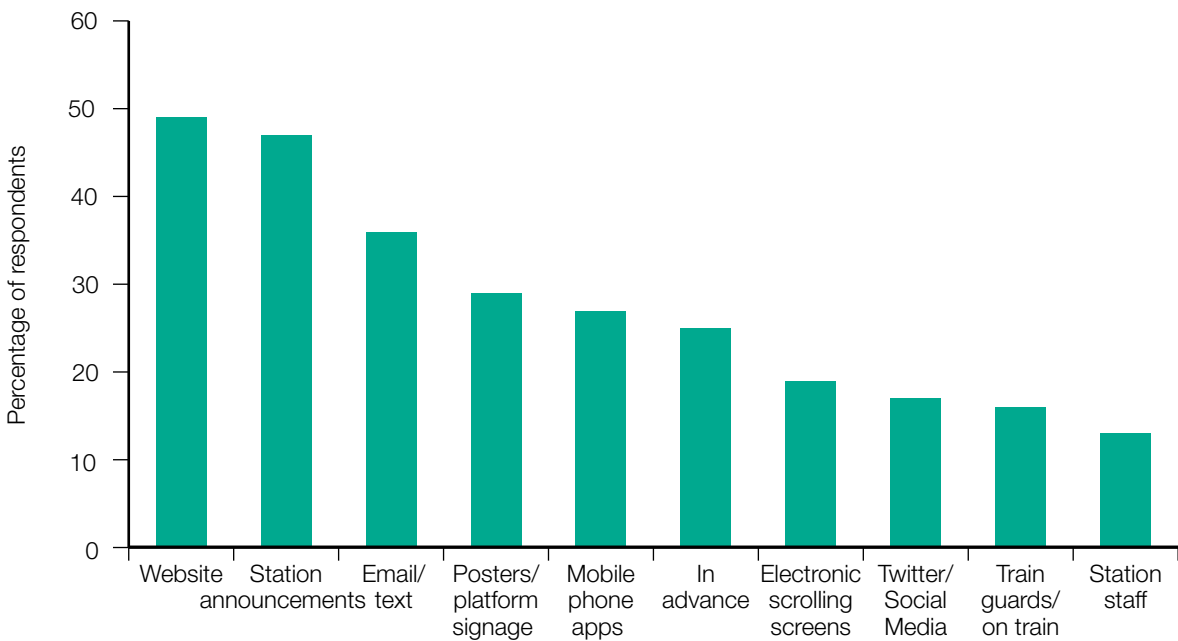
Response synopsis:

During times of **planned disruption** passengers wanted to know which routes were affected, when it was going to happen and any alternative route information. They also wanted the information to be accurate and to know the duration of the disruption.

Information was best provided online, via email/social media/apps or via announcements/posters at station in advance.

Positively 17% thought information for planned disruption was good already.

Further details:



Planned disruption information provision

There were some examples of good practice given in the area of information provision – these were the National Rail website/app and Transport for London (TfL).

There were also compliments for London Midland’s Twitter feed and London Midland’s website and app.

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders wanted information via information screens, station announcements or on the Internet.

They wanted the operator to state clear alternative travel arrangements and the anticipated length of any likely disruption.

Stakeholders complimented London Midland on its use of rail replacement bus services.

Our response to this question is set out under Q10b

Q10b – During railway disruption what information would you like to know, and when and how would you like to receive it during unplanned disruption such as signalling issues?

Response rate – 68%

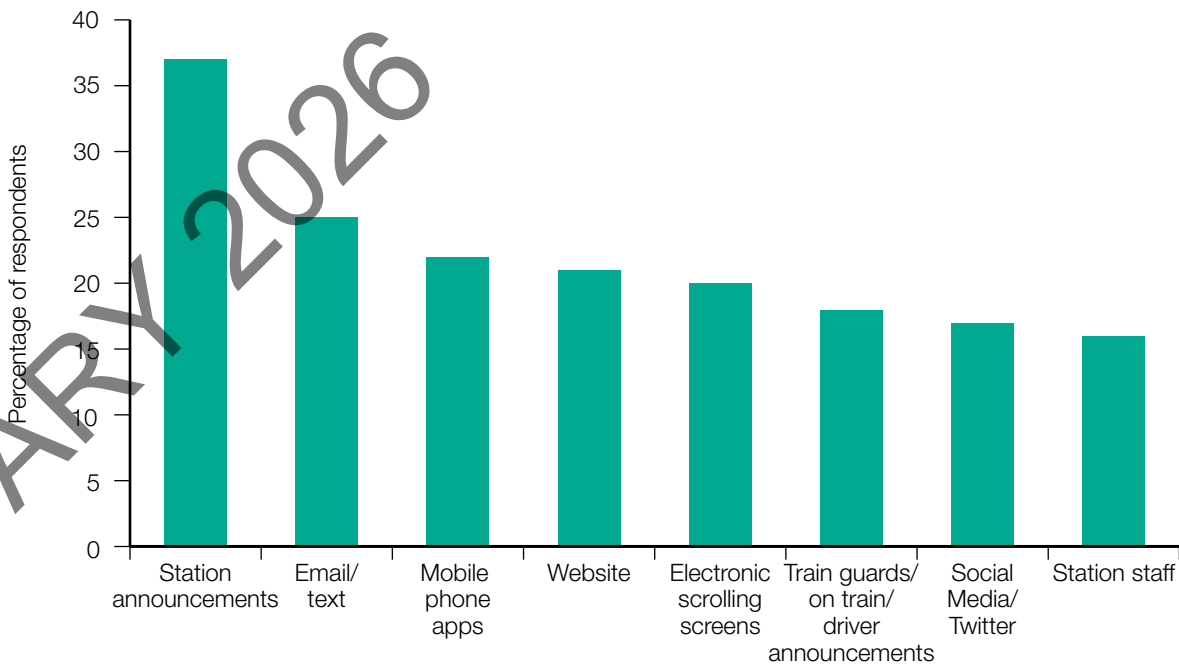
Response synopsis:

During times of **unplanned disruption** passengers want up to date/accurate information. They want to know any alternative routes available, the length of any delay and the reason for it.

Respondents’ preference for information for unplanned delays was via station announcements. A significant proportion of respondents wanted email/texts or mobile apps tailored to their journey. Online and social media were also important as were screens at the station and announcements on trains and by station staff.

Further details:

The main example of good practice for unplanned disruptions was London Midland’s Twitter feed, although it was believed its operating hours should be extended. London Midland’s app and website was also mentioned as was the National Rail app and website.



Unplanned disruption information provision

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders wanted unplanned disruption information on screens or to have staff giving out information. They would also like to see announcements at the station and on the train.

Stakeholders wanted information to be accurate and for clear information on alternative transport.

Good examples mentioned were Northern Rail’s use of GPS (satellite technology that provides precise details of a vehicle’s location) allowing live information to be provided on the train’s anticipated arrival time.

Our response:

We are requiring bidders to set out how they will significantly improve the provision of information during both known and unplanned disruption for all, including using both existing and evolving technology.

The new operator will be required to work alongside the Department, Network Rail, West Midlands Rail, Local Transport Authorities, other train companies and HS2 Ltd to minimise disruption to customers and communicate effectively with them.

There will be requirements to provide better information on alternative travel arrangements.

We are stipulating that a member of train company staff must be contactable at all stations during the times that trains serve the station, either in person, through a help point, through social media or via a personal mobile device.

All the helpful information and suggestions provided by consultation respondents have been made available to bidders to help inform their proposals in these areas.

There will be demanding targets to improve customer satisfaction in this area, and the Service Quality Regime in the West Midlands area and on branch lines will also monitor how the operator deals with the provision of information during delays.

Q11 – In what ways can the franchise operator provide better services, ticketing and information for passengers to serve major events? Please provide details of any specific events, the reasons why services need improving and any examples of best practice you are aware of.

Response rate – 37%

Response synopsis:

This question had a low response rate. Few respondents actually mentioned specific events where services needed improving, tending to give more general responses.

The main requests involved operators providing more carriages/trains to meet demand or to provide specific extra services for events.

Some thought advance notice of events would be helpful so that passengers could adjust travel times and avoid crowded services. Also of help would be later running/more evening trains and more staff.

