West of England Joint Transport Executive Committee  
7 March 2012

Rail Update – Great Western Franchise response

Purpose

1. To provide Members with a response to the Department for Transport (DfT) consultation on the new Great Western Franchise and proposals for the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2.

Background

2. The DfT published its ‘Great Western Franchise Replacement Consultation’ document on 21 December 2011. The document sets out a series of 34 questions around the shape of the new franchise. The timescale is:

   OJEU notice published Dec 2011  
   Consultation Dec 2011 – 31 March 2012  
   Invitation to tender May 2012  
   Bids submitted Aug 2012  
   Award announced Dec 2012  
   Franchise starts April 2013

3. The franchise will be for 15 years and the current level of service is to be used as the baseline.

Priorities for the new franchise

4. West of England priorities for the new franchise focus around the ones agreed with stakeholders at the Rail Conference on 4 November 2011 of:

   1) Greater Bristol Metro – half hourly cross Bristol train services  
   2) Re-open the Portishead line  
   3) Additional rolling stock – meeting current, future and suppressed demand

5. Evidence to support the case for these priorities is essential and working closely with Network Rail, the DfT and franchise bidders technical work has been undertaken (see below). It is intended that the DfT will use this to draw up the ‘Invitation to tender.’

6. As well as delivering the priorities in section 5 we expect the new franchise to include commitment to proposals in the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy, improved customer services, support for community rail partnerships, innovative ticketing including smartcards, station enhancements and long term aspirations. These are set out in Appendix One.
Delivering Priorities – Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2

7. The DfT have repeatedly emphasised the need to produce evidence and a business case for rail schemes. Considerable work has already been undertaken for the Portishead line and parts of the Greater Bristol Metro were tested under the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy in 2010. In order, however, to further strengthen the West of England’s response to the new franchise and establish the case for enhancements to be included in the baseline specification additional analysis work was commissioned and undertaken by Halcrow, framework consultants for the four councils.

8. The main findings from the emerging work are for a Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2. These form the basis for our proposals for train service changes (see also the response to Question 5 and 21 in Appendix Three) and are set out below and in Figure One. Figure One demonstrates just how well the Greater Bristol Metro links up and supports the new Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas.

**Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 – 2013 to 2018**

- Portishead – following reopening new half hourly service to Bristol Temple Meads with one train an hour going on to Severn Beach via Bristol Temple Meads.
- Bath Spa to Severn Beach – new hourly service stopping at Oldfield Park, Keynsham, Bristol Temple Meads and stations to Severn Beach with a turnback at Bathampton Junction.
- Severn Beach line – half hourly service delivered by the new Bath Spa and Portishead services above. No additional infrastructure on the Severn Beach line is required.

**Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2 – 2019 to 2023**

- Henbury Loop – hourly bolt on service to Bristol Temple Meads via Filton Abbey Wood (not Bristol Parkway) with capacity for two new stations (Filton North/Henbury) alongside Filton Airfield development. The service could serve new stations at Horfield/Ashley Down (with four tracking of Filton Bank).
- Yate – half hourly service by extending Weston-super-Mare to Bristol Parkway service with new turnback facility.
- Bedminster/Parson Street – half hourly service by stopping Taunton to Cardiff trains.
- New stations at Ashton Gate, Corsham and Saltford to come forward during Phase 2 subject to business cases.

9. Halcrow’s advice using industry models is that the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 is a very neat operational fit and offers a credible way forward for discussions with the Department for Transport and franchise bidders. It does not stop future developments.
Figure One

Greater Bristol Metro Phases 1 & 2

Proposed Rail Network

- Existing rail services (local and inter-regional)
- Services - Phase 1
  - Portishead to Severn Beach (hourly)
  - Portishead to Bristol Temple Meads (hourly)
  - Bath to Bristol Temple Meads Shuttle (Extension to Severn Beach - hourly)
- Services - Phase 2
  - Weston-super-Mare to Yate
  - Additional stopping services (Cardiff to Taunton) to call at these.
  - Extend Weston-super-Mare to Bristol Parkway service to Yate
  - Henbury to Bristol Temple Meads (hourly)
  - Possible new stations (subject to business case)
10. Halcrow are working on the demand and revenue forecasts. Early outputs indicate the Greater Bristol Metro may be revenue neutral. Major developments at places such as the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone and Filton Airfield generating more passengers will improve this position. Detailed discussions on all this work and proposals to incorporate the Greater Bristol Metro in the franchise specification will shortly take place between Halcrow, the four councils, the DfT and their consultants.

11. The Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 cannot be implemented without the four tracking of Filton Bank. Filton Bank is major bottleneck on the network and constraint to delivery of enhanced local and IEP (new electric) train services. The Government is urged to directly fund the four tracking of Filton Bank. A decision is expected in July 2012 when the Government’s High Level Output Specification (HLOS) is published.

12. Current regional services, for example Cardiff to Portsmouth, remain as they are. A Cardiff to Bristol Temple Meads to Bath Spa – overlay service on busiest parts of the Cardiff to Portsmouth route with possible extension to Chippenham and Swindon should be considered.

New stations package – 2013 to 2028

13. Whilst the Halcrow work is finding there is not a strong business case at present we remain committed to develop and implement new stations as the opportunities arise. Developer or local authority funding and revised growth forecasts may well bring some schemes forward over the life of the 15 year franchise and blockades around electrification may provide time slots to for laying the groundwork. The Halcrow work has established there is capacity on the network to provide additional stops. The highest priority for new stations (in alphabetical order) is Ashton Gate, Corsham (Wiltshire Council scheme) and Saltford. The franchise holder must be committed to progressing the new stations package and be flexible to accommodate their implementation and provide the necessary stopping services.

14. It is anticipated that Portishead and Pill stations will be provided under the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 with Henbury/North Filton and Ashley Down/Horfield as part of the Henbury Loop line under the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2. Subject to a business case we also expect Saltford station to come forward during Phase 2 of the Metro.

15. The case for some stations is more advanced and we recognise the contribution from the Saltford Station Campaign. Suggestions for a low cost modular approach to platforms is similar to proposals being developed for the Portway park and ride platform. All new station proposals must provide a business case and go through the Network Rail GRIP project management process. Resources will be needed for this. A phased incremental approach to the Greater Bristol Metro allows services to be sorted out first and passenger levels to be built up first before turning to additional stations with a strengthened business case.
Regional train services

16. Under the Greater Bristol Metro proposals all current regional train services via Bristol and Bath remain as they are for example Cardiff to Portsmouth and Cardiff to Taunton. The franchise should consider additional regional trains including a new Bristol to Oxford local stopping service and a Cardiff to Bristol Temple Meads to Bath Spa overlay service on the busiest parts of the Cardiff to Portsmouth route with possible extension to Chippenham and Swindon. Further extension to Oxford to link up with East West Rail should be evaluated.

Capital funding

17. It is recognised that implementing the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2 will require capital funding. We expect this to be included in the franchise specification with the franchise holder contributing towards the costs. To facilitate this the franchise must include a commitment to the principle of residual value whereby the franchise holder will be partially reimbursed on their investment should they fail to win the next franchise. Developer and private sector contributions will be sought wherever possible but funding may be insufficient and timescales may not coincide with those for the Metro.

18. Nonetheless the local authorities will need to acknowledge that a proportion of capital funding will have to come from their own sources. The proposal to devolve major transport scheme funding (see Agenda Item 8) is a likely source. It should be noted that this position is similar to the Joint Local Transport Plan 2011 to 2016 commitment to fund the Portishead and Greater Bristol Metro major transport schemes through the then Regional Funding Allocation. By signing up to provide capital funding, subject to confirmation, local authorities can provide the confidence for the franchise operator to commit to, plan for and implement new train services.

Summary

19. The Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2 and the new stations package will deliver a significant change in the rail provision in the West of England. Phase 1 will provide half hourly services to Portishead, Severn Beach Line, Keynsham and Oldfield Park. It provides the basis for Phase 2 adding the Henbury Loop and half hourly services to Yate. New stations will be fitted in as opportunities permit. Overall it provides a solid strategy for rail in the West of England and a credible response to the franchise consultation.

