PENINSULA RAIL TASK FORCE

Great Western Rail Franchise Consultation Response from the Peninsula Rail Task Force

Introduction

The Peninsula Rail Task Force (PRTF) represents the South West Peninsula which comprises Somerset, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall & the Heart of the South West (HotSW) and Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (C&IoS) LEP areas.

PRTF welcomes this consultation and the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Great Western Franchise Specification. We appreciate that this is not a consultation directly on the length of any franchise extension, but we consider that there is much merit in a longer direct award up to 2020, given the uncertainly that is provided by major infrastructure projects on the GWML, Crossrail, completion of Reading upgrade and the creation of a new hub at Old Oak Common, coupled with the replacement of rolling stock through electrification elsewhere.

However, an extension would not be acceptable if it leads to a "standstill" railway for areas beyond the current electrification and IEP fleet renewal plans, such as the SW Peninsula. The imbalances that will result in the next 6 years through a "2-speed" Great Western franchise, between electrified routes and routes substantially as current, need to be understood with steps taken to rectify this imbalance. The current plans for improvement between London and Bristol are in stark contract to the very modest improvements planned for the SW Peninsula.

The Initial Industry Plan (IIP) for CP6 is submitted in 2017, well before the end of the next franchise period. We would expect First Great Western (FGW) to be required under the terms of the franchise agreement to work with all stakeholders, Network Rail and the Department in reducing this imbalance by preparing schemes and completing feasibility work in preparation for delivery in CP6.

The South West Peninsula – the Case for Rail Investment

The South West has a bigger economy than that of Greater Bristol or South Wales, yet infrastructure investment into transport networks has not kept pace. Recent severe weather events have compounded existing issues, highlighting our fragile resilience and at times, severing entire counties from the rest of the UK. We are linked to London by a single but vital rail line via Westbury, with a separate gateway to Bristol and the West Midlands through another single link. Investment into our infrastructure will not only yield significant economic growth, but as crucially, it will enable far greater connectivity to national and international markets, creating opportunity and fostering ambition. Passenger growth (double the UK trend) consistently outstrips forecasts, with an urgent need to catch up through more trains and greater frequencies on London and local services.

Our request of Government is for:

- A resilient and reliable railway
- With faster journey times, and better connectivity
- And sufficient capacity and comfort.

A resilient and reliable railway
Severe bad weather has caused havoc across the South West over two consecutive winters, cutting off Somerset, Devon and Cornwall from the rest of the UK. The line was severed at Dawlish, whilst floods and landslips shut the remaining services for weeks. Businesses lost confidence, operational costs escalated, with losses estimated as <xx amount> in <yy timeframe>. Our economy suffered.

SOLUTION: An additional inland route West of Exeter, long term solution for Bridgwater, and increased capacity on the Exeter to Waterloo line (Exeter- Yeovil-Castle Cary) would provide greater resilience and reliability.

Faster journey times and better connectivity
The South West is the largest peninsula, with an equally significant economy, but is characterised by large distances between dispersed communities. As GVA drops 6% for every 100 miles from London, the further down the peninsula the greater the challenges become. Ensuring faster journey times, with more opportunities to connect at both a local and national level is critical.

SOLUTION: Upgrading signalling, improving line speeds and more modern diesel trains (to replace HSTs) whose greater acceleration and automatic doors will further cut journey times, and enhanced frequencies Paddington – Exeter allowing faster journey times further west, better calling patterns and sufficient capacity. A considered appraisal of the benefits of electrification is sought (recent research indicates it could yield up to £73m extra* for the SW economy <u>every</u> year.

Sufficient capacity and quality
The number of people using the trains in the South West is double the national rate of growth – and demand is outstripping supply. Trains are cramped, overcrowded, unreliable and slow. This will prevent further market growth, and it also limits our inward investment potential.

SOLUTION: the cascade of Thames Valley's existing rolling stock to provide sufficient trains for our local services once electrification is complete in 2016, and enhanced frequencies on overcrowded routes.

SW Peninsula Priorities

	Requirement	***Solution***	***When***
1	**Resilience** **A Reliable & Resilient Railway that meets the Needs of the SW Peninsula economy**	**£31.3m resilience plan** introduced in full. EA and NR working together on all aspects.	2017
	What: A commitment to good connectivity in the event of route disruption due to severe weather or maintenance work. This requires an additional inland route West of Exeter, long term solution for Bridgwater, and increased capacity on the Exeter to Waterloo line (Exeter- Yeovil-Castle	**Somerset Levels** Comprehensive joint agency solution **East of Exeter** Strengthen Exeter – Yeovil – Castle Cary route to enable diverted hourly Paddington Trains as well as existing SW Trains services (probably only two passing loops required).	As soon as possible As soon as possible Following Network Rail Resilience Study

	Cary). **Why:** The loss of a route without a viable alternative has severely impacted on both local and national economies, mobility and connectivity across the region and the wider UK. **Evidence:** Severe Weather disruption at Cowley Bridge, Somerset Levels, Dawlish, Honiton- Yeovil, plus a three week closure at Whiteball Tunnel – in two consecutive winters, has created economic losses across the South West and beyond.	**Dawlish/ Teignmouth seawall** Works undertaken to provide full protection against damage **Second route West of Exeter** (Inland route to complement the Dawlish line) - Recognising the strategic resilience needed for Devonport Dockyard and the added capacity this line will provide for growth in freight traffic. **Branch Line Resilience** Improved branch line resilience following comprehensive network wide audit of risk locations and wider network risks.	CP5* (by 2019) CP5 (by 2019)
2	**Local Train Services** **Sufficient rolling stock to cater for growing demand for travel** **What:** cascading rolling stock for local services by 2016 from Thames Valley once Thames Valley electrification is completed in 2016. **Why:** High and sustained passenger growth across the Peninsula without sufficient increase in train capacity is in danger of choking off travel demand and economic growth. **Evidence:** National data on SW Peninsula patronage growth approx. twice that of UK.	**Rolling Stock** All cascaded DMU trains from the Thames Valley post-electrification to be deployed to the Great Western Franchise to enable sufficient additional stock to be cascaded to the SW Peninsula To provide sufficient capacity on all local trains and implement: **Devon Metro** • 30 minute Paignton - Exmouth; • 30 minute Honiton – Exeter; • Hourly stopping trains Exeter – Bristol • Planned Plymouth – Tavistock services • 7 day a week timetable for Exmouth, Barnstaple, Honiton and Paignton and Gunnislake/ Tavistock lines • new stations at Cranbrook, Newcourt (2014), Marsh Barton (2016), Edginswell and Tavistock. **Cross Cornwall** • Two trains/ hour Penzance – Plymouth • Strengthening on Truro – Falmouth line • St Erth Parkway **Heart of Wessex** • Hourly trains providing improved connectivity with SW Peninsula – Paddington trains at Castle Cary/ Westbury.	End of 2016 using cascaded class 16xs from the Thames Valley post-electrification in the Thames Valley
3	**London Train Services** **Capacity and Frequency** **What:** sufficient capacity for current and future demands and improved journey times to London and higher frequency services .	**HST Replacement** Cascade, or procure, modern express trains for Paddington services to/ from the Peninsula to replace HST fleet by 2020 providing improved journey times through greater acceleration, and automatic door closing.	2019 2018 using new IEP