There were some requests for discounted train tickets to events or for combined event/train tickets.

Further details:

When asked to give the event which services could be improved to, the list was fairly general. However a few specific events were mentioned such as the German Christmas Market in Birmingham, Shrewsbury Flower Show, Cosford Air Show and the Three Counties Show.

| Type of event | % |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Major events/events in general | 38 |
| Football matches | 34 |
| German Market (Birmingham) | 9 |
| Concerts / festivals | 6 |
| Rugby World Cup | 4 |
| Shrewsbury Flower Show | 3 |
| Marathon/races | 3 |
| Daytime shows | 2 |
| Sports events | 2 |
| Cosford Air Show | 2 |
| Three Counties Showground | 2 |

Events for Service Improvements

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders would particularly like to see rail travel improved to events at the NEC, German Market, Aston Villa Football Club and Coventry Arena.

They felt services currently lacked capacity to meet demand when events were on and that they needed to run earlier/later.

Stakeholders suggested operators work better with event planners and provide information to regular users so they could change journey plans around events.

Our response:

We have specifically asked bidders to set out how they will work with event organisers, transport operators and other partners to improve services and information for major events. We have specifically referenced Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre, Coventry Arena, Birmingham City Centre and Wembley Stadium but are encouraging bidders to consider additional events/venues.

The improvements to Sunday and evening services set out under Question 7 will help to address a number of the concerns raised around the timing of services for major events.

Bidders have been asked to look at how they will effectively use their train fleet to cater for extra demand during special events, and potentially hire additional trains in exceptional cases where costs can be covered.

Q12a – What are your views on the value for money you receive for your train journeys in the franchise area when compared to other transport choices available to you?

Response rate – 81%

Response synopsis:

This question regarding value for money generated a high response rate, perhaps indicating the importance of this issue to passengers.

Two contrary views existed with similar proportions thinking services were too expensive or in contrast that they offered good value.

This contrast in views is further reflected with some individuals stating certain fares were good value for money such as season tickets, off peak fares and advanced tickets while other fares were poor value for money such as peak tickets or walk-up fares.

There were significant proportions of respondents who felt that fares were increasing despite there being no improvement in services, or who thought that the current fare system was too complicated.

Views varied by the type of service used and the reason for travel.

Further details:

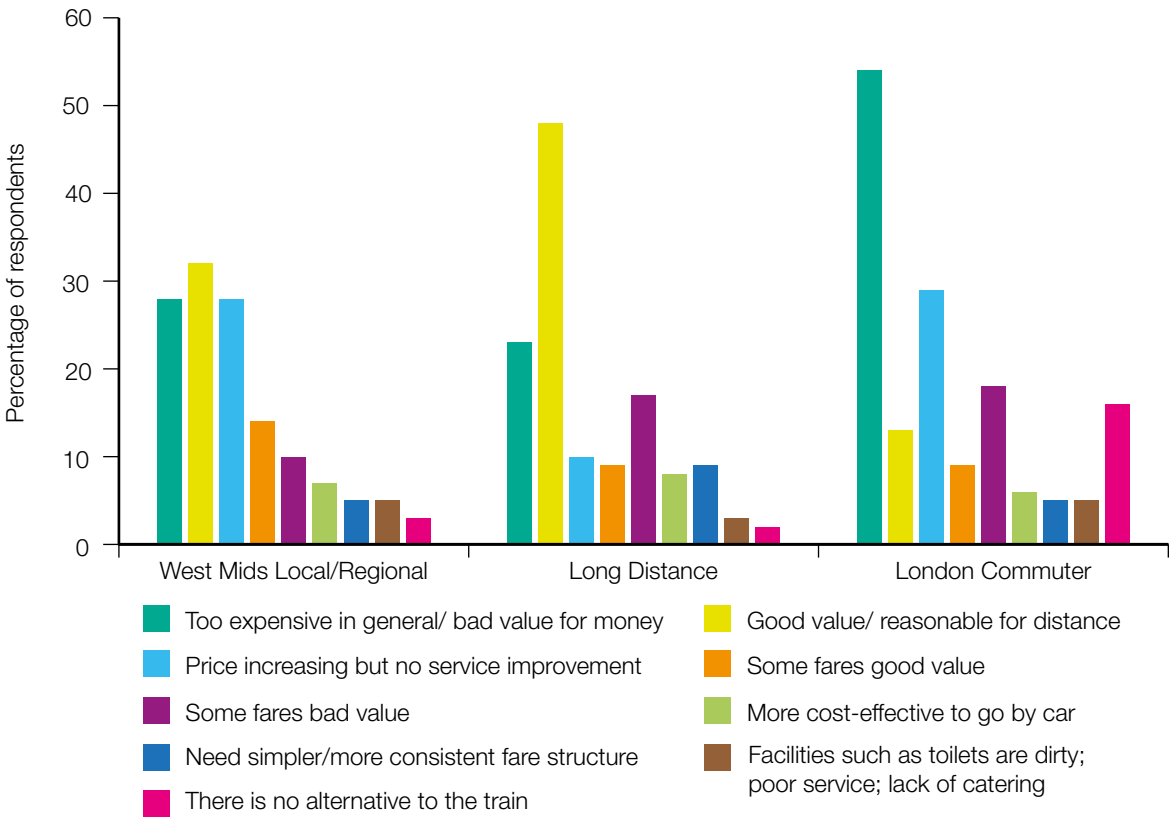
Respondents using West Midlands Local and Regional services and Long Distance services were more likely to say that fares offered good value for money, whereas London Commuters were more likely to think fares were too expensive and that they had no alternative but to use the train.

There was a higher proportion of respondents on Local and Regional and London Commuter services who felt that fares were increasing with no improvement in service.

Commuters and business users were also more likely to think fares were too expensive compared to leisure users who were more likely to find fares good value for money.



Opinion on Value for Money



Value for Money by type of service

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders tended not to respond to this question.

Where a view was given, responses were similar to those given by individuals; polarised between those who thought rail was good value for money and those that thought it was poor value for money.

Our response:

We will be continuing to apply Fare Regulation to the West Midlands Franchise which will limit the fare increases that the franchisee can apply to regulated fares (which covers most peak commuter fares) in order to prevent excessive price increases being imposed on travellers.

National policy is that regulated fares will be unable to rise by more than the rate of inflation until 2020.

West Midlands Rail will be given the opportunity to influence fares policy in the West Midlands Separable Business Unit area which could lead to deviations from national policy.

The franchisee will be required to introduce new ticketing products that offer better value for money for customers who travel less than five days per week.

We will also encourage the franchisee to widen the availability of season tickets through Direct Debit schemes in order to spread the cost of paying for annual tickets.

We are requiring a focus on improved service quality and customer experience for passengers, including the implementation of a Service Quality Regime in the West Midlands area and on branch lines and stretching customer satisfaction targets across the whole franchise.

Q12b: Does the range of ticket types available meet your needs or are there specific examples of new types of fare that you would like to see introduced?

Response rate – 54%

Response synopsis:

There was a relatively poor response rate to this question with only just over half answering.