20. Halcrow will provide a presentation on the Greater Bristol Metro proposals at the Committee meeting.

Comments on the consultation document

21. A one page summary of the Consultation document and comments on it can be found in Appendix Two. The full response to the 34 consultation questions is in Appendix Three.
22. A 15 year franchise is to be welcome, split into six years (to cover the upheaval of electrification, IEP, Reading and Crossrail) and nine years to the end of the franchise. The use of the current level of services as the baseline is also welcome. Whilst there are gaps in this it is a good base to work from. Growth is expected along with the opportunity for a new timetable pattern. Any changes to current services will be assessed by the DfT for deliverability, robustness and operational impact.

23. The document has six worthy objectives but these are light on aspirations and in particular enhancements to services, new services, capacity and infrastructure. Greater focus is on service quality, passenger satisfaction and value for money. The franchise objectives are:

- Effectively manage franchise changes.
- Provide appropriate capacity which is affordable and value for money.
- Overall passenger experience improves including implementing ‘smart’ technology and integrated ticketing.
- Train services perform to highest punctuality and reliability standards.
- Services delivered in most cost effective and efficient manner.
- Possible devolution of some specification or management of services.

24. Question 5 asks for investment priorities which as well as the West of England’s top three will need to include the four tracking of Filton Bank.

25. The increment/decrement approach (Question 7) is put forward as the option where local authorities can buy enhancements for example additional services through a ‘priced option.’ There is a suggestion these could be included in the base line specification but funding by promoters for at least three years with written guarantees looks more likely. Nonetheless we should press for the new franchise to include as many services as possible in the baseline and minimise the need for an extensive ‘priced option’ of enhancements.

26. Decrements could be used to fund enhancements elsewhere for example curtailing the Cardiff to Brighton service to Portsmouth and using the money saved to enhance the service between Cardiff, Bristol and Bath (Question 18).

27. Questions 18 to 21 (see Appendix Three) are key to what sort of local service we want to see with issues around services calling at all stations, more targeted local services and suggestions for train service changes. Proposals for the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2 are set out in response to Question 21.

28. The DfT is keen to see a less prescriptive approach and Question 10 asks what parts of the franchise specification should be mandated and which left to the discretion of the train operator/franchise holder. For example we believe the first and last trains and clock face services between them should be mandated with the operator left to set the exact times and type of rolling stock.

29. Question 12 asks whether the indicative IEP inter city train service could be improved. Four trains an hour between Bristol Temple Meads and London (two via Bristol Parkway and two via Bath Spa) is very welcome. We are disappointed,
however, that the frequency of services via Bath Spa is no different to now. Equally we are concerned over the Swansea to London service not stopping at Bristol Parkway thus missing key interchange opportunities for services to the Midlands, the North and the South West as well as a reduced service to Cardiff, Swansea, Swindon, Reading and Didcot. Trains from Weston-super-Mare to London will continue but routed via Bristol Parkway and not Bath Spa. There is a question mark over whether this route will best serve commuters between North Somerset and Bath.

30. The timescale for the new franchise is too short to allow for the devolution of rail powers but the franchise could be drawn up to allow arrangement to come into place later. Question 8 (a) to (d) asks what responsibilities and services could be devolved. A Rail Decentralisation paper will be published in early 2012 including the scope for devolving responsibility for some local rail passenger services.

31. The franchise holder will be expected to determine the fleets of rolling stock they need and negotiate leases with the rolling stock companies. Timetable decisions will be devolved to them and they will take on greater responsibility for stations. They will be required to support community rail schemes and for the West of England this means financial support for the Severnside and Heart of Wessex community rail partnerships. All bidders for the franchise are expected to show how they will reduce costs in line with the McNulty report on ‘Realising the potential of GB Rail.’ High costs in the rail industry are of concern, particularly for infrastructure, so ways to reduce them are welcome. This, however, should not be at the cost of reduced services.

32. We will seek guarantees that the new franchise operator will have the freedom and ability to procure sufficient rolling stock to meet demand (Question 23). Formal proposals from the operator will be required where the franchise can not meet capacity without investment in rolling stock/infrastructure but it is unclear who would pay. Franchise reviews at appropriate stages, two yearly minimum, must be built into the franchise, to meet passenger demand and enable additional capacity to be provided. Responding to capacity needs must be a core requirement of the new franchise.

33. The DfT ask for local factors that might influence future passenger demand (Question 2) for example Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, the five Enterprise Areas and Filton Airfield (see Figure One).

34. Other questions cover aspects such as performance areas of concern for example overcrowding and cancelled trains on the Severn Beach line (Question 24), station enhancements and accessibility (Questions 25 and 33), security (Question 28), ticketing including smartcards and multi operator tickets (Question 29) and catering (Question 31).

35. It is important to note that no timetable changes will take place until December 2014 so existing services will continue till then.
Neighbouring authorities and stakeholder input and support

36. Discussions have taken place with the neighbouring authorities, Somerset County Council, Wiltshire Council, Swindon Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Worcestershire County Council, Monmouthshire County Council and the South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA) over common aspirations for the new franchise and where enhancements will have cross boundary benefits. Common issues include:

- Additional hourly service Ebbw Vale - Newport - Severn Tunnel Junction to Bristol Parkway (SEWTA).
- Electrify the South Wales to Bristol and Bath services (SEWTA).
- Additional Cardiff to Portsmouth stopping service (Gloucestershire).
- Western rail access to Heathrow Airport (Swindon).
- Train lengthening on Cardiff to Portsmouth, Cardiff to Taunton and Gloucester to Westbury services (Gloucestershire).
- Bristol to Oxford service (Wiltshire and Swindon).
- Improved connectivity between Bristol, Cardiff and Wiltshire (Swindon).
- Four tracking of Filton Bank and fourth platform at Bristol Parkway (SEWTA, Gloucestershire).
- Concern over future IEP London to Swansea service not calling at Bristol Parkway and thereby missing key interchange opportunities (Gloucestershire).

37. This response to the franchise consultation has been shared with the neighbouring authorities and an update will be provided at the Committee meeting.

38. Various stakeholder groups have shared their responses to the new franchise with the West of England and these have been used to feed into this report. Contributions have been gratefully received from the following groups:

TravelWatch SouthWest and seminar in Taunton on 27 January 2012
Severnside Community Rail Partnership
Severn Tunnel Action Group
Yate Town Council
Friends of Suburban Bristol Railways
Pilning and Severn Beach Parish Council
Saltford Parish Council
Saltford Station Campaign
Bitton Parish Council
Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance
Individual responses

Priced Option

39. The DfT favour the ‘priced option’ approach for enhancements with local authorities providing funding. Evidence from Transport for London suggests priced options present poor value for money with enhancements costing more than they would have done had they been included in the original specification.
40. We believe the technical evidence demonstrates the business case for enhancements and the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 should be incorporated into the baseline specification of the new franchise. We reserve the right to pursue a ‘priced option’ approach for future schemes and services where the business case is less strong.

Response to the Department for Transport

41. It is proposed that this report and its appendices form the basis for the response to the Department for Transport. This will comprise:

- Covering letter and report setting out our priorities for the franchise and general comments on the franchise consultation.
- List of what else we expect to see in the franchise (Appendix One).
- Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2 with the necessary technical work.
- Answers to the 34 questions in the Great Western Franchise Replacement Consultation (Appendix Three).

