

# London TravelWatch Response to the InterCity West Coast Consultation Document

April 2011



**London TravelWatch** is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.

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## Executive Summary

### We welcome

The objectives of this franchise are to maximise the use of the available capacity on this important route: to improve overall passenger satisfaction: to improve accessibility of services and stations on the route; to improve the environmental performance of the franchise and improving the overall experience of passengers using this route.

### We recommend

A consistent hourly service pattern between London and Glasgow.

That the InterCity operator should play an enhanced role in providing commuter services into London from Milton Keynes to reduce overcrowding on more local services.

That consideration is given to additional electrification schemes to reduce the need for diesel trains to run into London and to provide more alternative routes at times of disruption.

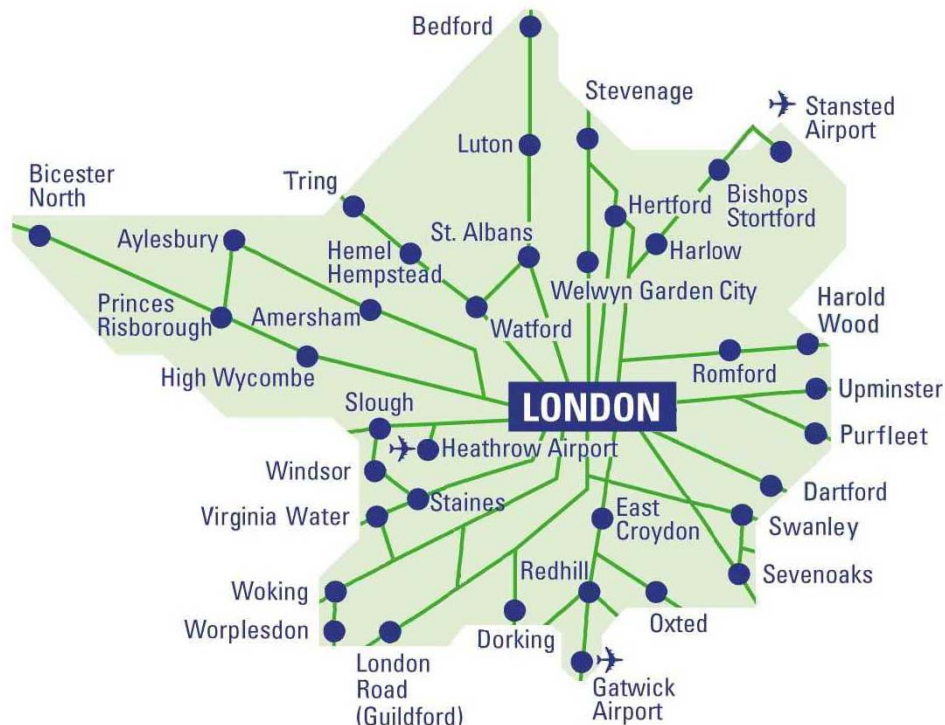
That better use should be made of First Class accommodation to help reduce overcrowding on the route.

That consideration is given to allowing the 'spare' off – peak path to be open to open access operators with the proviso that it opens up new journey opportunities for communities currently without direct links to London and provides price competition to the franchised operation.

## 1 Introduction

*London TravelWatch provides this written submission to the Department for Transport's Intercity West Coast' consultation as the independent statutory watchdog representing transport users of all modes in London and rail users in its surrounding area. The map below shows London TravelWatch's areas of National Rail responsibility.*

**Diagram 1 – London TravelWatch Rail Remit**



In responding to the Intercity West Coast franchise consultation, London TravelWatch has prioritised its aspirations. Each aspiration is allocated a priority rating and these have the following meanings:

- **High term priority** – aspirations which require management action but no more than modest investment and should therefore be achievable within the first two years of a new franchise. We would expect many high priority items to be achievable within one year or less.
- **Medium term priority** – aspirations which require investment on a scale which should be achievable (or on which substantial progress should be made) within two to five years.

- **Long term priority** – aspirations requiring complex and large scale investments which will take more than five years to complete. We would expect to see progress in less than five years whilst accepting that nation-wide implementation may take longer.

London TravelWatch's response has been informed by our casework appeals, as well as our current and past research as well as understanding the constraints on government and industry finances at the present time.