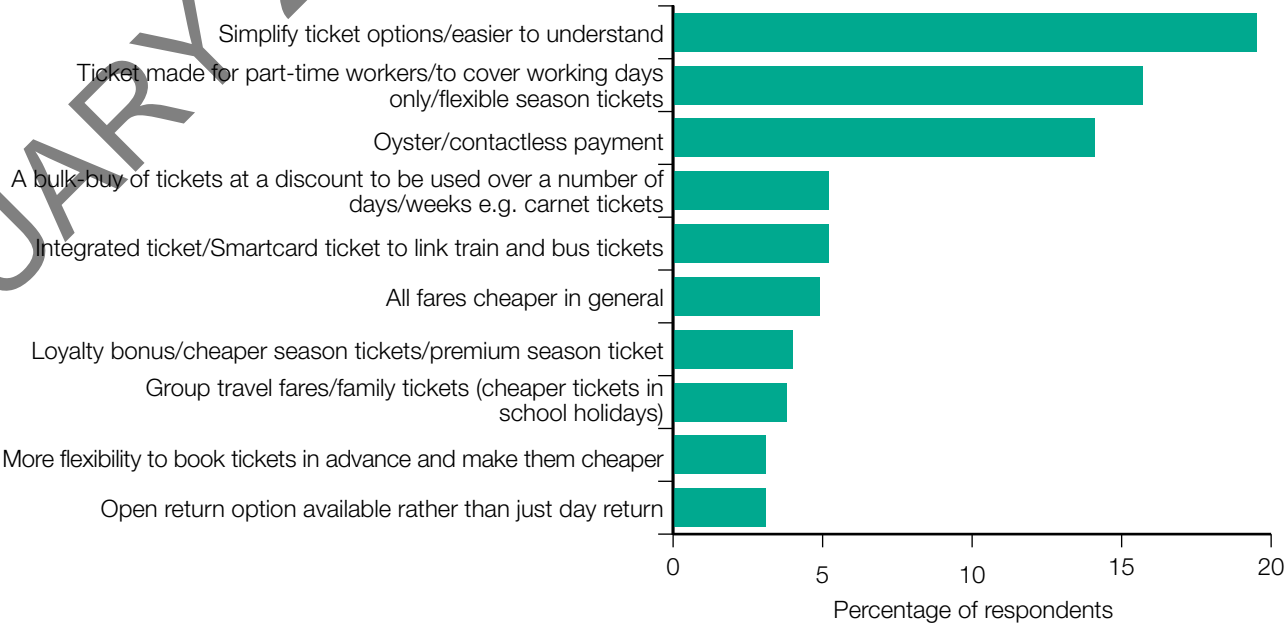
Where an answer was given the main response was to simplify the existing ticket system.

Where requests were made for more specific tickets the most popular response was for tickets for part time workers/more flexible season tickets and Oyster card/contactless tickets. Some liked the idea of bulk buying tickets at a discount to be used over a number of days or integrated Smartcard/multi-modal tickets.

Further details:

West Midlands Local and Regional service users wanted to simplify tickets or Oyster style ticketing, while London Commuters were most likely to state that they wanted tickets for part time workers.

The key response from Long Distance service users was to simplify tickets.



Alternative ticket types

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders were largely supportive of Smartcard ticketing and multi modal tickets.

They liked the idea of flexible season tickets for part time workers and would like to investigate a revision/widening of zonal fares.

Stakeholders also called for fares to be easier to understand.

Our response:

The franchisee will be required to expand the availability of smart ticketing across the franchise area and will be expected to set targets to increase the take up and usage of smart ticketing (which includes any option which does not require the use of a traditional magnetic stripe ticket).

The franchisee will be specifically required to introduce a new smart ticketing product for commuters into London Euston on the Northampton line, and also for travellers on the Abbey Line.

In the West Midlands, the franchise must support the delivery of nTrain tickets on the Swift card. We are also encouraging proposals to widen the availability of rail tickets on Swift across the wider West Midlands area.

The franchisee will be required to introduce new ticketing products that offer better value for money for customers who travel less than five days per week.

We want to make sure that there are suitable ticket options available for passengers with different needs making various types of journeys. This makes it difficult to simplify the range of tickets without removing some options for customers. Therefore we have focussed on ensuring that the new operator introduces an improved ticket retailing experience to make it easier for customers to purchase the best ticket for their journey. This includes ensuring that customers can easily access the information they need to understand and choose the best fare for them.

Q13a – We want to make it easier for passengers to pay for their journey. From the list provided¹² which are most important?

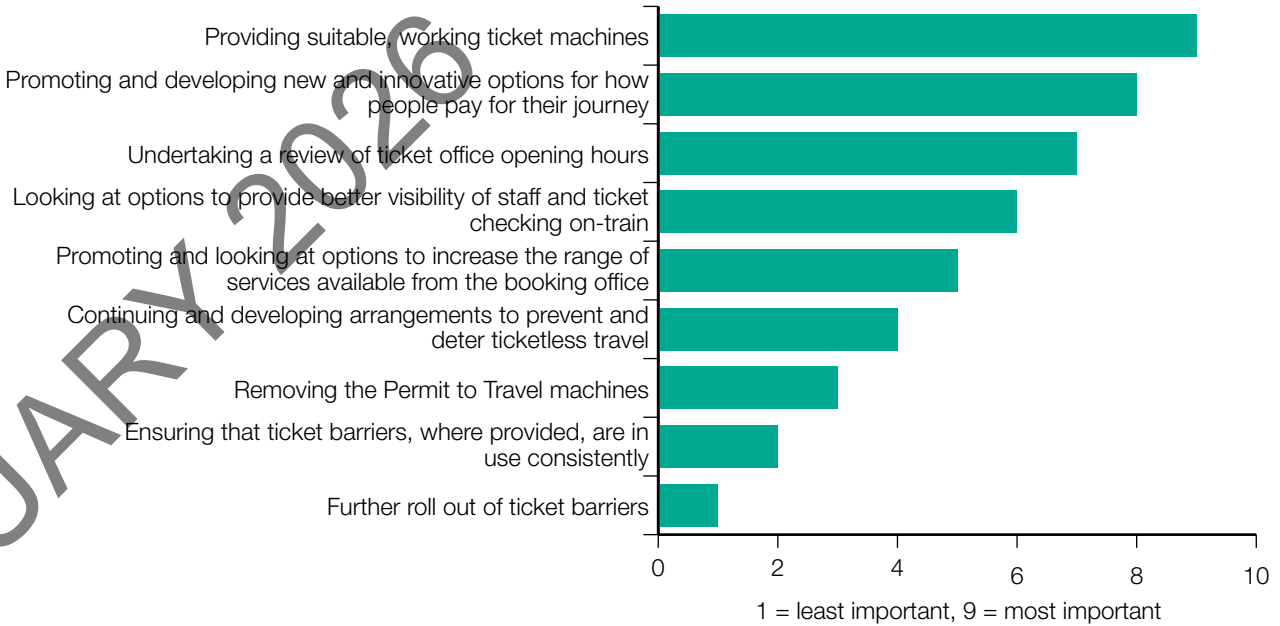
Response rate – 90%

Response synopsis:

- This was a closed question where respondents had to rate a number of attributes. As such the question received a good response rate.
- The priority for easier ticket purchase was for more ticket machines, followed by promoting new, innovative ways for people to buy tickets.
- Reviewing ticket office opening hours, better visibility of staff on trains checking tickets and promoting and increasing the range of services offered by ticket offices were the next most important.
- The further roll out use of ticket barriers, ensuring ticket barriers were manned and removal of Permit to Travel machines were considered least important.

Further details:

- When asked the reasons why ticket purchase is difficult, respondents tended to see the problem as being caused by a lack of staff at stations/on board trains and that ticket offices should be open for longer. Others commented that machines were often out of order or not available at all stations.
- There were general comments that fare evasion is a problem.
- Individuals thought buying tickets could be made easier by the provision of Smartcards, improved ticket pricing and information, mobile ticketing and allowing passengers to buy and print their own tickets at home.



Priorities to make it easier to pay for journeys

Stakeholder response:

- Stakeholders largely did not take part in the rating exercise, tending to make more general comments.
- As previously illustrated, Stakeholders were supportive of Smartcard ticketing. They would also like more ticket machines at stations selling the full range of tickets.
- Stakeholders tended to support a review of ticket office opening times.

Our response:

- The franchisee will be required to deliver an efficient and high standard of ticket retailing service, allowing customers to access tickets easily and securely prior to travel. Bidders will need to take into account the different passenger needs that exist within the franchise when developing their proposals.
- The franchisee will be required to develop and introduce smart ticketing technology that will provide an alternative to the traditional magnetic stripe tickets and make this widely available to passengers. This will also provide the opportunity for bidders to develop innovative approaches to making rail tickets available through a variety of retailing channels at the station, and also away from the rail network for example on digital media.
- We are also encouraging the franchisee to widen the availability of season tickets through Direct Debit schemes in order to spread the cost of paying for annual tickets.

¹² Options are shown on the graph on page 103.



Q13b – We want to reduce the number of people travelling without tickets. From the list provided¹³ which are most important?