Franchise Timeline 2013 to 2028

42. With the new franchise covering 15 years it is useful to set out a timeline for events and the phased approach for the Greater Bristol Metro.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>New franchise starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 to 2018</td>
<td>Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2014</td>
<td>First timetable changes take place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2016</td>
<td>Electrification to Bristol complete with Filton Bank four track tbc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 2017</td>
<td>Electrification to Cardiff complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>IEP (new electric trains) services start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019-2023</td>
<td>Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 to 2028</td>
<td>New stations package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2028</td>
<td>End of franchise</td>
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</tbody>
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Potential Bidders

43. It is believed there will be a short list of five bidders for the franchise. Once shortlisted it will be important for the West of England to enter into detailed discussions with all the bidders to secure support for and inclusion of our priorities in their bids for the new franchise. Interested bidders have been provided with the list of priorities set out in Appendix One (previously attached as Appendix One to the Rail Update report to this Committee on 7 December 2011).

Environmental Impact Assessment

44. Whilst rail’s share of journeys to work is modest, modern rolling stock contributes less carbon emissions than other forms of transport.
Risk

45. Implementation of electrification, a new longer franchise and rolling stock is largely beyond the control of the West of England authorities. Nonetheless the West of England needs to be as closely involved as possible in decision making to ensure proposals benefit the area.

Resources (financial and personnel)

46. At recent discussions the Department for Transport have emphasised the need to provide evidence and produce business cases, which fit with their appraisal requirements, for our rail aspirations regarding electrification, the new Great Western franchise and the devolution of rail powers. This will require significant resources to provide. Officers will report back on resources needed to a future meeting of this Committee.

Equalities Implications

47. There are no specific implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Views of Joint Scrutiny Committee

48. Joint Scrutiny Committee on 27 February 2012 discussed the franchise consultation and raised concerns over monitoring performance, revenue protection, levering in private investment, use of technology for tickets and keeping passengers informed, development of Bristol Temple Meads station and the need to have CO₂ and dealing with congestion as franchise priorities. All these comments have been included in the response to the franchise in Appendix Three.

Recommendations

49. Members endorse the response to the franchise set out in this report and in Appendix Three.

50. Members endorse the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2, Filton Bank four tracking and new stations package as set out in sections 7 to 19 for input into the Invitation to Tender process.

51. An interim response is sent to the DfT following this Committee to enable them to make an early start on using the response to input into the Invitation to Tender.

52. Officers are delegated in liaison with the Chair of JTEC to produce the final response for submission to the DfT by 31 March 2012.

53. Officers are delegated to undertake more detailed work in developing the business case for the West of England’s rail priorities.
Appendices

Appendix One: Summary of West of England priorities for the new franchise
Appendix Two: Great Western Franchise consultation – summary of details and comments
Appendix Three: Response to franchise consultation questions

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
Background Papers:
None
Appendix One

Summary of West of England priorities for the new Greater Western Franchise

Key Priorities

Greater Bristol Metro
Greater Bristol Metro of half hourly or better train services criss crossing the West of England and serving stations from Bath, Bristol, Portishead, Weston-super-Mare and Yate.

The Great Western Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy, March 2010 included recommendations for additional services (p165 onwards) and these should be brought forward by the new franchise. They include:

- Bristol Temple Meads to Yate
- Bristol Temple Meads to Chippenham
- Bristol Temple Meads to Bath Spa shuttle with possible extension to Clifton Down

New services from Cardiff to Swindon and/or Bristol to Swindon via Bath Spa should be considered to provide additional local stopping services.

Portishead
North Somerset Council has commissioned Network Rail to take feasibility work up to GRIP Stage 3 – Option Selection. Demand forecasts suggest the service could be profitable within three years. The new franchise will be expected to incorporate the future provision of services on the Portishead line and for the franchise holder to maximise their contribution to and be fully supportive of the scheme.

Additional rolling stock
Commitment to invest in and bid for new and additional rolling stock to meet current, future and suppressed demand. We seek guarantees that the new franchise holder will have the freedom and ability to procure sufficient rolling stock to meet demand.

Electrification
The new franchise should maximise the benefits of electrification of the Great Western Main Line through:

- Commitment to electrify local services wherever possible.
- Continuation of at least the current number of through trains from London to Weston-super-Mare.
- Support for future proofing to meet future aspirations for new stations and lines.
- Managing disruption during electrification.
- Review and consult on services post electrification.
What else we want to see in the new franchise

As well as delivering these priorities the new franchise is expected to include the following:

a) Baseline for new franchise
As a starting point the new franchise should include:

• Current network of services, capacity and frequencies as the baseline but not so “set in stone” to discourage improvement and innovation.
• Commitment to meet current, suppressed and future demand (especially post 2016 electrification and the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone) for 15 year franchise.
• Support for all planned Great Western Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy schemes 2014 – 2019 (Control Period 5).

b) Services
• Recognise the regional importance of the Cardiff to Portsmouth line and propose ways of developing it.
• Improved customer services – staffing, catering, parking and enhance current levels of British Transport Police.
• Support for community rail partnerships (Severnside and Heart of Wessex) including annual financial commitment.

c) Ticketing
• Regulated fares maintained.
• More innovative pricing to take advantage of spare capacity.
• Make ticket purchase easier.
• Multi modal/operator ticket schemes (e.g. Freedom Travelpass) and “carnet” style ticketing.
• Smartcards and roll out of ITSO Smart technology.
• Revenue protection.

d) Stations
• Expand real time electronic information systems at all Greater Bristol Metro stations.
• Improved connectivity/interchange with bus services at stations.
• Proposals and ideas for running stations.
• CCTV at all stations and car parks.
• Programme of station improvement schemes to bring local stations up to modern standards.

Future aspirations (post 2019)

The franchise bidder should take a long term view and help the West of England to produce business cases and deliver new services and stations.

The new franchise holder should consider ideas emerging from the ‘Network RUS: Alternative Solutions for Delivering Passenger Demand Efficiently.’
Appendix Two

Great Western Franchise Consultation – summary of details and comments

Page numbers refer to the Great Western Franchise Replacement Consultation document, December 2011.

Franchise holder will be expected to:

- Determine the fleets of rolling stock they need and negotiate leases with the rolling stock companies (p19)
- Propose how and where rolling stock fleets will be maintained (p19). This suggests depot locations could change from what they are now.
- Ensure rolling stock complies with standards for people with reduced mobility (p20 and p55) by 2020.
- Demonstrate how the RUS recommendations have been considered (p30).
- Timetable decisions devolved (p37).
- Reduce costs (p46)
- Take greater responsibility for stations (p49).
- Provide more cycle parking at stations (p49) but note there is no reference to carrying cycles on trains.
- Support community rail schemes (p55).

Comments

- Past problems of capacity, crowding and punctuality are acknowledged (p15).
- DfT is preparing revised passenger forecasts to take account of recent changes (p16). Increased demand in and around Bristol is acknowledged (p17).
- Identify local factors that might influence future passenger demand (p27) for example the Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone, 5 Enterprise Areas and Filton Airfield.
- Portishead gets a mention (p31) as a possible contender for inclusion in the High Level Output Specification for Control Period 5 (2014 to 2019).
- A list of services and lines is provided (p39-40).
- There will be no new diesel trains as seen to be poor value for money (p42) but future cascades are likely.
- No timetable changes will take place until December 2014 (p43) i.e. existing services will continue till then.
- Some standing will be inevitable (p44) and bidders will be required to ensure capacity matches demand.
- The DfT is producing a new rail passenger count database (p45) to inform decisions about pricing and capacity.
- Formal proposals required where franchise cannot meet capacity without investment in rolling stock/infrastructure (p45) but it is unclear who would pay.
- Bidders are expected to show how they will reduce costs (p46).
- Greater responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of stations could be transferred from Network Rail (p48).
- More provision for cyclists at stations (p49) but for parking not more cycles on trains.
- Bidders must demonstrate a commitment to work with community rail partnerships (p55).
Appendix Three:  Response to the Great Western franchise consultation questions

1. Respondents are encouraged to consider whether the proposed franchise objectives are an appropriate expression of the priorities that should apply to the new franchise.

We welcome the proposed franchise objectives with the emphasis on value for money and passenger satisfaction but they are thin on enhancements to both services and infrastructure to meet future demand. Given the high levels of growth in rail passenger numbers, acknowledged by the consultation document, this is surprising.