The key stations which are entirely within in London TravelWatch's remit served by this franchise are:

- London Euston
- Watford Junction

## 2 High Level Output Specification (HLOS) – Longer Trains

*Respondents are encouraged to consider any specific local factors that they believe might influence the future level of passenger demand.*

London TravelWatch believes a key priority for the potential franchise is the delivery of increased capacity to address overcrowding on the route in addition to any committed schemes in the HLOS statement and those that are already in the delivery stage.

### 3 High Speed 2 (HS2)

*Respondents are encouraged to consider issues arising from the planned development of HS2 – particularly in that the bidding community may find it difficult to price within their proposals the effects of either the introduction of a new service pattern or its abstractive effect at this stage.*

London TravelWatch broadly supports the concept of providing a high speed rail line between London, the West Midlands, the North of England and Scotland.

In addition to the benefits to be enjoyed by users of the proposed line, there would also be substantive benefits to existing users of the West Coast Main Line as diversion of demand would allow the provision of more local services between Northampton, Milton Keynes and Euston.



## 4 Other schemes

*We would welcome comments on what most important investment priorities that should be for the franchise and highlight any other schemes that are likely to be delivered during the life of the next franchise. Also welcome proposals for alternative approaches on these and other priorities to enable them to be achieved at a reduced cost.*

In general terms, London TravelWatch welcomes and supports the various infrastructure schemes that are proposed during the life of this franchise. However, we believe that there are a number of other potential interventions which could have benefits in terms of increased network reliability, increased operational efficiency and flexibility of the franchise and reduced operating costs which would give benefits to passengers.

In particular, we believe that a number of short extensions to electrification would enable reductions in the need to operate diesel trains into London, and give greater operational flexibility to the franchise operator. These should include the route between Crewe and Chester and diversionary routes in the West Midlands such as Birmingham to Nuneaton and Nuneaton to Coventry.

### High term priority

## 5 Third party schemes

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

We have no comments on this section of the consultation paper.

### 5.1 Franchising remapping

*Stakeholders are asked to highlight any amendments to service providers that they would like to propose as part of a remapping exercise.*

We have no comments on potential changes to service providers as part of the franchise process. However, we note that experience on the East Coast Main Line has shown that the introduction of open access operators to the route has resulted in price competition and the introduction of innovative services, resulted in benefits to passengers. Passengers on the West Coast Main Line have not seen similar benefits in terms of price completion and service provision

We believe competition could be encouraged on this route if the operator of this potential franchise did not occupy the spare West Coast Main Line (WCML) path referred to on page 54 of the consultation document; as an alternative this path could be let as an open access path. In order for this to be achievable, the following points should be considered:

- a) This path should be occupied for services on the WCML route south of Crewe to Euston, potentially except at Wolverhampton. If this service cannot go to Euston, it should not interface with WCML services on the main Stafford- Wolverhampton-Birmingham-Coventry –Rugby line.
- b) If this service was to run onto High Speed 1, the potential franchise ought to consider that the trains which are used on this line can only run at maximum speed. The trains must have the capability of running at either 125mph or 140mph.
- c) This path should not serve Birmingham, Coventry, Manchester or Liverpool if this path is used for services going directly to London Euston. It should not be primarily abstractive from the franchise. However, this path could serve these stations if the final destination is served as part of the West London Line (Clapham Junction, East Croydon and Gatwick Airport) or Stratford International. This alternative service could serve a

- station either on the West London Line or Stratford International as a terminus point or en route as part of an international journey.
- d) This path should open up a direct service to towns and/or cities that currently do not have regular off-peak direct train services to London such as Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Wrexham, Birkenhead, Blackpool, Walsall, Telford, Sutton Coldfield, Tameside, Huddersfield, Barrow, Blackburn and Burnley. If this suggestion is possible, we believe that these town and/or cities stated could all be considered as part of this service.
  - e) This path should stop at Watford Junction station to provide connections to North West London, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.
  - f) This path should have a stop at Wembley Central station on major event days.
  - g) This path should stop at Lichfield, Tamworth or Nuneaton to provide connections to parts of the East and West Midlands from London, which otherwise do not have direct services
  - h) If the services on this path do not serve the smaller towns in the West Midlands, then this path should stop at Crewe to provide connectivity to North Wales, the Wirral and Cheshire.
  - i) The operator of this path should offer competitive fares with that of the franchised operation.