Response rate – 80%

Response synopsis:

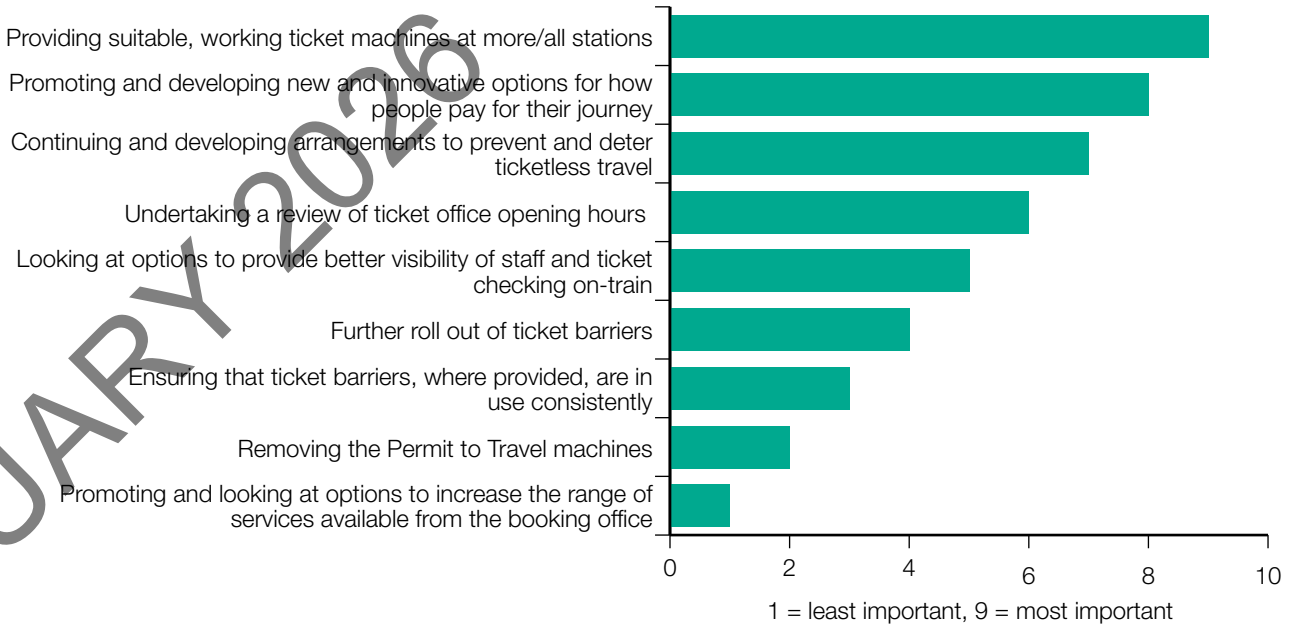
This was a similar rating exercise to Q13a.

As with the response to making it easier to buy a ticket, passengers thought ticketless travel would be best reduced by providing suitable, working ticket machines and promoting new, innovative options for how people pay for journeys. Continuing and developing arrangements to deter ticketless travel were also seen as important.

Following this was support for a review of ticket office opening hours and better visibility of staff on trains.

The use of ticket barriers was also seen to have more of a key role in reducing ticketless travel.

The removal of Permit to Travel machines and looking at options to increase the range of services available from ticket offices were considered of low importance here.



Priorities for preventing ticketless travel

Further details

In more general comments made about ticketless travel, individuals tended to think that there were not enough ticket checks and that ticket barriers were not always working/in operation. Respondents also tended to comment that there were insufficient ticket machines at stations and ticket office opening hours.

The solution to ticketless travel was seen to be more ticket checks and ticket barriers at local stations. There was also a call for increased penalty fares and for more staff.

Stakeholder responses:

Again when asked about ticketless travel, Stakeholders tended to make more general comments rather than rating the listed attributes.

On train tickets checks were key for Stakeholders, as were the use of ticket barriers and their further roll out at stations.

Stakeholders were also interested in driver operated doors to ensure guards could check tickets more easily. However, it should be noted that some Stakeholders such as rail unions were opposed to the introduction of driver controlled doors.

Our response:

We recognise the strong feeling from consultees about the unfairness of passengers travelling without paying. We therefore commissioned a specific ticketless travel survey (published alongside this document) to identify the levels of ticketless travel that exist within the franchise. This has identified current levels of ticketless travel on a route-by-

¹³ Options are shown on the graph on page 105.

route and time-of-day basis, showing some considerable variations in both passengers travelling without tickets and the potential revenue that might be lost as a result across the franchise area.

The franchisee will be required to manage ticketless travel and protect revenue, while ensuring that their approach to achieving this is not detrimental to the customer experience. Bidders will need to take account of the ticketless travel survey and propose a strategy showing how ticketless travel will be managed including how they will use Penalty Fares, ticket gates and other measures to support the strategy.

In order to assist in reducing ticketless travel and improving the visibility of staff on-train, bidders will be encouraged to consider developing initiatives to free up conductors to be more available to customers. This could include the implementation of Drive Controlled Operation (DCO) – where the driver operates the doors on the service. Conductors would then have more time to provide customer care and information, perform increased ticket checks and help improve feelings of security. All new rolling stock will need to be able to operate with DCO. If DCO is proposed by bidders, the Department will require the franchisee to undertake appropriate consultation (with passengers and the workforce) and demonstrate that they are supporting the continual development and expansion of the professional skills of on-train staff, in particular in relation to the on-board customer service passengers attach most value to.

Q14 – What could be done to improve security to make your journey better and encourage more people to use rail services? This could include on the way to or at the station or on board the train.

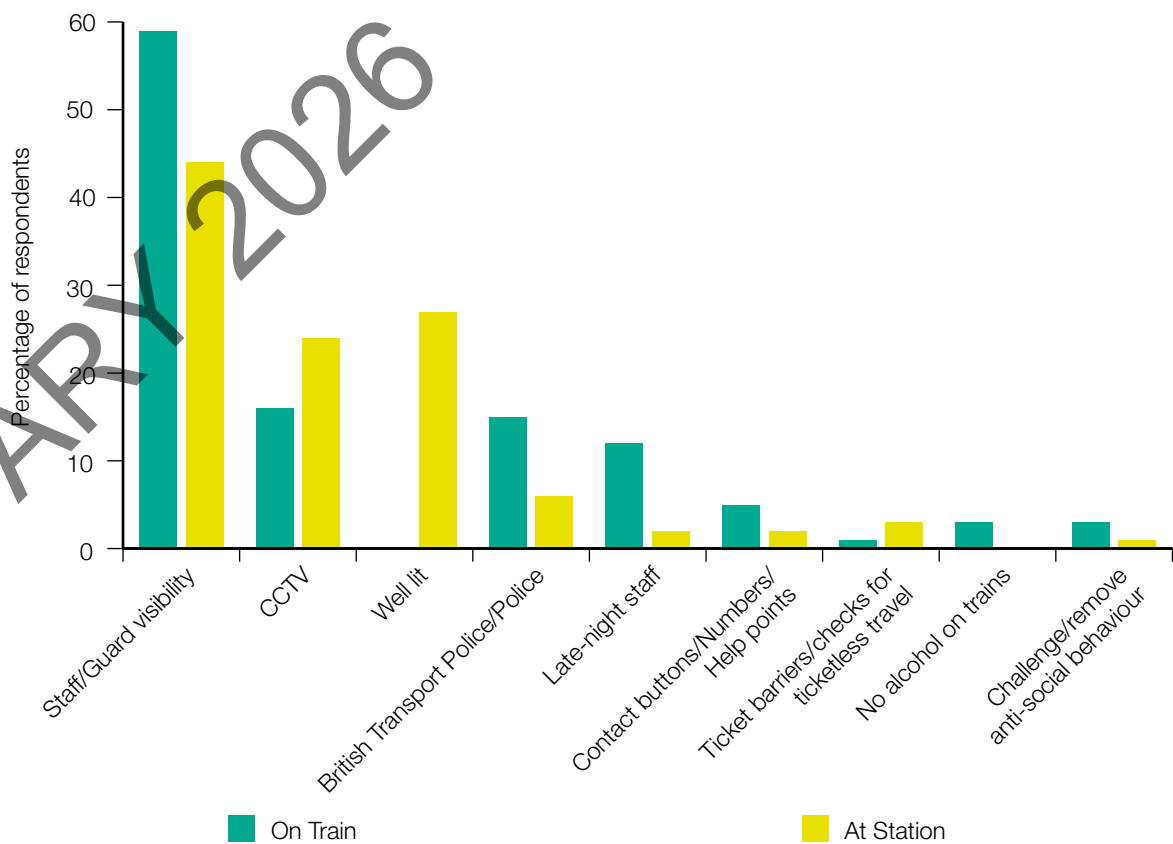
Response rate – 62%

Response synopsis:

Responses to this question were broken down into improvements on stations and trains. Individuals generally wanted a greater staff presence on both. Improved lighting and CCTV were also important at train stations, while improved CCTV and a police presence were the next most important suggestions on train. It should be noted that significant proportions of respondents to this question proactively commented there were no issues with either on board (12%) or at station safety (13%).