		London to Exeter < 2 hrs; London-Plymouth < 3 hrs: London-Penzance <5 hrs • Improved Frequency: 2 Trains/ hour Paddington – Taunton - Exeter • Deploy new IEP bi-mode trains or cascaded modern diesel trains • Improved stopping patterns Between Exeter, Taunton and Castle Cary, Westbury, and Newbury. • Regular timetables and stopping patterns enabling better connectivity with other services • Enable services operating to west of Exeter to only stop at Reading, Taunton and Exeter – to reduce journey times and produce a clockface timetable. • Enable Torbay to have regular London Trains, restoring the connectivity withdrawn in 2009 with SW Trains changes. • Reduced journey time from better performance trains, automatic doors, Reading Station improvements, line speed improvements; upgraded/ modernised signalling. **Cornish Sleeper** Refurbished trains and a commitment to the long term future of the service.	
	Why: The SW Peninsula economy is larger than either greater Bristol or South Wales. This is not reflected in current railway investment plans. The existing fleet of High Speed Trains will either need life extending refurbishments or complete replacement by 2020.		
	Evidence: 2. PRTF's electrification study demonstrates that an enhanced diesel operation over the short to medium term has a positive financial business case with an estimated Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of over 28:1 and total benefits of the service enhancement to the whole South West Economy of £73m per annum.		
4	**Infrastructure** **Including upgraded signalling, increased line capacity and Line Speeds**	**Signalling** • Modernise signalling west of Plymouth to increase line capacity and speed • Upgrade signalling west of Newton Abbot to increase line capacity and speed **Line Speed** Increase line speeds between Newbury and Penzance on track sections where there is scope. **Double track** Install passing loops as required to facilitate capacity improvements: • Exeter – Yeovil/ Castle Cary (to enable a diversionary route for hourly Paddington trains in addition to hourly SW Trains (Exeter –Waterloo); • Penzance – Plymouth.	CP5 – by 2019
	What: That Government commits to bringing forward a programme of track and signalling improvements to reduce journey times to and from the South West.		
	Why: A comprehensive programme of infrastructure investment, to ensure the maximum potential of cascaded and newer trains with better performance, will facilitate improved connectivity and resilience to all places west of Reading. This has increasing benefit further from London – to further generate significant demand.		
	Evidence: Studies indicate (2. above) that investment in rail infrastructure and rail services will generate reduced journey times and scope for better		

	frequencies - facilitating a virtuous circle of economic growth, inward investment, employment growth, economic development.		
5	**Strategic SW Peninsula Focus on Future Investment** **What:** (i) A commitment to progressing electrification to the far South West during CP5 and to commit to keeping the skills, equipment and supply chains in place at the end of CP5 to enable continuation of a rolling programme of electrification to include the South West during CP6. **Why:** To bring the SW Peninsula economy into long term national plans for strategic connectivity and resilience, to catapult the region from a 'strong growth scenario' to a 'transformational growth scenario'. Electrification allows economic benefits to be delivered to the far South West more cheaply and in an environmentally friendly way. **Evidence:** PRTF's Electrification study has concluded that an enhanced service delivered through electrification has an estimated BCR of over 2.5:1, building on the strong economic case for reducing journey time between the Peninsula and London and the rest of the country.	**Electrification** Commit to reassess the business case in the light of recent PRTF research, as a first step to committing to include SW Peninsula electrification once completed in South Wales - to retain expertise gained during that electrification phase). **TEN** Commit to include the SW Peninsula in the Trans European Network recognising the size of the SW Peninsula economy (greater than S Wales or greater Bristol), its growing knowledge-based economy, Devonport Dockyard.	For Phase 2 of electrification from 2019 onwards By 2030

Response to the Specific Consultation Questions

Q1. Respondents are encouraged to consider whether any additional objectives should be reflected in the franchise specification for the 5 year period from September 2015.

1.1. The objectives regarding economic growth and community rail are welcomed as additions following the previous consultation on the objectives for the Great Western franchise in 2012. Both of these issues are key objectives for the rail network in the South West Peninsula.

1.2. The size and vitality of the different SW economies relative to other parts of the country are often underestimated. From the table it is apparent that economies further west are equally in need of the benefits of better connectivity (the SW Peninsula economy has the highest growth) to optimises its contribution to national economic growth (fig 1).

Fig.1 – Contribution to the economy

	GVA £bn	Growth%	GVA/head £000	On HS2 or Electric
Greater Manchester	48.20	50.1	18.0	Yes
Derbyshire & Notts	37.08	52.6	17.6	Yes
South West Peninsula (Somerset, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth & Cornwall)	***35.81(3)***	***69.3(1)***	***16.3(10)***	***No***
Greater Bristol	26.04	68.1	24.3	Yes
Merseyside	23.06	48.4	16.7	No
South Wales	22.67	57.0	18.5	Yes
Leeds	18.00	48.8	24.0	Yes
Swindon & Wiltshire	14.16	55.3	20.8	Yes
Gloucestershire	12.11	50.8	20.3	No
Sheffield	10.00	56.5	18.1	Yes

Table compares positions between 1999 and 2011 - the figure in brackets is the South West Peninsula rank position out of ten. Source: ONS and 2011 Census

1.3. The SW Peninsula is the largest of the South West economies and larger than that of greater Bristol, Merseyside, South Wales, Leeds and Sheffield. While dispersed along the peninsula passenger demand aggregates onto the single mainline between Penzance and Taunton and beyond. There is sustained and high population growth in the SW Peninsula, fuelling the economic growth and rail usage.

1.4. GVA per head of population, as a measure of efficiency, shows the SW Peninsula as the least efficient. This is partly explained by research undertaken by the University of the West of England and the University of Bath concluded that productivity reduces by 6% for every 100 minutes of journey time to London. Longer and slower speed journeys to the SW Peninsula also take their toll on productivity and demonstrate the need for improved rail connectivity.