### High term priority

## 6 Franchise specification

### 6.1 Train Service Requirements

*Stakeholders are asked to suggest alternative suggestions that they believe will be affordable, value for money and provide a strong commercial or economic case.*

We believe the potential franchise should provide an hourly service from London Euston to Glasgow as part of the franchise agreement. **High term priority**

This service should have a consistent service pattern all day and all night, with all trains stopping at Preston, Lancaster, Oxenholme, Penrith and Carlisle. **High term priority**

As noted above we believe that it may be desirable to use the spare off peak path for an open access operator on grounds of providing passenger benefits from the introduction of competition. **High term priority**

We believe that the proposed three trains per hour level of service from London to Birmingham and Manchester is appropriate, and that this should be provided from 05:00 to 23:00 with the last train from either end (London or Manchester) to end at least at 23:00 and Birmingham at 24:00; **High term priority**

We believe that three trains per hour from Milton Keynes to North West England would be appropriate in order to have train service connectivity to North West London, Hertfordshire and Bedford. **High term priority**

We believe the West Coast InterCity operator has a key role in providing commuter services between Milton Keynes and London and so must be able to play a key part to maximise the use of capacity and to reduce overcrowding, not only for inter-city and sub-regional journeys but also for local journeys within the London travel to work area. **Medium term priority**

We believe that the West Coast InterCity franchise should provide off-peak services from London to these destinations because the London Midland services are time-consuming and are unattractive to passengers. **High term priority**

We believe that it would be beneficial in the short term, pending additional electrification if some Pendolino electric units were to be allocated to Birmingham – Scotland services, so that displaced diesel units could be reused to provide

direct services to places in the North West that currently do not have direct services to London. **Medium term priority.**

We are aware that Oxenholme and Penrith serve the Lake District which is a popular tourist and leisure destination for Londoners; consequently these passengers are less likely to own a private car and more likely to use public transport. We believe it is vital to provide a regular service to these stations to and from London, especially during weekends to meet passenger demand. **High term priority**

We believe there is a case for more InterCity services to call at Watford Junction, given the potential catchment area of this station. In 2007 we set out this case in our submission to the consultation on the December 2008 timetable and which is attached as Appendix A. We believe this analysis is still valid and would welcome proposals to increase services at this location. We believe that the spare West Coast Main Line path as an open access operator path should include a requirement to call at Watford Junction, in particular order for passengers to have connections to North West London, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. **High term priority**

## 6.2 Services during the off-peak, evenings, weekends and public holidays

*Respondents are encouraged to consider appropriate train times and service frequencies for the franchise. Respondents are also encouraged to consider alternative service propositions.*

In the recent West Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy it was noted that overcrowding occurs on the InterCity routes is on Sunday late afternoons and evenings. This reflects the growing trend for 'weekly' commuting to and from the metropolitan centres of London, Birmingham and Manchester. It also reflects the need for a seven day railway. We would therefore not be in favour of an extension of the existing policy of blocking two tracks for maintenance purposes on between 2000 Saturdays and 1200 Sunday. **High term priority**

## 6.3 Managing capacity

Research by London TravelWatch has identified that the ability to make better use of existing First Class travel capacity on the route could also be a means of managing demand on this franchise in a more effective manner. Please see London TravelWatch's 'Research into Passenger Attitudes to First Class Travel (2010)

(<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4222/get>)

This has potential benefits arising from the reduction in overcrowding in standard class accommodation, and so therefore we would recommend to the Department

and bidders that a re-evaluation of current provision and pricing strategies should take place. **High term priority**

We also believe that the current restrictions for higher price 'Saver' type tickets on Virgin Train services, especially for the following services leaving London at the following times on Mondays to Fridays:

- pre 10:00;
- between 14:30 and 16:30;
- post 19:00.

We believe bidders for this potential franchise should consider offering more flexibility on higher priced Saver type tickets to give passengers more fare options and fare flexibility to travel at times and on services which is most convenient for them.

We believe that yield management techniques can be used to 'smooth' demand, but in many cases there will be a limit to which this can alter demand, and so other interventions such as increasing service frequency or providing additional rolling stock will be required.

#### **6.4 Reliability and performance**

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

We are pleased with the improvements in reliability and Public Performance Measure (PPM) that the current franchise holder has been able to achieve in recent years. However, we believe that further improvements should still be possible given the modern fleet and infrastructure that is now in place on this route. If operators believe that a timetable change would enable this to take place then we believe there should be more in-depth consultations on any changes to ensure that passengers are not disadvantaged unduly from any change.

We welcome the proposal to include a 'Delay Repay' compensation scheme for passengers who are delayed by disruption to their journeys on this franchise. This is borne out by recent research commissioned by London TravelWatch, Passenger Focus and First Group to be published shortly.