Further details:

More staff on board trains or at stations was the key proposal regardless of the type of service used. Visible CCTV on trains and at stations was more of a priority for users of West Midlands Local and Regional services than it was on Long Distance or London Commuter services. In contrast more visible staff on late trains was a bigger priority for London Commuter services. Few specific stations were mentioned for improvements



Proposals to improve security at stations and on trains

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders also thought that providing more staff was the key to improved safety. This was followed by the introduction of CCTV and better lighting. Stakeholders were also were keen on schemes such as Secure Station and Secure Parking accreditation.

Our response:

Bidders have been asked to set out how they will improve perceptions of safety and security on the railway for both customers and staff as part of their submissions, working alongside British Transport Police, West Midlands Rail, the Safer Travel Partnership and other bodies. They are required to show how they will improve customer satisfaction with feelings of security on the train and at stations, and work alongside local authorities and other bodies to improve routes to the station. A design guide will be submitted to the operator setting out minimum standards for CCTV and lighting in the West Midlands area.

The Stations Improvement Fund will provide money to make improvements at stations. The operator could choose to use it to enhance safety and security measures.

We have asked bidders how they will improve the visibility of staff at stations and on trains. The new operator is also required to make sure a member of staff is contactable at stations from first to last train either in person, via a help point, through social media or by mobile telephone.



Q15 – What represents good service for you on your rail journeys and what could be improved or introduced to make you feel more valued as a customer and encourage you to recommend the railway to others? Please state whether you are referring to long or short distance services and give reasons including any relevant examples of outstanding customer service experiences.

Response rate – 62%

Response synopsis:

This question had a relatively low response rate.

Individuals tended to think that a good service typically means a punctual service, being able to obtain a seat, pleasant/polite/helpful staff, regularly cleaned trains and regular and timely announcements. Good communication in times of delay was also important.

Further details:

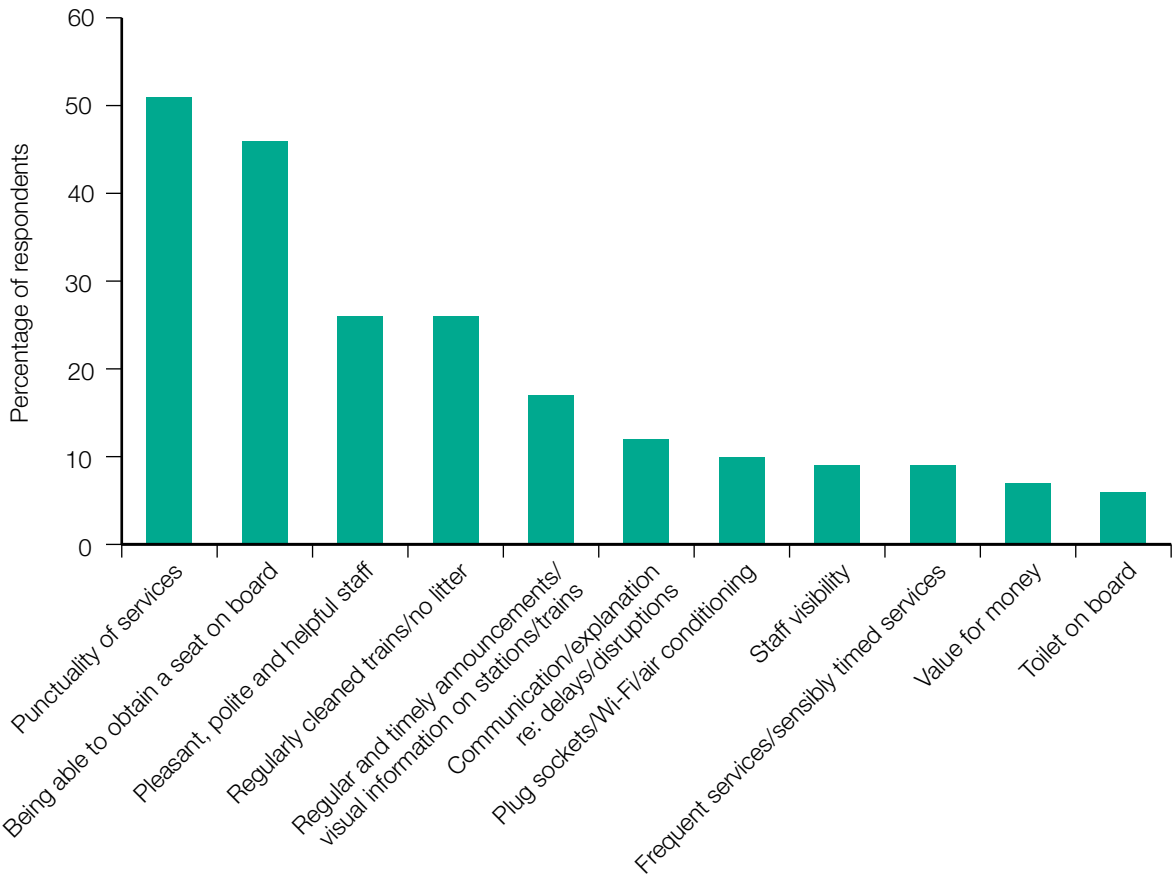
The main priorities for a good service varied little by whether respondents were referring to long or short distance services, with punctuality and seat availability being key.

On long distance services there was a greater expectation for catering and facilities such as Wi-Fi, plugs and air-conditioning.

Individuals commented that providing a good service should be addressed by making it easier for passengers to find the best value fare; improving customer care; valuing customers; providing more carriages; and an improved delay/repay compensation scheme.

Individuals gave a number of examples of good service. Virgin Trains were the most mentioned followed by Chiltern Railways. Examples of good service from London Midland were also given.

Some individuals made a point of naming specific members of staff on board and at station who they felt gave good service – largely as they were found to be friendly and funny. We have passed on these comments to London Midland to share with the relevant staff.



What represents good service

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Virgin Trains | Customer service/visible friendly staff/clean trains/compensation if booked online |
| Chiltern Railways | Visible friendly staff/good trains and facilities |
| London Midland | Customer service/cycle policies |
| Examples of specific staff | Friendly/funny/good announcements |

Examples of good service

Stakeholder responses:

For Stakeholders staffing was the key to good service with more visible and polite/knowledgeable staff offering a good level of customer care being most important.

Cleanliness, reliability and affordability were also frequently mentioned.

Our response:

Our approach to improving punctuality and reliability with improved performance targets is explained under Question 1, while managing overcrowding is set out under Questions 1 and 5.

The new Service Quality Regime and enhanced customer satisfaction targets will ensure a focus on improved cleanliness, maintenance and customer service.

Bidders have been asked to set out how they will improve information, especially during delays, as part of their submissions as outlined under questions 10a and 10b.

Free Wi-Fi will be required on all main line services by the end of December 2019.

The franchisee will need to provide a quick and simple Delay Repay compensation system for passengers. This will include a requirement to provide compensation for delays of 15 minutes. The new operator will have to actively promote to passengers how they can claim compensation due to delays.

Q16 – How could the provision of information on rail services be improved and what additional information would be of use to you when planning or making your journeys e.g. seat availability, journey times, and connection information? Where possible please provide reasons for your answers.