1.5. Therefore, the large discrepancy between the level of investment on the Paddington - Bristol line with electrification and IEP, compared with the lack of any planned investment on the Far South West lines, is a concern to authorities and businesses alike in the Far South West.

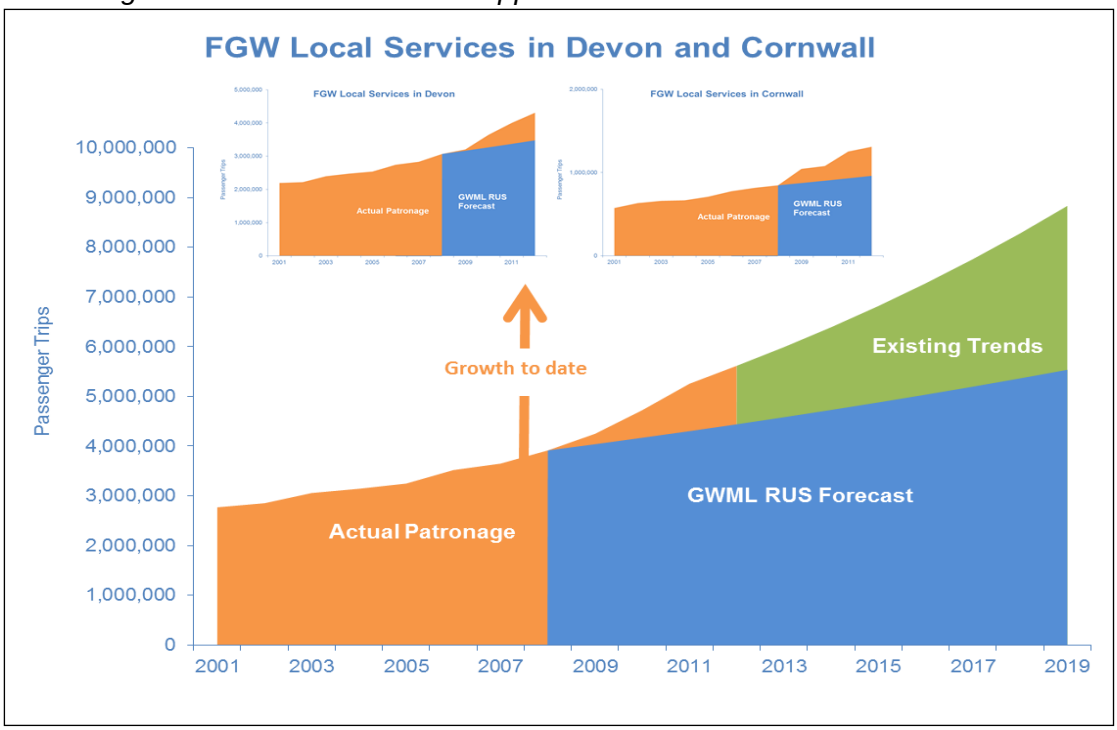
1.6. There must be specific recognition of the economic potential of the South West Peninsula and that the franchise must redress the growing economic disparity with other parts of the franchise area as result of the investment that is going into the IEP to Bristol and South Wales, and committed electrification schemes in the North of England as well as HS2 itself.

Q2. Respondents are encouraged to consider any specific local factors that they believe might influence the future level of passenger demand, which should be reflected in the specification for the new franchise.

2.1. Passenger growth in the SW Peninsula is consistently since 2000 around twice the national average, and increasing. We continue to have concerns from past and recent rail industry passenger growth forecasts that under-forecasting of growth in the SW Peninsula will continue. While the industry recognises that SW Peninsula rail patronage is growing at faster rates than national levels, the forecasts have never

caught up with the ever widening gulf between forecast and numbers travelling (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. How Growth has Outstripped Forecasts



Source: Network Rail and First Great Western data, 2012

2.2. Whilst the Initial Industry Plan (September 2011) assumes growth levels of 3-4% for regional railways in Control Periods 4 and 5, the Peninsula's railways have seen an average of **109% growth over the decade 2002-12** (Fig. 3). Clearly the new franchise should be expected to reduce this ever-widening gap and provide an alignment between forecasts, actual travel and train capacity.

Fig. 3 - Rail Passenger Growth 2002-12

Line	***Patronage Growth 2002 – 2012***
Exeter/ Paignton/ Plymouth	+108%
Exeter/ Barnstaple	+159%
Exeter/ Exmouth	+75%
Plymouth/ Penzance	+184%
Plymouth/ Gunnislake	+47%
Liskeard/ Looe	+57%
Par/ Newquay	+107%
Truro/ Falmouth	+208%
Penzance/ St Ives	+56%
Total	***+109%***
National Regional Rail Sector	*+52%*
National Rail All Sectors	*+55%*

Source: First Great Western, 2013

2.3. Growth continues unabated to the present day, with trends pointing to the rate of growth increasing in recent years, as can be seen from the increase in footfall at key stations between 2011 and 2012 (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 - Rail Passenger Growth at Key Stations 2011-12

Station	***Patronage Growth 2011 – 2012 (Footfall)***
Taunton	+4.7%
Exeter St David's	+7.2%
Paignton	+10.1%
Plymouth	+8.6%
Truro	+11.1%

Source: First Great Western, 2013

2.4. Therefore there continues to be considerable concern that the demand forecasting included within the franchise consultation is insufficient to deliver sustainable services and does not recognise the level of passenger growth experienced in the South West Peninsula during the current franchise. A review and catching up process needs to be initiated and reflected in decisions on investment in rolling stock and track infrastructure.

2.5. The SW Peninsula economy has a growing knowledge-based sector that relies on local and long-distance connectivity. However rail services must be planned with seasonality in mind (across the high season and "shoulder" months) as SW tourism continues to contribute to the national economy. The UK Tourism survey (2010) found 7% of visitors to the south west arrived by train in 2009 with the SW region having a 19% share of GB tourism expenditure in 2009. Many visitors use the railways while staying in the region.

2.6. A number of factors have and will continue to combine to increase the number of rail passengers:

- Of these population growth is expected to continue to be high (forecast population growth is 30% in the South West by 2033; Plymouth is planned to grow by 20% (50,000) by 2031).

- 19% of South West households have no access to a car.

- The Peninsula's combined population of over 2.2m is equal to or greater than the fourth and fifth most important cities in England outside London (Fig. 5) with over 1m jobs and a GVA of almost £36bn.