It would be beneficial if the potential operators could show ideas of incentives which could be offered to reduce service and standard discrepancies such as graffiti, trespass, suicides, theft of cable, criminal damage and reduction in lineside litter or rubbish.

We believe it that there needs to be a joint initiative between the potential operator and Network Rail to take responsibility to resolve and minimise these discrepancies. We welcome the ideas of incentives to revise the stations

contractual matrix between the two parties to clarify responsibility on these wide range of issues predominantly being maintenance and upkeep.

**High term priority**

## 7 Delivering improvements for passengers

### 7.1 Better railway stations

*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.*

London TravelWatch believes stations and the contractual matrix which govern them are one of the most complex areas of the railway. The relationships and the responsibilities of the parties involved are not clear therefore have not resulted in the levels of maintenance or investment that has occurred in other areas of the rail industry. There needs to be a more simplified and better-aligned contractual structure which could incentivise investment to the benefit of passengers and also reduce costs.

London TravelWatch's definition of an interchange 'is the act of transferring from one mode of transport to another.' Interchange requires information and signage to allow the passengers to seamlessly transfer to their onward journey.

There should be consideration for improving station signage, because it is important that bidders demonstrate how they will conduct information zoning across all stations which this potential franchise will have responsibility for. For example we are pleased to see that Southern Railways has implemented information zoning at all of their stations. We believe that this information zoning aims to achieve the following:

- 1) Placing information in the most appropriate places around the station for passengers.
- 2) Standardising information provision.
- 3) De-cluttering station information.

As part of this information zoning scheme on the National Rail network, we recommend that this should be extended to the London Underground and at joint operated stations in order to cover the interface between the modes of transport. This will mostly be applicable at major managed termini station such as London Euston.

### High Priority



We agree that having better access to stations is an important element in improving start-to-end journeys. As the consultation review has highlighted that there is desire for additional car parking and cycle parking, we believe it is vital that the operator of this potential franchise implements station travel plans. The station travel plan concept allows the provision of facilities access to the station to be tailored to the specific demand which is generated by the passengers of the specific station under this franchise.

Please see London TravelWatch's report 'Getting to the station – Report on access to Rail and Underground Stations (2006)

(<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/12087/get>)

### High Priority

We jointly conducted research with Passenger Focus into passenger priorities for station improvements. This jointly conducted survey was undertaken as a result of the 'Better Rail Stations' report which identified the ten priority stations for investment of which three were in our remit, namely Barking, Clapham Junction and Luton. We have used the information gathered as evidence more generally in this report for passengers' priorities at stations in the London area.

Please see London TravelWatch's report 'Standards at London's Rail Stations' (2010) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839/get>)

## 7.2 Access for All (A4A) and National Stations Investment Programme (NSIP)

Accessibility of the transport system for passengers with disabilities or particular needs should be a vital outcome which should be delivered by operators. London TravelWatch supports the Disabled Peoples' Protection Policy (DPPP) process and the commitments it requires operators to set out for assisting the disabled and elderly who wish to use National Rail services. However, the DfT needs to ensure that the network wide implementation of the DPPP process reflects the complex nature of jointly operated stations in London, particularly where London Underground operate stations on behalf of National Rail operators or are part of a National Rail interchange. This is of particular importance at London Euston.

London TravelWatch believes that improvements at stations have the potential for relatively small investment of money to deliver benefits to passengers in improved feelings of safety and security as well as in the level of information provided to the passenger. These types of improvements include:

- Improving the appearance of the station buildings by painting them and undertaking maintenance
- Rationalisation of signage layouts around stations to make sure that they are fit for passenger's needs
- Clearing litter and graffiti from stations and tracks
- Gating stations where the station footfall is large enough as the increased revenue can pay for the scheme and at the same time will benefit passengers by making the railway environment feel safe and secure. In particular we would recommend that consideration be given to the gating of the remaining platforms of London Euston that are not so equipped.