Rail patronage within the West of England has risen by 37.5% over the last five years and 84% over ten years (West of England Annual Rail Survey 2011). On the Severn Beach Line numbers have increased by 123.2% in the last five years with a 12.6% growth in 2010/11. Growth in 2011 on the line to Weston-super-Mare was 18.3% and to Gloucester via Yate 19.7%.

To note the Great Western Route Utilisation Strategy, March 2010 only predicts a 41% growth in passengers from 2008 to 2019 at an annual rate of 3.2%. The figures from the West of England above suggest this prediction will soon be exceeded.

It is worth comparing this rail passenger growth with traffic levels. Traffic growth across the West of England has continued to fall since 2007 whilst flows into the centre of Bristol have fallen by 4% since 2004 (West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 2006/07 to 2010/11 Five Year Progress Review). All this suggests rail travel is recession proof.

We highlight research by TravelWatch SouthWest which predicts that by 2019 there will be a 100 million seat capacity gap on high speed services in the Great Western franchise area (‘Greater Western, Lesser Western,’ September 2011).

Account should be taken of the four councils’ emerging Core Strategies as we have concerns that if meeting future demand is not explicitly set as an objective, bidders will not be adequately focused on it.

We draw attention to the Passenger Focus findings that the top priorities for passengers are reliability/punctuality, obtaining a seat and the price of tickets (Great Western Franchise – Key findings from passenger research, 2012).

Given the importance given to carbon reduction in the Government’s White Paper ‘Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – making sustainable local transport happen,’ January 2011 it is a little surprising that it is not included in the objectives.

2. Respondents are encouraged to consider any specific local factors that they believe might influence the future level of passenger demand and to comment on any specific HLOS recommendations that they believe the franchisee should be required to implement.
Future Passenger Demand

The West of England is a high growth area, one of the fastest growing economies in the UK and the economic hub for the South West. An active Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is leading the way with the aim to generate 95,000 more jobs over the next 20 years. GVA is forecast to grow at 3.4% (2010 to 2020) against a national average of 3.2% whilst the population will grow by 19% by 2026. Bristol is the most competitive large English city outside of London (UK Competitiveness Index).

Backed by the Local Enterprise Partnership the new Temple Quarter Enterprise Zone centred around Bristol Temple Meads station aims to create 17,000 new jobs with 4,000 by 2017. It is anticipated that a large proportion of employees will come to work by train. Similarly the Enterprise Areas at Bath City Riverside (9,300 jobs), Weston-super-Mare Gateway (11,000) and Filton/A38 (4,000), are all well located to the rail network and will generate new passengers.

Growth will be further strengthened through the Regional Growth Fund award to the LEP of £39.8m. Targeting the Enterprise Areas this will bring forward development at a quicker pace. An additional £11m from the Growing Places Fund will boost the creation of jobs by funding the infrastructure required to get stalled projects moving again.

Figure One demonstrates just how well the Greater Bristol Metro links up and supports the new Enterprise Zone and Enterprise Areas.

Other key development areas well served by the rail network include:

- North Yate – 3,000 homes (for Yate station).
- Charlton Hayes – 2,400 homes and 14 ha employment (close to Patchway and Bristol Parkway stations).
- Prologica – major employment site (close to Patchway station).
- Harry Stoke – 3,200 dwellings (close to Bristol Parkway).
- Filton Abbey Wood - continued growth of Ministry of Defence (MoD) jobs from 8,950 at present to 10,100 by December 2012 with closure of MoD sites in Bath and Wiltshire and more commuting to Filton.
- Cheswick/Walls court Farm – 800 dwellings and 6 ha employment (close to Filton Abbey Wood).
- University of the West of England (UWE) – ongoing master planning for 11ha expansion to campus including a new sports stadium (home to Bristol Rovers F.C.).
- Avonmouth/Severnside – 650 ha site with extant permission for B2/8 land uses (adjacent to the Severn Beach Line and Henbury Loop).
- Keynsham Town Centre and Somerdale (former Cadbury’s site) – 700 new dwellings and 20,000m² employment land (close to Keynsham station).
- Weston-super-Mare – 8,000 new homes including two new villages.
- Bristol Airport – served by Bristol Flyer coach service to Bristol Temple Meads.

The redevelopment of Filton Airfield, 5,700 homes, 50 ha of employment land and 35,000m² of retail raises the opportunity for new train services on the Henbury loop line with a new station(s) serving the site.
Figure One

Greater Bristol Metro Phases 1 & 2

Proposed Rail Network

- Existing rail services (local and inter-regional)
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  - Extend Weston-super-Mare to Bristol Parkway service to Yate
  - Henbury to Bristol Temple Meads (hourly)
  - Possible new stations (subject to business case).

travel+

Bath & North East Somerset Council
South Gloucestershire Council
North Somerset Council
Our proposals for a phased Greater Bristol Metro (see response to Questions 5 and 21) will serve and facilitate these development areas. In turn these areas will drive up passenger demand. The new franchise must maximise the opportunities arising from this and plan for it in terms of train services, capacity and rolling stock. Future growth must not be choked off by not meeting passenger demand.

**HLOS July 2012 and franchise specification**

The number one priority for the four councils of the West of England is the delivery of the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 as the foundation for a local rail network comparable and commensurate with other similar city regions (see response to Questions 5 and 21).

The Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 cannot be implemented without the four tracking of Filton Bank. Filton Bank is major bottleneck on the network and constraint to delivery of enhanced local and IEP (new electric) train services. Four tracking of Filton Bank is a strategic piece of rail infrastructure.

Thus the four councils urge the Government to commit to the following investment:

- **HLOS July 2012** – include four tracking of Filton Bank and infrastructure for Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1. The four tracking of Filton Bank should be funded directly by the Government.
- **Franchise specification** – to include both the infrastructure and operating commitment for Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1.

Whilst the franchise consultation relates to passenger services we draw to your attention plans for developing the Strategic Freight Network in the HLOS including gauge enhancement to W10, to accommodate high cube containers, on the Avonmouth (Henbury Loop) line. The proposals for a new deep sea container port at Avonmouth will substantially increase the volumes of rail based freight. The franchise holder will need to work closely with Network Rail and freight operators to ensure services for both passengers and freight can be accommodated. The four tracking of Filton Bank will greatly enhance freight operations from Avonmouth and Portbury. The extension of electrification to Avonmouth from Filton Junction should be considered.

3. **Respondents are encouraged to consider issues arising from the planned schemes and identify any local factors that should be considered.**

We welcome the proposals to electrify the Great Western Main Line and the new fleet of IEP trains.

The DfT have indicated (TravelWatch SouthWest meeting 27/01/12) that Network Rail’s Route Asset Management Plan (RAMP) funding may be available to extend electrification. We urge the DfT to consider extending electrification to Weston-super-Mare and Yate and possibly Taunton. This will enable the Greater Bristol Metro of half hourly cross city services to be electrified running fast, smooth, high capacity and efficient trains. With future extensions to Avonmouth via the Henbury Loop and the Severn Beach Line 100% of the local rail network will be electrified. The more electrification is extended the greater the scope for operational efficiencies and hence lower unit costs. This would benefit freight movements as well as passenger services.
Now is the time to plan for extensions.

We understand from the DfT (TravelWatch SouthWest meeting 27/01/12) that following the arrival of new Thameslink rolling stock there will be an oversupply of spare electric multiple units (Class 319) for cascade. We expect the franchise to secure these for future service on the Greater Bristol Metro (see response to Question 21).

In the short term it is important to ensure electrification of the Great Western Main Line is future proofed, through passive provision, to enable future network enhancements, in particular Greater Bristol Metro, to be implemented. To enable our aspirations careful consideration needs to be given to the locations of masts/stanchions, gantries, transformer stations, signalling and telecommunications and other ancillary equipment. Key requirements are junctions and turnbacks designed to ensure electrification allows onward extension and space is left for future stations. By making passive provision now future costs and disruptions can be minimised. More information can be found in the West of England’s report ‘Electrification: Note for Network Rail and the Department for Transport,’ February 2012.