- Our economy is larger than that of Greater Bristol.

Fig. 5 - The SW Peninsula Population compared to Major Urban Areas

Area	**Population (2012 mid year estimates)**
West Midlands urban area	2,762,700
Greater Manchester	2,702,300
West Yorkshire	2,240,700
Far South West Peninsula	**2,217,800**
Greater Glasgow	1,789,600
Tyne and Wear	1,108,100
West of England (Bristol / Bath area)	1,080,600
Southampton	239,400
Cambridge	125,200

Source: ONS 2013

2.7. There is a strong case that a better railway will address the key issues of low productivity (as measured by GVA – Fig. 6). This is lower than anywhere per head of population in Southern England with Devon, Plymouth and Somerset at 80% of the UK average and Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly at 66% of the UK average; Torbay alone is at 60.5% of the UK average. Cornwall qualifies for EU Convergence funding; Devon, Plymouth and Torbay qualify for Transition funding.

Fig. 6. Economy and Population (2011/12).

Area	***Total size of economy - GVA 2011***	***Total population – mid year estimates 2012***
South West Peninsula - Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay	£35.81bn	2,217,800

Source: ONS 2012 and 2013

2.8. A number of major economic and regeneration projects are underway or planned in the South West Peninsula which will benefit greatly from rail connectivity. These include:

- Eco-communities in the Clay Area
- Newquay Enterprise Zone
- Falmouth Port Masterplan
- Plymouth will deliver 32,000 new homes and 42,000 new jobs by 2031
- Plymouth and South West Peninsula City Deal: creating 9500 permanent jobs and releasing 34,200 square metres of marine workspace through the development of Royal Navy's South Yard
- Sherford New Community including 5,500 new homes adjacent to the eastern boundary of Plymouth
- East of Exeter creating 10,000 jobs and 12,000 houses up to 2025
- Bridgwater - Hinkley Point C New Nuclear build
- Taunton - Firepool Regeneration site / Monkton Heathfield Urban Extension

2.9. The HLOS acknowledges plans for the Devon Metro scheme which will deliver new stations at Cranbrook, Newcourt, Marsh Barton and Edginswell. These additional stations will increase demand for services on the Paignton, Exmouth, Axminster and Barnstaple lines, which the new franchise operator will need to accommodate with increased capacity through increased service frequencies.

2.10. The following RUS recommendations should be implemented to support the South West Peninsula's rail growing rail needs:

- Recommendation post 2019 for reduced stops on Berks & Hants route to improve journey times to the whole Peninsula
- The Mainline Signal Renewal programmed within CP6; this work should be brought forward as it is a key constraint to the delivery of service improvements, particularly the PRTF's aspiration for an hourly London service plus an hourly local stopping service
- Line speed improvements between Bristol and Taunton.

2.11. These will help address the need to reduce journey times between the SW Peninsula and London to address the imbalance with faster journeys to equivalent distance cities elsewhere in the country.

Q3. Respondents are encouraged to highlight interfaces with any other schemes that are likely to be delivered during the next five years, which the operator may need to consider.

3.1. The franchise specification needs to be aligned with, and consistent with, other adopted strategic plans:

- Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan 2014-19
- The Long Term Planning Process
- Great Western Route Utilisation Study
- HS2 proposals will lead to the relocation of the existing motive power depot at Old Oak Common to accommodate a new interchange station between the GWML and HS2. The franchisee will need to consider the continuity of services whilst this move takes place

- and more local schemes:

- Great Western Mainline Signalling Renewal
- Extension to Tavistock
- Interreg Citizens Rail – More frequent trains on the Riviera Line between Paignton, Newton Abbot and Exeter providing a stepping stone to the Devon Metro concept
- Devon Metro - an improved local metro service for the network centred on Exeter, including a half hourly service between Paignton and Exeter, additional services to Honiton/ Axminster, new stations at Cranbrook, Newcourt, Marsh Barton and Edginswell, a 7 day timetable and better connectivity between local stops between Exeter and Bristol.
- Plymouth Station Refurbishment
- Taunton / Bridgwater / Station Enhancement - significant investment is planned to improve the access to and the general environments at each of these stations
- Night Riviera Sleeper Upgrade and Traincare Centre
- Resilience works and the Network Rail £31.3m 10 point improvement scheme.

3.2. Sufficient capacity needs to be maintained in the Paddington - Reading corridor to provide sufficient train paths for the increased number of trains to the SW Peninsula planned in the Long Term Planning Process.

Q4. Respondents are invited to identify any changes or reorganisation to the routes served by the Great Western franchise that they would recommend; and to explain their rationale.

4.1. The only changes or reorganisation to routes served by the Great Western franchise that is worthy of consideration concerns the need to assess possible advantages to the travelling public if the Exeter - Barnstaple line was operated by the SW Trains franchise, with (a) better cross-Exeter journeys; (b) direct connectivity Barnstaple – London; (c) more suitable trains on the Barnstaple line where end-to-end traffic predominates.

Q5. Respondents who wish to promote service changes should clearly identify these in their response to this consultation, as well as any supporting business case or value for money (VfM) analysis.

5.1. We are promoting a half hourly mainline service during the next franchise period between Penzance and Exeter. This would comprise an hourly long distance service from Penzance to London/ the North overlaid by an hourly stopping service from Penzance to Exeter.

5.2. PRTF supports Somerset County Council, working with neighbouring authorities and community rail partnerships, to achieve an increase in the capacity and frequency of services on the Heart of Wessex line. This will also provide better connectivity between the SW Peninsula and other neighbouring areas. Research undertaken by the Heart of Wessex CRP presented a robust case for investment as part of the previously cancelled franchise process. PRTF would like to see this considered as part of the specification.

5.3. Two trains an hour between Exeter and Honiton/ Axminster will be required to serve the growth East of Exeter, and may be best interworked into the Great Western Franchise services.

Q6. Respondents are encouraged to bring to our attention research, evidence or publications which they believe should be considered in the development of the franchise specification.