Responses rate – 47%

Response synopsis:

There was a low response rate to this question, potentially due to information provision being covered in previous questions.

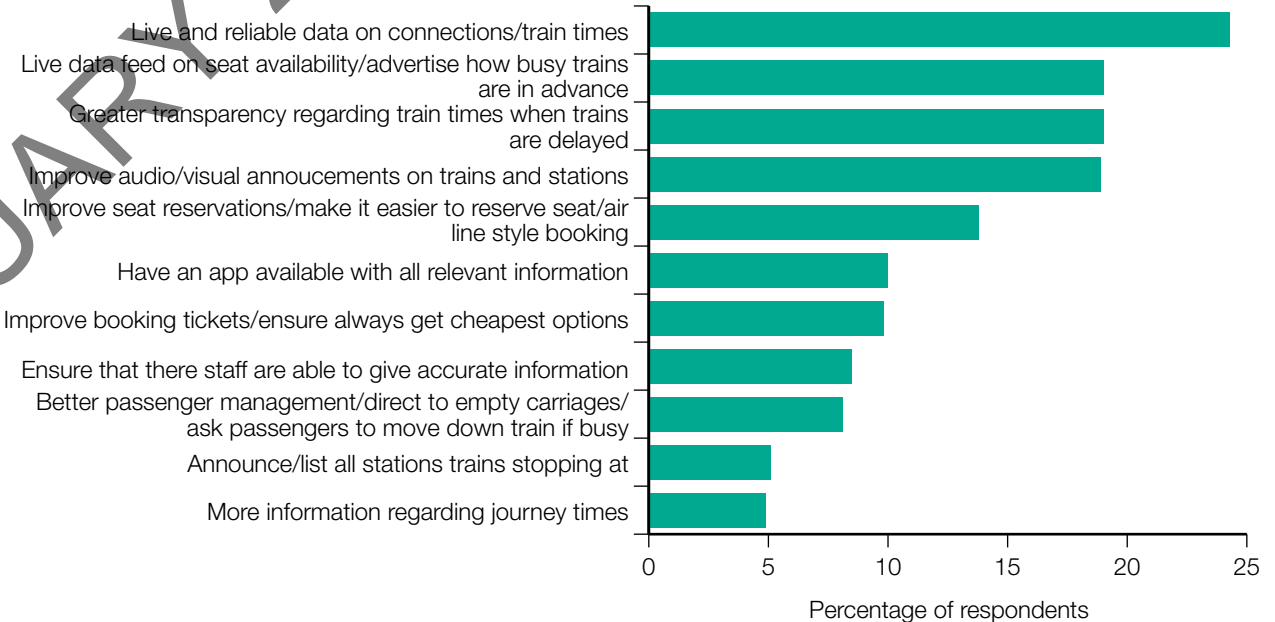
Individuals most commonly stated that they wanted live and reliable data on connections/times, followed by greater transparency regarding arrival times during disruption.

There was also interest in more information on seat availability on specific services.

Passengers again emphasised the need to improve audio/visual information.

Other issues were the provision of apps which covered all types of information and improvements to booking tickets to ensure that passengers always got the cheapest option available.

Further details:



Improvements to provision of information

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders gave a wide range of responses to how information could be improved.

The most common comment was for more on board screens followed by more accurate information in general and at times of disruption.

Information on seat availability was also mentioned.

Our response:

Bidders have been asked to set out how they will provide improved information to all passengers in particular during disruption and on fares/ticketing.

We have asked bidders how they can provide improved information on seat availability and train lengths, and they will be offered credit if they include this in their proposals.

The new operator will be required to regularly publish information on their performance with regards to:

- Punctuality and reliability;

- Trains running with less than the agreed number of carriages;
- Customer satisfaction;
- Service quality (cleaning and maintenance); and
- Customer service.

Bidders have been asked to provide information by market area to ensure it is as relevant as possible to customers and Stakeholders.

Credit will be offered to bidders who set out proposals to provide more personalised information for customers.

A focus is placed on using existing and evolving technology to provide better information including via apps and social media.

Provision of on board displays and announcements will be required on all trains by the end of 2019.

Real time information will need to be provided for all trains through live tracking, including on the Abbey Line.

Q17 – Should the railway have its own identity representing the areas it serves rather than the train company that operates the services e.g. a specific brand on services that run within the West Midlands area? Please give us a reason for your response to help us understand your view.

Response rate – 68%

Response synopsis:

There was generally ambivalence towards railway branding with a significant proportion of respondents having no views or stating they didn't care.

28% were positive about local branding while 18% said they were not in favour of it.

Further details:

Users of West Midlands Local and Regional services were slightly more supportive of branding than users of Long Distance or London Commuters services who tended to be more negative/ambivalent.

Reasons for agreeing with branding were that it would create a local identity and help promote local areas. Some passengers felt branding should cover all modes of transport similar to TfL, Merseytravel and Transport for Scotland.

People who did not support a local brand cited uniformity and accountability (being able to identify the company running the trains) as their main reasons.

Reasons for being ambivalent towards branding were that a good service and value for money were more important.

8% of respondents did not support local identities citing the costs of rebranding. As some form of rebranding will inevitably be undertaken when the franchise is renewed, and having a local brand would remove the need for rebranding in future franchises, these answers were categorised separately.

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders who responded to this question were largely supportive of local branding, or had no views. Few Stakeholders were against local branding.

Stakeholders felt branding could create a local identity and provide local ownership/accountability/pride.

Our response:

As part of the partnership work with WMR and the journey towards the devolution of rail services within the West Midlands area, a new brand and values will be provided for use in that area.

The new brand will be applied to trains, stations, marketing and information in the West Midlands Separable Business Unit area, shown on the map in Appendix C.

More details on devolution and the new brand can be found in Section 1 of this document.



Q18 – How could communities, businesses and/or other organisations within the public, private and voluntary sectors be encouraged to play an active part in the running of the railway stations or services in their area?

Response rate – 34%

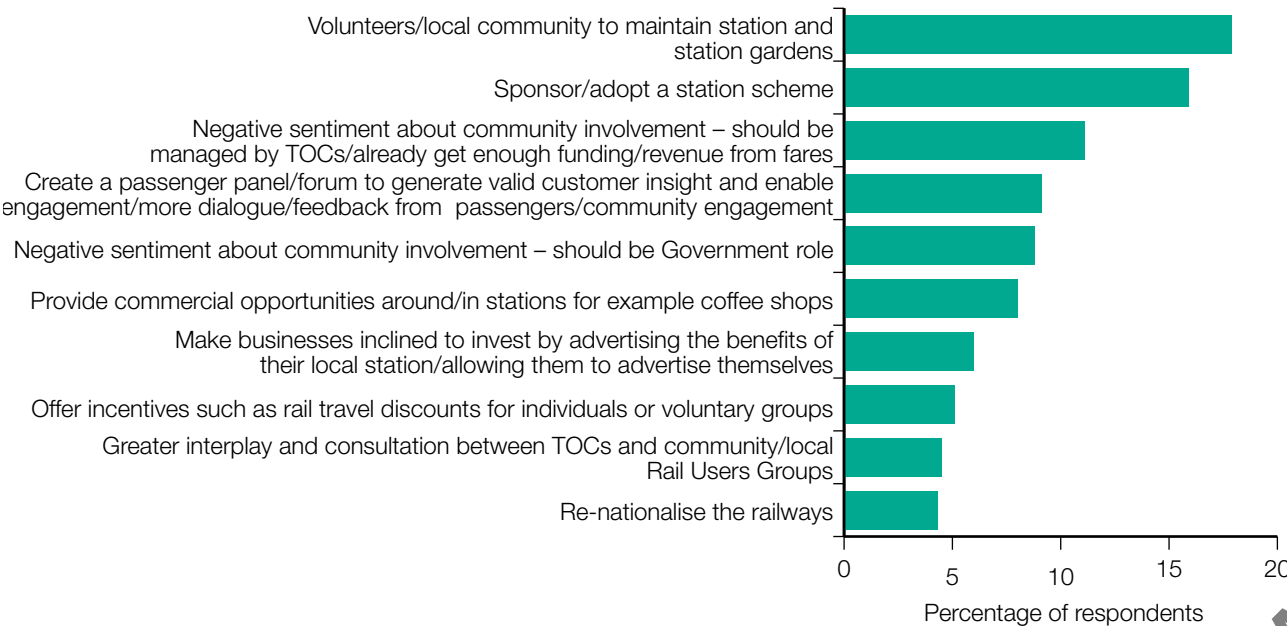
Response synopsis:

The response rate for the question was low with only a third of respondents providing a response.