### High Priority

### 7.3 Rail Value for Money review

*Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to improve the management and maintenance of tracks and stations. Welcome proposals that will enable reductions in cost to be achieved.*

London TravelWatch responded to the 'Rail Value for Money' study which was published on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010. Our key recommendations were:

- 1) **Barriers to efficiency and value for money** – the present station contractual structure needs to be re-evaluated because the existing arrangements have not resulted in the level of maintenance and investment which is seen in other areas of the rail industry.
- 2) **Incentives to generate greater efficiency** – train operators might be more efficient if they were given more responsibility for the business forces of a franchise. In this process, the train operating companies are the parties which have the closest connection to the passenger and the day-to-day operation; therefore they should have the greatest insight into the potential for an organised system to manage and maintain tracks and stations.
- 3) **Options for generating more revenue** – in a national context the main issue to be addressed is the revenue support mechanism. Mainly for London and its supporting area, we recommend both a strategic review and a gating strategy.

Please see London TravelWatch's 'Rail Value for Money Study – Written Response' (2010) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4225/get>)

### 7.4 Security and Safety

*Respondents are encouraged to consider any local safety issues that we believe needs addressing.*

We believe that security and safety is vital from a passenger perspective because this determines the passenger to use public transport, especially for evening services.

We welcome having CCTV cameras around the station but only if they are monitored. We encourage investment to integrated station CCTV systems with control rooms across lines of routes, especially for local safety issues to be addressed.

We are aware that policing at stations is an expensive resource of funding, therefore we understand it is unrealistic to expect visible police presence at all stations. The presence of too many police officers may also be counterproductive as it may give out the opposite message, indicating that there is a threat which the public especially passengers needs to be protected from.

However, in terms of police personnel, we welcome positive development taken by certain train operators to arrange the role of their own staff more effectively (and in some cases with additional powers) to act as Travel Safe Officers and Rail Enforcement Officers. For Example, Southern has teamed up with the British Transport Police (BTP) to launch a new team of officers to crack down on anti-social behaviour and low level disorder at stations in the South region (these officers are called Railway Neighbourhood Officers).

There needs to be a line to clarify the responsibility for rail station car park crime between the BTP, local police and other forces. The BTP and other forces need to work jointly as a policing network to protect the security of passengers both in the station and at the wider environment of the station.

We also acknowledge that the introduction of ticket gates can also have a significantly positive effect in reducing crime and disorder on the rail network.

**Medium term priority**

## **7.5 Fares, ticketing and revenue protection**

*Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to minimise revenue loss across the franchise and how fares on this franchise could be made easier to understand.*

Fares are the biggest single issue which London TravelWatch receives appeal about from passengers. 28 per cent of complaints received by both London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus (combined) in quarter 4 2009/10 were related to fares, retailing and ticket refunds.

We advocate a strategic review of fares pricing policy, especially in London. The network benefits of an integrated strategic approach to ticketing are important to passengers as consumers.

We believe that revenue collection through a gating strategy for station across the network is an efficient way to minimise revenue loss across the franchise. Even though most of this franchise is outside of our remit, we have still identified that many Virgin Trains and Network Rail managed stations in the West Midlands and the North are not gated (e.g. Birmingham New Street and Coventry). We understand that Virgin Trains do not lose much revenue because they have an on-board ticket checking system but, other franchised operators (especially in the major metropolitan conurbations) do lose a significant element of revenue, because the stations managed by the West Coast franchise are ungated.

### **Medium term priority**

The strengths and weaknesses for passengers using a Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) at station can vary. Bidders may want to consider inserting a panic/help button to give video/audio link which connects to a call centre on all TVM's at all stations across the franchise. If a passenger needs assistance with purchasing a ticket, then they can press the button to get assistance straightaway; this is effect can also minimise ticket purchasing discrepancies.

Ways in which bidders should consider maximising revenue is by influencing operators to make more of their passengers aware on the facilities and services which are offered with a First Class ticket. We have identified that on the Virgin Trains website, when a passenger is ready to book and pay for their ticket, there is no message or link to remind the passengers of the benefits of first class. By inserting a 'benefits with first class' link on the 'ready to pay' web page, this could influence the passengers decision last minute, especially if they are making a long distance journey.

We have identified that the link to the Eurostar has not been fully exploited on this route, because through tickets options for this connecting service is very limited compared to the use of through tickets offered by First Capital Connect, Midland Main Line and East Coast. **High term priority**

We envisage by selling preloaded Oyster PAYG cards on trains into London would assist in managing queues and crowds at Euston London Underground station. We also wish to encourage the sale of Travelcards for London and their equivalents in West Midlands, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow by the West Coast franchisee. **High term priority**

## **7.6 Passenger Information**

*Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to communicate with passengers across the franchise.*

### 7.6.1 Stations

The potential operator need to consider ways they can make sure that passenger assistance is available through the whole station and therefore a help point facility should be located on each platform of the station. Passengers should be informed that helps points at stations can be used for any purpose of assistance and not just for emergencies.