6.1. Relevant documents include:

- The South West Spine (February 2013, revised February 2014)
- Economic Study into the Electrification of Rail Services to Plymouth and Cornwall (April 2014)
- Network Rail Long Term Planning Process Market Studies:
  - Long Distance
  - Regional Urban
  - Freight
- Strategic Economic Plan & Local Growth Deal, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP (March 2014)
- Strategic Economic Plan & Local Growth Deal, Heart of the South West LEP (March 2014)
- Network Rail, Devon & Cornwall Strategic Route Review (May 2014)
- Network Rail, West of Exeter Route & Resilience Study
- Network Rail, Western Route Study
- PRTF, Economic Study into the West of Exeter rail closures (June 2014)
- Network RUS: Electrification, Network Rail, October 2009
- Response to the ORR consultation on Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan, Peninsula Rail Officer Group, February 2013
- Specifying the new Greater Western Franchise: Greater Western or Lesser Western? Travelwatch South West, September 2011

Q7. Respondents are invited to propose any changes to the current service pattern which they feel should be considered and to explain their rationale, for example by identifying specific local factors which might influence the future level of passenger demand which they consider should be reflected in a revised specification.

7.1. In the context of the size of the SW Peninsula economy, the growth potential of the economy, and the high and sustained patronage growth – as detailed in the preceding question responses – service development is essential.

7.2. PRTF has developed a service specification which Network Rail has used for its modelling in the LTPP, the Devon & Cornwall Strategic Route Review (completed May 2014), the Western Route Study (due to complete in later in 2014) and the West of Exeter Study (due to complete June 2014). This should be adopted within the franchise period with an hourly pattern of services west of Exeter as follows:

HST1 - London Paddington – Penzance
HST2 - London Paddington – Plymouth
HST3 - London Paddington – Exeter / Paignton (4 return journeys per day weekdays and 2 trains per day weekends)
XC1 – Glasgow/Edinburgh/Newcastle – Plymouth/Penzance
LOC1 - Exeter – Penzance
DM1 - Exmouth – Paignton
DM2 - Exmouth – Paignton
T1 – Gunnislake/Tavistock – Plymouth

7.3. The *Economic study into the electrification of rail services to Plymouth and Cornwall* commissioned by the PRTF in late 2013 examined the case for (a) continuing the electrification of the mainline from Bristol and Newbury to Penzance, and (b) an enhanced modern diesel train service pattern. Electrification gave a positive Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.52. An enhanced diesel operation without electrification provided a very strong BCR of 28.03. This demonstrates the huge unmet demand in the region for rail services and constrained growth due to a combination of slow journey times, capacity issues and ageing rolling stock.

7.4. We are seeking a minimum of four return trips between Torbay and London Paddington each day (currently three each weekday). 2009 changes to the South West Trains franchise saw the withdrawal of two weekday and Saturday return trips, and four Sunday return trips to London Waterloo with no replacement in the Great Western franchise. Torbay is the second largest conurbation west of Bristol, with a population of 131,000.

7.5. Devon Metro has received widespread industry support as a concept:

- two trains an hour 30 minute service Exmouth – Paignton,
- two trains an hour Exeter – Honiton,
- a 7 day railway with the same frequencies/service pattern on every day of the week.
- New stations at Newcourt, Cranbrook, Marsh Barton and Edginswell promoted by Devon County Council and Torbay Council
- hourly local connectivity between Exeter and Bristol.

Given the good progress on new stations, Interreg funding from 2013 for Exeter – Paignton, and DMU cascades from the Thames Valley, a launch of Devon Metro is anticipated in late 2016/ 2017.

The Interreg EU funded project has laid the foundations for two trains an hour Exeter – Paignton, which was also identified as a requirement from 2016 in the last RUS. Its implementation was delayed by aborting the 2013 Great Western Franchise: as a result the Interreg funding is limited to 2 years 6 months. Previous ministerial assurances on avoiding adverse effects on service development from the stalled

franchise would point to these enhancements being adopted from the start of the new franchise.

7.6. We are seeking a minimum of four return trips between Torbay and London Paddington each day (currently three each weekday). In 2009, changes to the South West Trains franchise meant the withdrawal of two weekday and Saturday return trips, and four Sunday return trips to London Waterloo. No replacement in the Great Western franchise was made for the loss of these services. Torbay is the second largest conurbation west of Bristol, with a population of 131,000, but as Table 7 (above) shows, it lacks regular direct connections to London, that other conurbations of a similar size receive:

7.7. We are seeking an additional late evening train from Plymouth to Exeter. Apart from the Sleeper Service, which departs Plymouth at 2355, the last train leaves at 2125. This is too late for access for Plymouth's evening economy and functions, venues and entertainment (on Saturdays, there is no Sleeper Service). A local train leaving Plymouth between 2230 and 2300 should be a priority to meet this latent demand and to provide a basic level of evening service from Plymouth to Exeter (the two largest cities in the Peninsula).

Q8. Respondents are invited to say whether they value a faster headline journey time, or more intermediate stops, on a particular journey that they make (and to identify that journey).

8.1. The choice of whether faster headline journey times are valued more than an increased number of intermediate stops misses the point. Frequency is the key to allow fast as well as stopping services in any single hour. Passenger Focus established that frequency scored 251 when making the comparison of factors deterring or encouraging rail travel, 251 meaning 251% of 'average' importance across factors affecting rail use choice.

8.2. The high growth in SW Peninsula patronage justifies increased frequencies on London services, and we would expect the franchise to enable a phased approach to (a) increasing frequencies, while (b) retaining or improving calling patterns at intermediate stations (as outlined in the Long Term Planning Process) by e.g. introducing 2 trains per hour during the extended franchise period.

8.3. Increased frequency in turn would enable so called "intermediate" stops to receive better calling patterns, and should enable regular calling patterns that would enable greater connection-reliant connectivity.

8.4. DfT needs to ensure that sufficient rolling stock is available, and that First Great Western is expected to work with the industry to secure this stock for these enhancements.

8.5. While it is the intention of Government that the Far South West should not be disadvantaged by HS2 or improvements along the GWML, concrete plans need to be shown within the franchise specification to deliver on this.