The most common suggestions were for volunteers/local communities to maintain local stations/gardens or for a sponsor/adopt a station scheme. There was some desire for a passenger panel/forum to create more customer feedback.

There was a significant proportion of respondents who were negative towards community involvement thinking it was the responsibility of train operator or that it should be a government role.

Further details:



Community involvement

Stakeholder responses:

Stakeholder responses were very supportive of Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and other rail related community initiatives and schemes.

Stakeholders thought CRPs should be better funded/resourced. They wanted a better dialogue between operators and CRPs, and would like the winner of the new franchise to be supportive of CRPs.

Other Stakeholders would like a greater interplay between Train Operating Companies and communities.

Our response:

We are requiring that an increased amount of £150,000 per annum is dedicated to community initiatives. This will be used to support the two existing CRPs and work to develop additional initiatives across the franchise area. We believe there is much opportunity for this given the positive consultation response, the involvement of WMR and the number of proactive Rail User Groups in the franchise area.

From April 2020 the operator will be required to provide £1.6m a year for station and train service improvements put forward by the community and Stakeholders during the life of

the franchise via a Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF). This will fund rail related schemes that support social need using feedback from local Stakeholders and passengers.

Bidders have been asked to provide a Customer and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy setting out how they will work alongside passengers, communities, businesses, West Midlands Rail, CRPs, Rail User Groups and other bodies to improve the railway in ways that are responsive to local needs and aspirations.



Q19 – Based on your experience or knowledge of the railway, how do you think train services, railway stations and supporting services should be delivered so that they consider and support the environment, equality and the communities/areas they operate within.

Response Rate – 35%

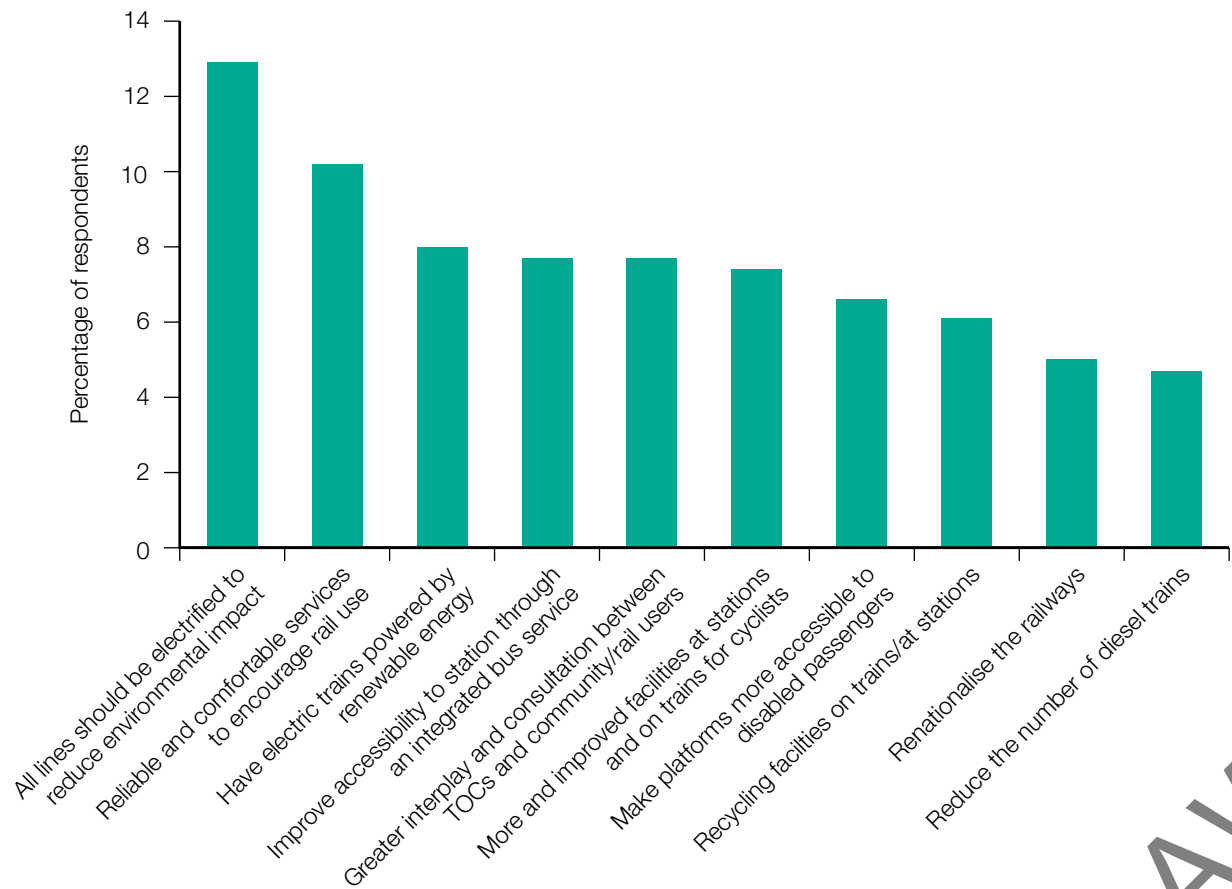
Response synopsis:

There was a low response rate to this question.

The main suggestion from individuals was that all lines should be electrified to reduce environmental impact or to have electricity powered by renewable energy.

Improving access for disabled people and improving station access by sustainable modes such as bus and cycle was also mentioned as was greater engagement between the operator and the community/CRPs.

Further details



Environmental, equality and community matters

Stakeholder response:

Stakeholders would like to see improved access to rail stations by sustainable modes. They were also supportive of the 'Access for All' initiative which improves access to stations for people with limited mobility for example by providing lifts and ramps.

Stakeholders wanted a move towards more electric trains as opposed to diesel. They would also like to see more recycling.

Stakeholders felt it was important to ensure that the new franchise follows any standards set by government.

Our response:

The new operator will be required to work alongside Network Rail and other parties to develop rail schemes to provide a more sustainable railway, and accessibility schemes to make the railway easier and more available to use for all.

There is a focus on encouraging more environmentally friendly travel to stations as outlined under Question 2a and 2b.

Increased community and passenger involvement is a key requirement of the franchise, as set out under Question 18.

Bidders have been made aware of the responses to this question to consider when setting out their proposals for stations and trains.

We have carefully considered the needs of equality groups when setting out the specification for the new West Midlands Franchise.

A minor works fund of £300,000 per annum is being provided specifically for accessibility improvements.



Q20 – If there are any additional areas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been addressed in this consultation please explain them here.

Response rate – 19%

Response synopsis:

This question had by far the lowest response rate with fewer than 200 responses. However there was a wide variety of different responses from those who did answer it.

There was a tendency for respondents to reiterate key concerns raised elsewhere in the consultation such as crowding, staffing, re-opening closed stations/lines and maintaining current services.

Further details:



Further comments

Stakeholder response:

Only a handful of Stakeholders responded to this question. Responses tended to be very specific to Stakeholders' areas of interest.

There were some concerns over how the delivery of HS2 will effect local areas/rail services and how this will be managed.

Freight groups wanted to ensure that any changes to the franchise took the needs of freight into consideration.

Other groups further campaigned for the opening of specific local stations/lines or services already mentioned.

Our response:

Most of the items raised in this question have been addressed in our responses to previous questions:

Our response about managing crowding is provided under questions 1 and 5.

Our response to cycle storage is covered in paragraph 5.74 and under questions 4 and 5.

Our responses to the routeing of the London Euston to Crewe service and requests to reinstate rail services at Barlaston railway station are outlined under question 9.

Our responses to requests to introduce new services or reopen closed lines is provided under question 7 and in Appendix H.

Bidders will be asked to set out their management approach in ensuring there are sufficient staff and trains to deliver the increased level of service we are delivering in the new franchise.