With electrification of the Great Western Main Line there is the opportunity to run an overlay stopping service on the busiest parts of the Cardiff to Portsmouth route running from Cardiff to Bath Spa with possible extension to Chippenham and Swindon using electric trains cascaded from Thameslink. This would help to meet the existing and growing commuter demand from the Bath and west Wiltshire areas to the MoD at Filton Abbey Wood.

Electrification and the new franchise presents the opportunity to specify and fit the new IEP timetable around local and regional train services for the first time. This opportunity should be taken. It will also maximise connection opportunities with IEP trains at Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway.

With a 15 year franchise the franchise holder should plan for the future extension of Cross Rail beyond Maidenhead to Reading. This will maximise the use of Cross Rail and provide new interchange and travel opportunities for passengers from the South West to London and vice versa.

The provision of additional track capacity between Filton Abbey Wood and Bristol Temple Meads (four tracking of Filton Bank) is key to relieving the conflict between “all stations” and faster trains (see response to Question 2).

4. Respondents are encouraged to consider any specific local factors that they believe might influence the future level of passenger demand and to comment on any specific RUS recommendations that they believe the franchisee should be required to implement.

Future levels of passenger demand

See response to Question 2.
RUS recommendations

On RUS recommendations for services the franchise holder should develop and implement proposals based around:

- Option F: Cardiff to Portsmouth corridor – train lengthening and additional local stopping service (BCR 2.0)
- Option H: Lengthen services into Bristol Temple Meads – 11 trains (17 additional vehicles) across morning and evening peaks on Cardiff to Portsmouth (BCR 2.8), Cardiff to Taunton (BCR 2.5) and Gloucester to Westbury (BCR 1.9)
- Option J: Bristol Metro – half hourly clock face services Bristol to Yate (BCR 2.5 with third party funding), Clifton Down to Bath Spa (BCR 2.4) and Bristol to Weston-super-Mare (BCR 0.4 due to cost of doubling the track from Worle). Note these proposals form part of the Greater Bristol Metro Phases 1 and 2.

On infrastructure the franchise holder should support RUS recommendations for:

- Option I1: Three or four tracking from Dr Days Junction to Filton (Filton Bank) - critical to creating enough capacity to meet demand for new local services and IEP trains (BCR 2.2)
- Option I3: Four track railway between Bristol West and Parson Street – increase capacity and improve performance (BCR 4.6)

5. Respondents are encouraged to consider investment priorities for the franchise and are asked to highlight interfaces with any other schemes that are likely to be delivered during the life of the next franchise. We also welcome proposals for alternative approaches to enable the proposed investment programme to be achieved at a reduced cost.

The West of England Rail Conference on 04/11/11 brought together stakeholders, the rail industry and councils to agree a set of priorities for the local rail network. The top three priorities, which emerged are:

Greater Bristol Metro – half hourly cross city train services to stations
Portishead line – reopening to passengers
Additional rolling stock – meet current, future and suppressed demand

Since the Rail Conference the West of England has undertaken further analysis using the four council’s framework consultants Halcrow. A phased approach combining the Greater Bristol Metro and Portishead schemes has emerged from the work and forms the basis for the West of England’s investment priorities set out below (see also the response to Question 21). These will be endorsed at the Joint Transport Executive Committee on 7 March 2012.

Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 - 2013 to 2018

- Portishead – reopening line with new half hourly service to Bristol Temple Meads with one train an hour going on to Severn Beach via Bristol Temple Meads.
- Bath Spa to Severn Beach – new hourly service stopping at Oldfield Park,
Keynsham, Bristol Temple Meads and stations to Severn Beach with a turnback at Bathampton Junction.

- Severn Beach line – half hourly service delivered by the new Bath Spa and Portishead services above. No additional infrastructure on the Severn Beach line is required.

The franchise holder will be required to provide a minimum number of additional diesel multiple units between 2013 and 2018, to service Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and to deal with existing overcrowding and short formation of trains on key routes. Every opportunity should be taken to secure rolling stock cascaded following electrification in the North West.

**Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2 - 2019 to 2023**

- Henbury Loop – hourly bolt on service to Bristol Temple Meads via Filton Abbey Wood (not Bristol Parkway) with capacity for two new stations (Filton North/Henbury) alongside Filton Airfield development. The service could serve new stations at Horfield/Ashley Down (with four tracking of Filton Bank).
- Yate – half hourly service by extending Weston-super-Mare to Bristol Parkway service with new turnback facility.
- Bedminster/Parson Street – half hourly service by stopping Taunton to Cardiff trains.
- New stations at Ashton Gate, Corsham and Saltford to come forward during Phase 2 subject to business cases.

**Additional Stations – 2013 to 2028**

Whilst the Halcrow work is finding there is not a strong business case at present we remain committed to develop and implement new stations as the opportunities arise. Developer or local authority funding and revised growth forecasts may well bring some schemes forward over the life of the 15 year franchise and blockades around electrification may provide time slots to for laying the groundwork. The Halcrow work has established there is capacity on the network to provide additional stops. The highest priorities for new stations (in alphabetical order) are Ashton Gate, Corsham (Wiltshire Council scheme) and Saltford. The franchise holder must be committed to progressing the new stations package and be flexible to accommodate their implementation and provide the necessary stopping services.

It is anticipated that Portishead and Pill stations will be provided under the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 with Henbury/North Filton and Ashley Down/Horfield as part of the Henbury Loop line under the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2. Subject to a business case we also expect Saltford station to come forward during Phase 2 of the Metro.

**Capital Funding**

It is recognised that implementing the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2 will require capital funding. Developer and private sector contributions will be sought wherever possible but funding may be insufficient and timescales may not coincide with those for the Metro. We also expect the franchise holder to contribute capital funding towards meeting our priorities. To facilitate this the franchise must include a commitment to the
principle of residual value whereby the franchise holder will be partially reimbursed on their investment should they fail to win the next franchise.

Nonetheless the local authorities acknowledge that a large proportion of capital funding will have to come from their own sources. This will provide the confidence for the franchise holder to commit to plan for and implement new train services.

**Demand for the Greater Bristol Metro**

Origin/destination information from the West of England Annual Rail Survey (2010) emphasises the importance of Greater Bristol Metro cross city flows with Bristol Temple Meads, Bath Spa and Filton Abbey Wood as the main destinations. Bristol Temple Meads is the destination for 64% of passengers from Weston-super-Mare, 66% from Yatton, 62% from Oldfield Park, 61% from Yate, 54% from Nailsea & Backwell, 44% from Keynsham and 42% from Clifton Down. Filton Abbey Wood is the destination for 19% of passengers from Yate, 18% from Oldfield Park, 12% from Nailsea & Backwell, 11% from Bath Spa, 8% from Keynsham and 5% from Weston-super-Mare. Bath Spa is the destination for 29% of passengers from Keynsham, 19% from Filton Abbey Wood, 11% from Weston-super-Mare, 10% from Clifton Down and 7% from both Yatton and Nailsea & Backwell.

**HLOS July 2012 and franchise specification**

The Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 cannot be implemented without the four tracking of Filton Bank. Filton Bank is major bottleneck on the network and constraint to delivery of enhanced local and IEP services. Indeed, there is only very limited scope to increase the frequency of cross city services without this scheme proceeding.

Thus the four councils urge the Government to commit to the following investment:

- **HLOS July 2012** – include four tracking of Filton Bank and infrastructure for Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1. The four tracking of Filton Bank should be funded directly by the Government.
- **Franchise specification** – to include both the infrastructure and operating commitment for Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1.

**Electrification**

As set out in the response to Question 3 passive provision should be made as part of electrification to ensure future network enhancements including the Greater Bristol Metro can be delivered.