8.6. PRTF supports Plymouth City Council's aspiration for more trains between Plymouth and London in under 3 hours to be accommodated within a two-trains-per-hour frequency, with these services extended into Cornwall. Comparative typical

journey times from London to a range of towns and cities across the UK are listed below in Table 8:

Fig. 7 - Comparison of journey times to towns and cities

16th Largest City	Brighton and Hove	1 hour
	Leicester	1 hr 2 mins
	Birmingham	1 hr 22 mins
	Doncaster	1 hr 35 mins
	Nottingham	1 hr 40 mins
	Lincoln	1 hr 44 mins
	Norwich	1 hr 50 mins
	Manchester	2 hrs 7 mins
	Liverpool	2 hrs 14 mins
	Rotherham	2hrs 15 mins
14th Largest City	Hull	2 hrs 33 mins
	Huddersfield	2 hrs 37 mins
	Newcastle	2 hrs 50 mins
	Torbay	**3 hrs 13 mins**
15th Largest City	**Plymouth**	**3 hrs 15 mins**
13th Largest City	Sunderland	3 hrs 30 mins

The picture is even more stark when factoring in distance (Fig 8)

Fig. 8 – Distance from London / fastest journey times

Location	**Distance from London (Miles)**	**Fastest Journey (mins)**	
		Current	**Future**
Exeter	173	122	105 (2)
Stockport	178	115	68 (3)
Plymouth	225	180	135 (2)(4)
Darlington	232	140	109 (1)
Lancaster	230	144	99 (1)

8.7. We would also wish to see improvements in the arrival times of the first trains in the day from London. The first through train leaving London after 0700 reaches the following cities at: Birmingham 0827, Leicester 0829, York 0850, Nottingham 0917, Leeds 0917, Liverpool 0923, Manchester 0928, Exeter 0930, Sheffield 0941, Newcastle 0951, Lancaster 0954, **Plymouth 1117** and Edinburgh 1122 *.

8.8. It is hoped that the December 2014 timetable change will see the introduction of an earlier arrival into Plymouth, arriving at 1037.

8.9. If there is a balance to be made between frequency and intermediate stops, it should be to maximise customer use of those services; local engagement will be key to any decisions on this.

Q9. Should any elements of the indicative modelled intercity service pattern be mandated, and can it be improved? What should the priority be for intercity services where IEP trains are not planned to operate?

9.1. It is important that services which are not commercially viable but serve a vital transport connection and meet broader objectives are protected. The following aspects of the specification should be mandated:

- First and last trains
- Key stops
- Minimum no. of stops for each station, including peak service stopping
- Frequencies – maximum gaps in service
- Specific train paths for local rail services to avoid strategic destinations such as London and Birmingham having an undue influence on the timing of local rail services
- Total number of services
- Key morning and evening peak services (peak includes commuters, students and leisure travellers) including the number of trains, the peak capacity (including seasonal peak capacity)
- Specification of the capacity of each service and the intended capacity to account for future patronage growth.

9.2. Performance targets should be set for aspects such as capacity, rolling stock, timetable compliance, customer satisfaction and ticket prices.

9.3. The current service on branch lines in the Peninsula has been developed over time through close partnership working between the TOC, local authority, Rail Partnership and local communities. This valuable work must be kept in mind to provide the best interchange opportunities and the current timetable should provide the baseline timetable for building future improvements on.

9.4. We believe that within the life of the new Franchise (by 2020) HST's should be replaced by IEPs or modern diesel stock that will provide significant journey time improvements, including to Penzance, through better performance.

9.5. The South West Peninsula faces a number of future challenges with regards to rolling stock. We already have services that are over capacity due to the high level of passenger growth we have experienced. This situation is exacerbated during the summer with the high level of visitors we welcome each year. The current high speed rolling stock is 40 years old and is becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and refurbish. HSTs are also significantly slower than more modern diesel trains due to poor acceleration and manual doors which increase station dwell time with a cumulative effect through the SW Peninsula combined with the number of stops.

9.6. The Passengers with Reduced Mobility (PRM) regulations come into effect in 2020 and mean that extensive work will need to be done to both the HST and DMU fleets to ensure that they are compliant. This will be an expensive option which may not be needed if the right rolling stock is cascaded to the long distance services to and from the Peninsula and to our local branch line services.

9.7. Wales, Bristol and Swindon will benefit from the new intercity express trains providing improved journey times. A similar journey time improvement is needed for the South West Peninsula to avoid a comparative disadvantage relative to London - to ensure support for our economy and that our distance from London and other markets does not impact on our businesses' ability to operate effectively.

9.8. Regardless of which rolling stock is used to replace HSTs in the South West, it should be reconfigured to suit this type of service better. Luggage and cycle space remains a key issue after passenger over-crowding. Business travellers should be

better catered for in terms of providing more space to work as well as the availability of Wi-Fi and mobile connectivity.

9.9. The current medium-distance services to the South West Peninsula, i.e. Exeter – Penzance and Bristol – Penzance should be retained but with more suitable rolling stock than the current trains which are unacceptable for long journeys. These services provide better connectivity without interchange.

9.10. In order to improve connectivity from the South West Peninsula and improve access to economic markets, connections from between the Peninsula and the south coast need to be enhanced. A better Heart of Wessex service and more (and regular) Westbury stops as proposed in the Long Distance Market Study would help address this and be a logical next step.

9.11. Rolling stock, its availability, its quality and its performance, are key constraints on growing the quality of the SW Peninsula rail network. IEP operations on the SW Peninsula main line should be actively considered.

Q10. What do you feel the Great Western operator's priorities on the suburban network should be once it is electrified in 2016 e.g. for additional higher capacity, fast commuter services, or improved journey times?

10.1. On these electrified suburban routes, the opportunity should be taken to maximise the capacity of short and middle distance routes, for example Oxford and Newbury, to assist in relieving the demand on long distance services to the south west from stations within the suburban area.

Q11. After the electrification to Newbury, expected in 2016 would passengers' needs be best served by a diesel service from Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury to Newbury connecting into a fast service to London Paddington, or a diesel stopping service from Bedwyn to Reading connecting to a fast service from Reading to London Paddington, or other options? The former would give faster journey times to London but add a change at Newbury for passengers to Reading.

11.1. It would appear that a strong case does exist for electrification to extend to Bedwyn. It would be unacceptable for SW Peninsula Intercity express trains (whether fast or semi fast services) to stop at Bedwyn, Hungerford and Kintbury.

Q12. Respondents are invited to suggest ways in which Community Rail Partnerships could deliver more of the beneficial outcomes for passengers achieved so far.

12.1. The SW Peninsula local authorities have very positive and supportive working relationships with the Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) in their areas. These Partnerships carry out invaluable work to promote awareness of rail, encourage patronage and highlight the need for rail improvements but are often hindered through lack of funds and information.

12.2. Local authorities are under pressure to reduce budgets and are therefore continually looking for savings where a direct mechanism between expenditure and council savings does not exist. We would therefore like to see an increase of funding to the CRPs delivered through the franchise to ensure that their work can continue and that the service that they provide can continue to be improved upon, to the benefit of the franchise and revenue.

12.3. The availability of information available to the CRPs, and therefore what is cascaded to the public, could be improved upon through the designation of a local manager to work with the CRPs in their area. The CRPs would benefit from a closer working relationship with the TOC and the TOC would have better access to more local information and issues concerning their services.