There is a large separate workstream looking at how HS2 works will be managed in a way that minimises disruption to passengers, including a large amount of funding set aside for information and communication. The new operator will be required to work closely with HS2, Network Rail, West Midlands Rail, Transport for London, other train companies and other parties to ensure the HS2 works are managed in a proactive customer friendly way wherever possible. We are also requiring that work is undertaken to ensure that opportunities that arise due to the development of HS2 are harnessed for the future e.g. more capacity for local services, development of services to connect to HS2 through initiatives like Midlands Connect.

Appendix H: Rail infrastructure schemes

The following table summarises the development status of a number of schemes raised by respondents to the consultation. The new operator will be required to work alongside third parties to help with the development of these proposals where possible.

| Rail scheme | Status of development |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reopen Camp Hill line | <p>This scheme forms part of the draft West Midlands and Chiltern Route Study as an option for funders.</p> <p>This scheme is dependent on the delivery of additional railway lines (Chords) in the Bordesley area and an expansion to Birmingham Moor Street Station as set out as a choice of funders in the West Midlands & Chilterns Route Study 2026¹⁴ as part of the Midlands Rail Hub.</p> <p>While there is currently no money available for development or delivery, funding for development work is currently being sought by Midlands Connect.</p> <p>The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)¹⁵ is considering additional feasibility work on new stations at Moseley, Hazelwell and Kings Heath as part of the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBS LEP) HS2 Growth Strategy Connectivity Programme¹⁶ and WMCA Movement for Growth Strategy¹⁷.</p> |

| Rail scheme | Status of development |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reinstate Walsall to Wolverhampton services | <p>Without significant infrastructure investment only an hourly service can be provided on this line. This would not generate the level of usage needed to provide a strong business case.</p> <p>Walsall Council is commissioning further work to establish what infrastructure works are required at Wolverhampton and Walsall railway stations in order to operate a 30-minute frequency service. Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils will work closely with the WMCA to strengthen the business case and further develop the scheme using the outputs of this feasibility work. The ambition is to have new stations along the line in James Bridge (Darlaston), Willenhall and Portobello. The feasibility work mentioned above will explore options for new stations at James Bridge and Portobello. Willenhall has already had a level of station feasibility work completed.</p> |
| Reopen Walsall to Stourbridge Line/reopen closed lines in Dudley | <p>The WMCA is progressing work on Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro line which uses part of this old rail alignment as part of the WMCA Movement for Growth Strategy. This includes proposals for a rail interchange at Dudley Port. The project does not preclude future heavy rail use.</p> |
| Reopen Sutton Park Line/reopen Aldridge station | <p>Work is currently being undertaken to develop proposals to reinstate rail services between Walsall and Aldridge. Feasibility work has been undertaken on a station at Aldridge and potential electrification of the railway line.</p> <p>This scheme is part of the GBS LEP HS2 Growth Strategy Connectivity Programme and work will continue to progress this scheme within the life of the new West Midlands Franchise.</p> <p>The remainder of the route between Aldridge, Sutton Coldfield, Castle Bromwich and Central Birmingham features as a future rail corridor in the WMCA Movement for Growth Strategy.</p> |

14 <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/West-Midlands-and-Chilterns-Route-Study/>
15 <https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.org.uk/>
16 <http://centrefenterprise.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/HS2-Connectivity-Package.pdf>
17 https://westmidlandscombinedauthority.org.uk/media/1179/2016-06-01-mfg-summary-document_wmca.pdf

| Rail scheme | Status of development |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reinstate passenger rail services between Lichfield and Burton/Derby | This is not currently being developed by local authorities, however it features as a future rail corridor in the WMCA Movement for Growth Strategy. Staffordshire County Council includes support in its draft Rail Strategy for the extension of passenger services north of Lichfield Trent Valley to Burton upon Trent and beyond to Derby. The County Council envisages this scheme being delivered in the longer term and only following the electrification of the Birmingham to Derby route (including Wichnor Junction to Lichfield Trent Valley). The County Council is continuing to work with partners and the rail industry including through Midlands Connect to make the case for investment for the electrification of this route. |
| Provision of a direct service between Stratford-upon-Avon and Oxford/Worcester via Long Marston and Honeybourne | This is not currently being developed by any local transport authority, however Worcester County Council is investigating the economic value of any such new service within its Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy ¹⁸ . Significant infrastructure work would be required to reopen this line – a road has been constructed along the former track bed in Stratford-upon-Avon, a large stretch of the closed section of line between Long Marston and Stratford-upon-Avon is now a cycleway and local developments along that part of the route will also constrain reinstatement of rail services on this line. Capacity issues on the Cotswold Line and at Oxford would also need to be resolved if additional services are to operate alongside the Great Western Railway (GWR) services between Oxford and Worcester. Work has been undertaken by local supporters of the scheme to develop some initial feasibility and optioneering work. |

| Rail scheme | Status of development |
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| Introduce West Midlands Franchise services to Tamworth and Nuneaton. Open rail stations at Castle Bromwich/Fort Dunlop/Castle Vale | The Birmingham to Tamworth/Burton and Nuneaton/Leicester via Water Orton lines are some of the key West Midlands travel to work area corridors without a dedicated local rail service. Early stage feasibility work undertaken by WMR indicates that it may be possible to introduce an additional hourly service to Burton-upon-Trent in the future subject to turnaround facilities being provided at Burton and infrastructure work in the Water Orton and central Birmingham areas. It may also be possible to run an additional Birmingham to Leicester via Nuneaton service. Previous work by Warwickshire Council has also suggested that a Coventry – Nuneaton – Birmingham service might be possible. For 2026 and beyond, the Midlands Rail Hub could provide sufficient rail track capacity in both Central Birmingham (Moor St and Bordesley Chords) and on the Water Orton corridor to enable dedicated local rail services to be introduced. Staffordshire County Council's draft Rail Strategy supports the introduction of an additional local rail service from Tamworth/Burton upon Trent to Birmingham. The Rail Strategy also supports the implementation of the necessary infrastructure to provide the required capacity to enable a dedicated local rail service to be introduced. |
| Provide a new service to Bushbury/Pendeford/Fordhouses/i54 north of Wolverhampton | This is not currently being developed by Local Authorities, however the WMCA Movement for Growth Strategy is investigating Bus Rapid Transit for this corridor. |
| Worcestershire Parkway | A new station is due to be opened in 2018 which will be operated by GWR as part of the Great Western Franchise. The new West Midlands Franchise operator will be encouraged to work alongside GWR, Worcestershire County Council, WMR and Network Rail to ensure consistency between the three Worcester stations. |

¹⁸ <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/western-route-study/>

| Rail scheme | Status of development |
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| Birmingham – Kidderminster – Worcester – Bristol and Birmingham – Bromsgrove – Worcestershire Parkway – Bristol | Worcestershire County Council's Rail Investment Strategy is testing the economic benefits of new services from Kidderminster and Bromsgrove towards Bristol, similar to concepts in the Network Rail Western Route Study ¹⁹ . |
| Extend Birmingham – Kidderminster services to Silverwoods (west Kidderminster), West Midlands Safari Park and Bewdley along the Severn Valley Railway | This scheme is being supported by local developers and West Midlands Safari Park, with outline planning consent for a new station at Silverwoods. |
| Reopening of the Oxford to Cambridge railway line | The Department and Network Rail are developing this scheme as part of the East-West Rail project. Oxford to Bicester is now open with the full route to Oxford City due to open in December 2016. The route to Bletchley and Bedford is to be developed in the next three years and delivered in Network Rail's Control Period 6 (2019-2024) Options are being looked at for the route between Bedford and Cambridge. |
| Reopen Walsall to Lichfield line | This line features as a future rail corridor in the WMCA Movement for Growth Strategy. Staffordshire County Council supports the re-opening of the Stourbridge – Walsall – Lichfield line primarily for freight but also for passenger use in the long term and as such this scheme is included as a long term aspiration within the draft rail strategy. Recent work carried out on behalf of the WMCA concludes that there is currently no required demand to reopen the line for freight in the short-term. However, in the meantime this route is protected from the impact of new development through relevant local plans. |

¹⁹ <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/western-route-study/>

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