**Western rail access to Heathrow Airport**

We support proposals for a western rail access to Heathrow Airport. Work undertaken by Slough Borough Council suggest rail access from the west will generate around £1.5 billion of economic benefits and remove one million car journeys a year from the road network. The project is seen as deliverable and affordable. At under £500 million the cost can be borne entirely by the private sector with a payback period of nine years based on expected annual revenue of £70 million.
6. Respondents are encouraged to consider any changes to the services included in the Great Western franchise that they would like to propose as part of a remapping exercise.

See response to Question 18 regarding the Portsmouth to Brighton service.

7. Respondents who wish to pursue increments or decrements should make these clear in their response to this consultation. Further information on the Department’s requirements for increments/decrements can be made available on request.

The four councils of the West of England reserve the right to pursue the increments/decrements approach. We believe, however, the proposed train services set out in our response to Questions 4 to 7 and 21 have a sound business case demonstrating value for money and should be included in the baseline specification.

8. Respondents are encouraged to consider:
(a) Which responsibilities and types of services on the Great Western franchise might be suitable for more local decision-making?

We believe the following services are suitable for more local decision making:
- Severn Beach line.
- Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2 (services to local stations) including the Portishead and Henbury Loop lines.

(b) Which options for devolving decision-making should be considered further and which should be rejected?

We support the devolution of rail powers with the ability to set the specification for local train services in the Great Western Franchise, including a devolved Rail Service Grant from the DfT. We should no longer be simply a consultee on franchises.

As part of devolution we need the DfT to engage at an early stage in the development of any future High Level Output Specification.

Devolution is also part of the City Deal request responding to the Government’s Unlocking Growth in Cities paper published on 8 December 2011.

(c) To which bodies might decision-making be devolved and how would governance, accountability and transparency be demonstrated, especially if consortia of sub-national bodies are formed?

The West of England has a successful and highly respected Joint Transport Executive Committee. Made up of the transport Executive Members from the four councils the Committee has a clear remit, is openly accountable, transparent and ultimately reports to the Cabinets of the councils. The Committee wishes to continue discussions with the DfT on proposals to take on rail powers under option 8(b).

(d) How might risk be dealt with if responsibilities are devolved?

We would expect any devolution of rail powers to be accompanied by a Rail Service
Grant which would enable risks to be managed within the overall budget.

9. Respondents are encouraged to bring to our attention research, evidence or publications which the Department should consider as part of this refranchising process.

Halcrow 2012 rail study for the West of England (with sister studies on the Henbury Loop, Salford station and the Radstock line).
Portishead GRIP Stage 3 plus demand forecasts.
West of England ‘Electrification: Note for the Network Rail and the Department for Transport,’ February 2012.
TravelWatch South West ‘Greater Western, Lesser Western’ report, September 2011
Severnside Community Rail Partnership Progress Report, January 2012.
‘Growing Bristol’s Railways,’ Transport for Greater Bristol Alliance, November 2011.

10. The final specification will seek to avoid a prescriptive approach and to balance passenger, taxpayer and stakeholder interests. Respondents are encouraged to consider which aspects of the specification they believe should be mandated and which could be left to greater commercial discretion.

Mandated

First and last trains.
Minimum half hourly user friendly clock face services between first and last trains.
Minimum number of carriages/seats to be provided peak/off peak on each route.
Stopping services to connect into and from London services.
Saturday and Sunday service frequency.
Minimise the distance that passengers are forced to stand.
Provision of catering facilities on inter city and inter regional urban trains (e.g. Cardiff to Portsmouth).
Fares not to be used as a tool to suppress demand.
Retention of peak hour ticket sellers at local stations.
Requirement to cater for bicycles.

Commercial discretion

Exact times of services.
Type of rolling stock.
Start and end point of services.
Diesel or electric traction.
Freedom and ability to procure sufficient rolling stock to provide capacity required (and appropriate level of spare stock).
Innovative fare products to encourage greater patronage of local services at slack time e.g. evenings.
Depots – use of local depots such as St Phillips Marsh to ensure reliability and performance targets are met.

11. What balance should be struck between end-to-end journey times and intermediate stops on long distance services?
Whilst not an issue for this franchise we would like to flag up the potential for stopping more CrossCountry trains at key stations/generators of demand such as Worle, Yate and Filton Abbey Wood. There should also be closer co-operation of timetables and stops between the franchises on cross country routes.

12. Can the indicative modelled intercity service pattern be improved (noting the IEP availability in Table 3.5 and the availability of other fleets)?

The indicative service pattern of two trains per hour to Bath is no different to the current level. This is surprising given that the footfall at Bath Spa is second only to Bristol Temple Meads in the South West at 4.7m passengers per annum (Office of Rail Regulation). We suggest that a third IEP service be added via Bath Spa.

For Weston-super-Mare one IEP train an hour to London via Bristol Parkway would provide a fast and attractive alternative to travel via the M5 to the North Fringe with its expanding employment opportunities (see response to Question 2). There is a question mark, however, over whether this route will best serve commuters between North Somerset and Bath. Consideration should thus be given to extending the third IEP service via Bath Spa suggested above to Weston-super-Mare to mirror the current pattern of intercity trains to London.

We are concerned over the Swansea to London service not stopping at Bristol Parkway thus missing key interchange opportunities for services to the Midlands, the North and the South West as well as a reduced service to Cardiff, Swansea, Swindon, Didcot and Reading.

13. Whether and, if so, how many of the current HSTs should be subject to life-enhancement refurbishment and what would be their revised life-expectancy be?

By the time the new IEP trains come into operation the existing HST fleet will be 40 years old. It is doubtful whether they can be refurbished to meet disability requirements or meet modern day expectations of comfort. Rather than a revised life expectancy we urge the Government to procure a replacement fleet of diesel powered trains capable of running long distance and regional services. The requirement is for a new fleet to serve the whole of the South West. This stock should be based on a common design “shell” but with differing internal features and facilities to reflect the different operations i.e. one variation for local stopping and branch line services and another for longer distance cross region services. It is of concern that a decision about new diesel units can not be postponed forever. At best a revised life expectancy will add only a few extra years of service.

It should also be noted that in 2011 First Great Western had the highest average age of rolling stock of any franchise in the country (‘Greater Western, Lesser Western,’ TravelWatch SouthWest, September 2011).

14. Should other InterCity rolling stock, either new or cascaded, be procured for these services?

As indicated in the response to Question 13 new rolling stock should be procured for these services.
15. What should be the future of the overnight service between Paddington and Penzance, given that the sleeping cars and, especially, the locomotives, are ageing?

No comment.

16. What is the best balance between fast outer commuter services and intermediate stops? How could the residual suburban services best be optimised once Crossrail services start?

No comment apart from the observation that the extension of Crossrail from Maidenhead to Reading would give greater scope to optimise both the outer commuter services and inner suburban services and increase connectivity with the IEP services calling at Reading.

17. Under current plans for electrification, direct services from the Henley and Bourne End branches to Paddington would still have to be diesel-operated. Respondents are encouraged to consider if these services would represent a good use of scarce timetable slots on the main line, given that these slots could be used by higher-capacity electric trains.

No comment.

18. Are the services that extend eastwards from Portsmouth to Brighton the best use of Great Western diesel rolling stock, in view of the fact that there are frequent electric services provided by Southern on this route, or could this rolling stock could usefully be redeployed elsewhere?

Given the lack of rolling stock for the West of England area and the unlikelihood of a new generation of diesel multiple units being built in the short/medium term it would make sense to redeploy rolling stock currently used for those services that extend to/from Portsmouth to Brighton. As there is an adequate service between Southampton and Brighton it is suggested the train resource is redeployed for use on the Greater Bristol Metro (see responses to Questions 4, 5 and 21).

Before this happens we require guarantees that four car trains are provided on the Cardiff to Portsmouth service to meet demand and that the service is not split at Bristol Temple Meads.

19. Should branch line services continue to call at all branch line stations, or could the needs of most passengers be better met by omission of some of the intermediate stops on some or all of the trains, so that the final destination is reached more quickly?