Q13. While maintaining end-to-end service frequency, could the needs of passengers be better met by providing the operator with some flexibility over calling patterns on branch lines?

13.1. The PRTF is open to considering a reduction in the number of intermediate stops on branch line services, where there is a benefit in journey time that would deliver a more customer-focused solution, and lead to an increase in patronage. This should be an evidence-led process determined by journeys made from individual stations on each service.

13.2. Branch line timetables should be optimised to ensure that connections to onward mainline services can be made without incurring long connection waiting times.

13.3. Local stopping patterns on branch lines should be a matter for discussion and agreement between the franchisee and Local Transport Authorities, and the local Community Rail Partnership and rail user groups. In the event of a dispute, the Department would adjudicate.

Q14. Respondents are asked to suggest what mitigating actions and steps the GW operator should be expected to take to meet the needs of its passengers both during the planned disruption to the GW franchise as a result of planned upgrade works and when ‘force majeure’ events such as extreme weather, impact the network.

14.1. Passenger needs should be prioritised when planning construction work during the new franchise. It is important that disruption to service and passengers is kept to an absolute minimum. Every effort should be made to operate to the current stated timetable.

14.2. Good Information is key, and lessons from the recent weather-related disruption needs to be identified and inform future strategy.

14.3. Technology exists to ensure that passengers, at even the most remote stations, can be made aware of disruptions – e.g. mobile phone technology, on station CIS system and social media. However, these forms of communications can only be relied upon if there is sufficient signing available to ensure that people are aware of how to access the information. Remote announcements should be made at rural stations that may not have any other communication alternative.

14.4. An improvement in on-board announcements about the availability of connecting services would also go some way to improving the current amount of information available.

14.5. How the TOC deals with delays and keeps passengers informed were both priority issues identified in the Passenger Focus FGW Passenger Survey.
As construction work is likely to take place at night, which could lead to severe disruption to the Penzance – London sleeper service, consideration should be given to operating this service on the Exeter – Waterloo line during such times of disruption.

14.6. The needs of the leisure market must not be overlooked when planning service alterations and bus replacements. These travellers use rail occasionally and a bad experience, or poor publicity, such as during the recent episodes of severe weather, can have a detrimental impact on their future travel choices. Travellers often have significant amounts of luggage and will want to be confident in their journey so having to change trains or use buses needs to be taken into account in service replacement planning.

Q15. Where the provision of temporary, alternative service is unavoidable, respondents are invited to suggest what alternative provisions they would prefer the GW operator to put in place.

15.1. Passengers have a right to expect frequent, high quality and accessible replacement services to be provided during times of disruption where alternative services are unavoidable, although greater measures to ensure resilience are still required. A consistent, high quality approach across the entire network should be agreed and implemented when required.

15.2. Where customers are forced to use bus or coach rail replacement, there should be an obligation to reduce fares to reflect the inconvenience caused to customers. First Great Western offered a 20% discount during the Dawlish blockade. The train operator could do more to arrange with local bus operators to accept train tickets for parallel services to give greater choice and flexibility rather than just the rail replacement offer. Stagecoach SW offered this facility during the Dawlish blockade, but the onus should be on the rail operator to lead rather than rely on goodwill and initiative of bus operators.

Q16. Respondents are encouraged to consider what steps the GW operator should be expected to take when reacting to changes in passenger demand, and what targets for capacity should be set.

16.1. Bidders should plan their services and rolling stock for growth at actual, and not industry, rates. Where growth exceeds expectation, the bidder should ensure mechanisms are in place to fund and supply additional rolling stock to either strengthen existing services or add new services.

16.2. Review points should be built into the new franchise to allow for regular review, and account taken of any significant change in capacity required and services. This will provide an opportunity to assess the performance of the franchise operator against the performance criteria included within the franchise and, where necessary,

renegotiate the financial profile. The Local Transport Authorities and the Peninsula Rail Task Force that represents the five LTA's in the SW Peninsula should have a key role in these reviews.

16.3. If it were possible to measure the degree of under-issuing of tickets a measure should be included in the franchise. Issues of overcrowding should be more formally identified by the TOC and reports of action taken shared with PRTF/ LTAs.

16.4. Use of automatic passenger counting equipment to measure when capacity is exceeded should be included in the franchise.

16.5. Bidders should be required to state how they would measure capacity and what steps they would take to address this, and the impact on their bid.

Q17. Respondents are invited to highlight if there are specific stations or services where they feel particular attention should be paid to reliability or punctuality.

17.1. The Night Riviera Sleeper service is often disrupted when work on the railway is carried out at night. As a service that has been identified for improvement, the Peninsula regards the Sleeper as an important service providing an economic benefit to the region and as such should be given full consideration during times of disruption.

17.2. The westbound Paddington - Devon/ Cornwall services have been identified by Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership as requiring attention.

Q18. Are there any areas of the GW franchise where you feel cost savings could be made?

18.1. Improvements should be made to revenue collection, particularly on branch lines and between stations with short journey times between them, e.g., Camborne and Redruth, Exeter – Paignton, Paignton -Torquay, Exeter – Exmouth and evening services generally. Lack of a robust process impacts not only on revenue collected but also on the level of support that these services require.

18.2. A key focus of the franchise should be to increase revenue through patronage to reduce the subsidy from government (and local authorities).

18.3. Loss of revenue from uncollected fares is seen as a serious issue. It masks the potential viability of train services and at times capacity problems. In turn this does not present a true picture of whether a local authority should actually provide financial support for service enhancements if, but for better revenue collection, a service would be commercial.

18.4. It also means that passenger numbers are under recorded and this is reflected in DfT and NR statistics and data which always underestimate growth in the SW Peninsula. Open stations will only encourage fare avoidance whether intentional or not.

18.5. Enhancements to rail services such as the Truro-Falmouth branchline have demonstrated that increasing capacity and frequency leads to an increase in

patronage and revenue. It also, across the country, points to clear evidence of significantly higher than forecast rises in patronage. The franchise should include incentives to encourage operators to take risks in the provision of services to increase frequency, or funding should be available from the DfT to Kickstart this type of service.

Q19. Respondents are encouraged to consider which locations merit consideration for future improvement under these schemes.

19.1. Although considerable improvements have been made to station infrastructure in the current franchise, for the new franchise the impetus should not be lost. It is vital that a firm commitment to improve infrastructure is shown by the successful TOC. We would expect the successful TOC to work with local authorities in developing proposals for improving the environment of the key stations within the South West Peninsula.

19.2. A number of the major stations in the area need improvement in order to meet their potential and the importance that access to rail services has in the far south west. On the branchlines, the TOC will be expected to proactively engage with the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership and Severnside Rail Partnership.

19.3. Greater engagement by the TOCs and NR in the planning process to secure CIL or s106 funding would assist in delivering these types of schemes.

19.4. More weight should be given to local match funded projects ready to be delivered when considering national and local priorities. Within the new franchise, the SW Peninsula would like to see DfT recognise the benefit of locally funded capital improvements, either through the creation of a capital fund to match against local investment, or by allowing local authorities to capture some of the wider revenue benefits that TOCs and DfT realise through these improvements which can then be used as funding to deliver local service increments.

19.5. There are a large number of stations in the South West Peninsula which are not DDA compliant between platforms; examples of well used non-compliant stations include: Bridgwater, Castle Cary, Hayle, St Erth, St Austell, Dawlish, Torre and Bodmin. The TOC should identify a funding stream to support Network Rail and the local authority in addressing station access barriers.

19.6. DDA requirements for buses from 2017 will give an increased level of access to people with mobility issues and this should be continued throughout the public transport network so that access to all forms of public transport is consistent. This would be an important step towards the Integrated Transport System that all want to see.

19.7. Current cycle access/ parking/ storage provision is poor at many stations in the far south west. Sheltered cycle parking should be provided uniformly across Great Western stations. At stations with bridges low cost solutions such as the installation of wheeling channels could help to address this. The cycle lockers introduced during the last franchise have not been successful.

19.8. We would encourage partnerships between the TOC and local authorities to develop further station travel plans to improve accessibility to the Peninsula's

stations. Access to sustainable travel solutions and improving travel choice is a key objective of local authorities' Local Travel Plans.

19.10. Better car parking at "rail head" stations in particular is required as a matter of priority, as it is known that many car parks are at capacity and acting as a disincentive to travel by train with the associated adverse effects on revenue, financial support and viability.

19.9. Increased car parking capacity is desperately needed at a number of key stations including Totnes, Tiverton Parkway, Castle Cary and Torbay's railway stations with 115 in total (Paignton has 80 spaces, Torquay 30 spaces, Torre 5 spaces). Stations with a similar population size on the Great Western franchise area typically have between 150-200 spaces. The new franchise should aim to provide 300 spaces across the three Torbay stations, to meet the demand of passengers who arrive by car.

19.11. There are a number of stations in the South West Peninsula with inadequate lighting, particularly at small and rural stations, which require resolution in terms of safety and security, to encourage greater use and revenue generation. More creative solutions need to be explored to improve perceptions of security and the station environment in the evening.

Q20. 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.

20.1. Please see the response to question 14.

20.2. An improvement in on-board announcements about the availability of connecting services would also go some way to improving the current amount of information available. Often announcements are made on-board but the volume is too low to hear or understand. This may just be a matter of staff training, or the calibre of PA systems on older trains, but it is a crucial (if small) issue that may be virtually cost-free to improve.

20.3. Given the growth in social media, TOCs should continue to increase their use of this instant form of communication. This was particularly successful during the recent periods of bad weather disruption that affected the Somerset levels and Dawlish Seawall. .

20.4. How the TOC deals with delays was the issue that caused most customer dissatisfaction in the Passenger Focus Greater Western passenger survey of 2014.

Q21. Rail Executive is considering what the appropriate approach for monitoring and improving service quality in the new franchise would be. Respondents are invited to say what matters most to them (for example, cleanliness of trains and stations, or the helpfulness of staff) in terms of the service quality they receive.

21.1. In addition to the existing KPIs for punctuality and reliability, benchmarked against national comparators, obtaining a measure of customer satisfaction is extremely important. We therefore support the proposed approach, which uses the

National Passenger Survey results. However, it is important that any surveys are representative of the network and range of services being provided, and should not be focused on InterCity or long distance services. This should be supplemented by engagement at a local level particularly with local authorities and Community Rail Partnerships.

21.2. Regular formal review points are required, alongside an open book attitude from the TOC to listen to stakeholders and address concerns throughout the life of the franchise.

21.2. The provision of a regionally based manager is essential in maintaining good communications and relationships between the TOC and local stakeholders to allow for ongoing informal monitoring.

21.3. We would support the continuation of the forums established by the current TOC which allow stakeholders and customers to provide feedback on the performance of the franchise directly to the TOC.

21.4. We also believe that a Performance Indicator on percentage of passengers with a ticket/paying a fare would be an important measure to maximise revenue and overall efficiency and minimise net costs and network support.

Q22. Please indicate if there are any additional areas that you think Rail Executive should consider consulting on and that have not already been addressed during stakeholder engagement.

22.1. In the light of the recent study commissioned by PRTF on electrification, we believe the time is right, and the case is now sufficiently strong, for Government to engage with PRTF and the industry on actively considering the long term benefits of electrification. This study should also consider the wider implications act when the SW Peninsula main line will be the only main line to London not under electric traction after 2019.

22.2. Smart card ticketing is known to increase travel and its introduction at an early stage in the franchise will assist integration with other public transport in the south west region. A project to equip all buses in the south west with ITSO national standards smartcard ticket machines has been completed, and local progress is being made on paper day bus/ rail cross-mode tickets. The further roll out of ITSO ticket machines on rail will allow this initiative to grow and facilitate the growth of cashless boarding which will, in turn, reduce lost revenue on rail services. PRTF is keen to work with the industry to achieve progress in this.

22.3. Mobile phone e-tickets and EMV/ pay wave technology for credit/ debit card purchases for relatively inexpensive amounts should be included in these enhancements.

22.4. Simpler fare structures can also help encourage more travel through greater public understanding of fares available, including reducing the disparity between pre-booked APEX tickets and ‘turn up and go’ fares.

22.5. Better season ticket offers for regular travellers who travel less than five days a week should also be a requirement of the franchise,

22.6. A greater number of unstaffed stations should have self service ticket machines to reduce lost revenue and to provide passengers who have bought their tickets online with the ability to collect them from an automated machine.

22.7. An increase in on-train ticket checking would significantly reduce the amount of revenue lost as, for example, train managers cannot check tickets on busy summer trains and passengers can travel end to end without a ticket. This is a particular problem on the branch lines and could be made more stringent by the utilisation of seasonal gate lines at key destinations. The amount of non-payment is such that it would appear that employing more revenue collectors would provide a "spend-to-save" gain.

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