The West of England has one branch line – Bristol Temple Meads to Severn Beach. The current pattern of services calling at intermediate stops should be retained with St Andrews Road as a request stop. Portway Platform, when constructed, will need to be added to the list of stops.
20. Do the medium-distance regional services (e.g. Cardiff to Portsmouth and Worcester/Gloucester to Weymouth) adequately serve the needs of all passengers along their lines of route, or would shorter-distance services, targeted on local travel requirements, be more beneficial?

We question whether longer distance stopping services from Worcester and Great Malvern to Bristol and Weymouth best serve the needs of local passengers. The West of England is largely self contained with 89% (Census 2001) of its workforce living and working within the area. Services should focus on where the demand is and not be driven by historic operational reasons. Longer distance services are more vulnerable to disruption and delay due to incidents along their entire route. Short distance local services reduce this risk.

Alternatively a shuttle service (half hourly) from Gloucester to Great Malvern would meet local need there and improve the robustness of the main line and services between Bristol and Gloucester.

The full Cardiff to Portsmouth service should be continued with fewer stops and faster, upgraded trains. To cater for local demand we believe an overlay stopping service on the busiest parts of the Cardiff to Portsmouth route is required running from Cardiff to Bath Spa with possible extension to Chippenham and Swindon. With electrification of the Great Western Main Line there is the opportunity to run this service using electric trains cascaded from Thameslink. Electrification should not be used as a reason to delay implementation of this service using diesel units.

We are concerned that overcrowding caused by a lack of capacity will act as a growth constraint on the Cardiff to Portsmouth route.

21. Taking in to account the current service pattern and the future changes, respondents are encouraged to suggest train service changes that they believe will be affordable, deliver value for money and provide a strong commercial, social or economic case.

As set out in the response to Question 5 our top three rail priorities are the Greater Bristol Metro of hourly cross city train services, Portishead line reopening and additional rolling stock. These form the basis for our proposals for train service changes and are set out below.

Technical evidence demonstrating the business case for these services will accompany the final response to the Department for Transport.

Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 – 2013 to 2018

- Portishead – following reopening new half hourly service to Bristol Temple Meads with one train an hour going on to Severn Beach via Bristol Temple Meads.
- Bath Spa to Severn Beach – new hourly service stopping at Oldfield Park, Keynsham, Bristol Temple Meads and stations to Severn Beach with a turnback at Bathampton Junction.
- Severn Beach line – half hourly service delivered by the new Bath Spa and
Portishead services above. No additional infrastructure on the Severn Beach line is required.

Both the infrastructure and operating commitment for Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 must be included within the franchise specification.

**Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2 – 2019 to 2023**

- Henbury Loop – hourly bolt on service to Bristol Temple Meads via Filton Abbey Wood (not Bristol Parkway) with capacity for two new stations (Filton North/Henbury) alongside Filton Airfield development. The service could serve new stations at Horfield/Ashley Down (with four tracking of Filton Bank).
- Yate – half hourly service by extending Weston-super-Mare to Bristol Parkway service with new turnback facility.
- Bedminster/Parson Street – half hourly service by stopping Taunton to Cardiff trains.
- New stations at Ashton Gate, Corsham and Saltford to come forward during Phase 2 subject to business cases.

The franchise specification should include a commitment to develop and implement the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2 service.

**Whole franchise 2013 to 2028**

**Regional Services**

Under the Greater Bristol Metro proposals all current regional train services via Bristol and Bath remain as they are for example Cardiff to Portsmouth and Cardiff to Taunton. The franchise should consider additional regional trains including:

- New Bristol to Oxford local stopping service.
- Cardiff to Bristol Temple Meads to Bath Spa overlay service on the busiest parts of the Cardiff to Portsmouth route with possible extension to Chippenham and Swindon. Further extension to Oxford to link up with East West Rail should be evaluated.
- SEWTA proposal for an additional hourly service from Ebbw Vale to Bristol Parkway via Newport and Severn Tunnel Junction and Patchway hourly service to provide new journey to work opportunities to developments around Bristol Parkway.

**Short term enhancements**

On the Severn Beach line we believe that with a revised fares structure and greater revenue protection there is a strong business case for the service to be included in the baseline specification for the franchise. As such it will no longer require financial support from Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council.

Portway platform on the Severn Beach Line is a low cost scheme to complement the existing bus based park and service. Technical work demonstrates it can be accommodated within the existing timetable.

**Additional Stations**

Whilst the Halcrow work is finding there is not a strong business case at present we remain committed to develop and implement new stations as the opportunities arise.
Developer or local authority funding and revised growth forecasts may well bring some schemes forward over the life of the 15 year franchise and blockades around electrification may provide time slots to for laying the groundwork. The Halcrow work has established there is capacity on the network to provide additional stops. The highest priorities for new stations (in alphabetical order) are Ashton Gate, Corsham (Wiltshire Council scheme) and Saltford. The franchise holder must be committed to progressing the new stations package and be flexible to accommodate their implementation and provide the necessary stopping services.

It is anticipated that Portishead and Pill stations will be provided under the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 with Henbury/North Filton and Ashley Down/Horfield as part of the Henbury Loop line under the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 2. Subject to a business case we expect Saltford station to come forward during Phase 2 of the Metro.

**Capital Funding**

It is recognised that implementing the Greater Bristol Metro Phase 1 and 2 will require capital funding. We expect this to be included in the franchise specification with the franchise holder contributing towards the costs. To facilitate this the franchise must include a commitment to the principle of residual value whereby the franchise holder will be partially reimbursed on their investment should they fail to win the next franchise. Developer and private sector contributions will be sought wherever possible but funding may be insufficient and timescales may not coincide with those for the Metro.

Nonetheless the local authorities acknowledge that a large proportion of capital funding will have to come from their own sources. The most likely source is devolved funding for major transport schemes. This will provide the confidence for the franchise holder to commit to plan for and implement new train services.

**Heart of Wessex**

We believe the proposals by the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership for an improved service between Westbury and Weymouth are based on a sound business case and will deliver economic benefits to Bristol and Bath. We confirm there are no conflicts between the preferred options for development of the Heart of Wessex line and the aspirations of the four West of England authorities.

22. **Respondents are encouraged to consider appropriate train times and service frequencies during planned disruption for the life of the new franchise. Respondents are also encouraged to consider alternative service propositions.**

Trains should be used instead of replacement buses to minimise disruption and the need to change modes. Services as close to the existing time timetable should be provided. If there is no choice but to use replacement buses then they must be low floor and capable of carrying pushchairs and bikes.

As recommended by Passenger Focus the franchise should include a requirement to fully adopt all elements of the ATOC Approved Code of Practice on passenger information during disruption (The Great Western Franchise 2013 onwards: an initial submission from Passenger Focus, December 2011).

We draw attention to the Passenger Focus finding that only 8% of passengers support...
blockades during major engineering works (Great Western Franchise – Key findings from passenger research, 2012).

We welcome moves by Network Rail to provide a seven day railway and minimise the need for weekend engineering work.

23. Respondents are encouraged to consider:
(a) the steps which bidders should be expected to take to meet passenger demand and the most appropriate mechanisms for ensuring additional capacity is provided when it becomes necessary;

We expect bidders to provide additional rolling stock, higher capacity rolling stock and/or increased frequency of trains to meet demand.

Franchise reviews at appropriate stages, two yearly minimum, must be built into the franchise, to meet passenger demand and enable additional capacity to be provided as well as respond to any inaccuracies or changes in planning assumptions. Responding to capacity needs must be a core requirement of the new franchise. The completion of electrification is likely to have a “sparks” effect on passenger levels and this should be recognized and planned for in the franchise.

(b) how capacity should be measured and appropriate targets set.

No standing on journey legs exceeding 10 minutes and on all days of operation including Saturdays and Sundays. Passengers in excess of capacity (PIXC) counts which apply in London and the South East should be extended to cover the whole area of the Great Western Franchise.

24. Respondents are encouraged to highlight any performance areas of particular concern.

These include:

• Poor rolling stock reliability – train faults and failures.
• Severn Beach line cancellations, short formed trains and services terminated at Clifton Down and Avonmouth.
• Overcrowding on peak hour trains at Filton Abbey Wood, Yate and on the Severn Beach Line.
• Principles of contingency planning should be agreed with the local authorities.

TravelWatch SouthWest has highlighted trains that are regularly full and standing in the South West (‘Greater Western, Lesser Western,’ TravelWatch SouthWest, September 2011). For the West of England area they include:

• 0640 Weymouth to Bristol Parkway - Westbury to Bath
• 0720 Severn Beach line - Bristol Temple Meads to Clifton Down
• 0730 Cardiff to Portsmouth – Newport to Filton Abbey Wood
• 1528 Warminster to Great Malvern – Bristol to Yate
25. Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to improve the overall efficiency of the rail industry to enable reductions in unit costs to be achieved.

Increased revenue protection, particularly on the Severn Beach line, will improve the profitability of local services and reduce costs. We look to the new franchise to include higher levels of revenue protection than currently provided.

Standardising the local rolling stock fleet will minimise the need to maintain different types of train and thereby reduce costs. Franchise bidders will be required to standardise their fleets for local services.

We support the Government’s intention to reduce the involvement of Network Rail in the operation and maintenance of most stations and instead make the franchise holder responsible. This will be more efficient and contribute to cost reductions.

26. Respondents are encouraged to consider the best method for funding major station enhancements and are encouraged to consider any local accessibility issues that they believe need addressing.

The franchise holder should be given 99 year full repair leases on major stations to provide the confidence for long term investment.

Greater investment in Bristol Temple Meads station is required to provide the quality of facilities commensurate with the 7.9m passengers (Office of the Rail Regulator) who use the station every year. The station should be a welcoming and accessible gateway to the city. The franchise holder must work with Network Rail, the local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnership to achieve this goal. An early decision on the future of the Digby Wyatt train shed is sought.

The franchise should include a train operator discretionary/minor works fund to finance station enhancements alongside Network Rail’s own Discretionary Fund. Accessibility issues should be addressed through the train operators fund matched by the Access for All funding which we expect to see continue. We welcome announcements in December 2011 for the new ramps at Keynsham and Nailsea & Backwell stations and raised platforms at Freshford, Stapleton Road and Lawrence Hill. For Freshford the need for step free access to the Westbury bound platform remains an issue.

Nailsea & Backwell and Avonmouth stations in particular have substantial drops from the carriage to the platforms and should be addressed. The train operator must be required to undertake a survey of all station platform heights and produce an Action Plan to address.

At Bristol Parkway station future enhancement plans must make provision for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) terminus for services approaching from Hunts Ground Road. BRT is part of the £101m North Fringe to Hengrove Package awarded funding by the DfT in December 2011.

Bristol Parkway has a successful Station Travel Plan and this concept should be extended to other stations on the local network.
At Filton Abbey Wood the franchise holder must work with Network Rail and the local authority on ideas for a new link road to the station.

We welcome the recognition of providing cycle parking at stations but are concerned there is no reference to increasing space for cycles on trains. Cycle docks, similar to those introduced on the South West Trains franchise, should be introduced at major stations. In all 6% of passengers cycle to or from the station (West of England Annual Rail Survey 2010).

Car travel is the second most popular way of getting to the station representing 29% of all trips (West of England Rail Survey 2010). The availability and price of car parking is an issue at Bristol Parkway, Bristol Temple Meads, Nailsea & Backwell and Keynsham. The franchise holder must work with local authorities on pricing and provision of parking at stations. We are concerned that the cost of parking can exceed the train fare acting as a disincentive to use the train.

27. Respondents are encouraged to consider which merit consideration for future improvement under these schemes and how such schemes could be funded.

As indicated in the response to question 26, Nailsea & Backwell and Avonmouth have substantial drops from the carriage to the platforms and should be addressed through either the NSIP programme and/or Access for All funding.

28. Respondents are encouraged to consider how security and safety might be improved, together with any local safety issues that they believe need addressing.

The role of the British Transport Police should be extended.

After the present programme, funded by Bristol City Council, of installing CCTV is complete CCTV should be extended to cover Oldfield Park, Keynsham and Weston Milton. CCTV should also be provided on all trains.

29. Respondents are encouraged to consider how ticket purchase could be made easier and how to minimise revenue loss across the franchise.

The franchise holder should be expected to agree to participate (under s137(2) of the Transport Act 2000) in any multi-modal ticket scheme set up by an LTA. Existing multi-modal ticket schemes (e.g. Freedom Travelpass) should be developed, where desired by LTAs, into statutory ticket schemes to ensure participation by all bus operators and should be amended as necessary to conform to the recommendations of the Competition Commission in its report on Local Bus Services published in December 2010.

All multi-modal tickets to be available as smartcards because all local buses in the West of England area will be equipped with smart readers by 2013.

It is far from clear in the consultation document that all of the above will be the case.

Passenger Focus has demonstrated the most popular way to buy a ticket remains the ticket office (42%) (Great Western Franchise – Key findings from passenger research,
The franchise holder must retain all existing ticket offices and peak hour ticket sellers with no reduction in opening hours or staffing. New technology should not be used as an excuse to reduce the role of the ticket office.

As TravelWatch SouthWest has demonstrated First Great Western stands out for having higher turn up and go fares than fares for comparable journeys elsewhere in the UK (‘Greater Western, Lesser Western,’ TravelWatch South West, September 2011). Passengers also regard rail fares as expensive and complicated. This highlights the need to simplify fare structures but without an overall increase in fares.

More revenue protection officers are needed, especially on the Severn Beach Line and consideration should be given to extend the number of gated stations and how to minimise the fraudulent use of smartcards.

30. Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to communicate information with passengers across the franchise and how best to keep passengers informed during times of disruption.

Modern communication methods should be used e.g. twitter, SMS text, apps and social networking sites. The franchise holder should be flexible enough to adopt new technology as it emerges.

Traditional leaflets, adverts and posters, particularly at stations, must be retained.

31. The Department is considering the appropriate approach for monitoring and improving service quality in the new franchise, and respondents are encouraged to consider the proposals suggested, to highlight any alternative proposals and to make recommendations on any issues that may be identified.

No comment.

32. Respondents are encouraged to consider what level of catering provision should be provided.

Buffet cars should be provided on all train services from London to the West of England (Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads, Bristol Parkway and Weston-super-Mare) and on services to Cardiff.

Trolley facilities should be provided on inter regional routes between Cardiff, Portsmouth, Weymouth, Swindon and Bristol.

Station refreshment facilities at Bath Spa, Bristol Temple Meads, Bristol Parkway, Yatton and Weston-super-Mare should be retained and upgraded. Consideration should be given to combined cafes/ticket outlets at other stations.

33. Respondents are encouraged to consider local accessibility and mobility issues and suggest how improvements could be made.

We remain concerned that the current fleet of diesel multiple units will not meet the January 2020 requirement for all trains to be accessible to persons with reduced
mobility. Whilst an operator minor works fund (see response to Question 26) will improve station access this is undermined if the trains themselves are difficult to access. The Government will have to procure fleets of accessible trains before the 2020 deadline. As set out in the response to Question 13 a new fleet to serve the whole of the South West is required.

The franchise holder should be encouraged to bid for Access for All funding to aim to get all West of England stations fully accessible by 2020.

34. Respondents are encouraged to consider what environmental targets could be set within the franchise specification.

The UK Climate Change Act has established legally binding targets requiring the Government to reduce the country’s CO₂ emission by 34% by 2020 from a 1990 baseline. The franchise should include a similar target to reduce CO₂ emissions.

The franchise holder must be required to co-operate with Air Quality Management Plans in Bath and Bristol.