Real time information should be simply and accurately communicated to passengers. We believe that the following real-time information should be communicated to passengers in a concise and consistent manner:

- Train service information
- Information about train service delays (with reason)
- Notification of train cancellation (with reason)
- Notification of any other related train disruption (with reason),
- Notification of the next (exact and expected) two train service both arriving and leaving the station
- Notification of any major disruption or cancellation on route of each train service (with reason)

Each member of staff should be provided with an integrated National Rail and London Underground route map in order to assist and answer any related service queries passengers may have. Station staff should also be provided with a timetable in order to assist passengers about train times at any time of the day.

A single standard for signage should be adopted across the franchise as this would simplify the journey experience for passengers and reduce cost to funders when the franchise is to commence. A decal could be used in a standard location to denote the operators branding clearly while at the same time to ensure consistency and reduce cost.

### 7.6.2 Trains

It is vital that bidders need to consider developing a standard communication strategy of ways to communicate information to passengers through station announcements on the train. In particular, standard ways of announcing delay/cancellation/station closure information and causation should be implemented to ensure that a consistent message is provided to passengers across the network.

Train drivers should be given advance warning of any delays or cancellations to upcoming services and station which will affect passengers, in order for passengers to plan an alternative route in advance.

## 7.7 Improved Service Quality

*The Department is considering the appropriate approach for 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.*

London TravelWatch has been pleased that overall levels of customer complaints on the existing franchise have been reduced in recent years. It should be noted that with Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch has worked with train operators to produce independent complaints handling audits, which have highlighted best practice and contributed to the overall reduction in complaints. We recommend that this practice should continue into the new franchise.

However, passengers often do not complain when they should have done. In other franchises, the use of service quality monitoring systems has been greatly beneficial, and so we would urge consideration of the adoption of these practices within this franchise. **High term priority**

## 7.8 Managing disruption

*Respondents are encouraged to consider how best to keep passengers informed during times of disruption.*

As noted above we believe that there are a number of small electrification schemes which could be beneficial in reducing service disruption that should be considered.

We welcome the introduction of a 'Delay Repay' compensation scheme.

We also believe that best practice from other operators should be adopted by the West Coast franchisee in respect of keeping passengers informed during disruption. These should include announcements by on train staff when a train has been halted for more than two minutes, even if the announcement says that the train personnel do not know the reason for the delay. Announcements should be made at regular intervals thereafter as and when information becomes available.

Consideration also needs to be made on how information on disruption is communicated in relation to connecting operators' services.

## 7.9 Community Rail partnerships

We would encourage any bidder to work with and create links to community organisations where this would deliver clear passenger benefits.

## 7.10 DDA 1995 and minor works fund

*Consider local accessibility and mobility issues and suggest how improvements could be made.*

Euston is accessible from platform to concourse and then onto the street, bus station, street bus stops and to the entrances of Euston and Euston Square London Underground stations

Additionally Euston Square station now has lift access to the westbound platform only. Bidders might be asked consider whether they could contribute or facilitate the provision of step free access to the eastbound platform of this London Underground station

There is lift access to the taxi stand under the station and to the Victoria and Northern line ticket halls, although the signs imply the lift is to the Underground. The signing needs changing to reflect this limitation.

We are currently promoting a more pleasant route between Euston and St Pancras and King's Cross stations. This would benefit huge numbers of passengers and relieve one of the most overcrowded sections of the Underground. This would require works to be done on street and at the station.

All parties are supportive of this proposal, but only the London Borough of Camden, has been prepared to take the initiative. They have promoted works and committed funding to create a continuous and level footway between these stations along Brill Place and Phoenix Road.

Camden's planners have negotiated a piazza in front of the Midland Road entrance to St Pancras which will benefit this routeing.

## 7.11 Catering

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

As most of the journeys related to InterCity services are long distance journeys, the InterCity operator needs to consider the level of catering provision which should be provided to passengers.

This is closely related to our work on First Class Travel, which identifies that essentially for journeys over two hours a full restaurant/catering service needs to be provided to passengers. For journeys less than two hours a 'snack' type service would be acceptable to passengers.

Please see London TravelWatch's 'Research into Passenger Attitudes to First Class Travel (2010)

(<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4222/get>)



## 8 Improving the environmental performance of the railway

*Respondents are encouraged to consider what environmental key performance indicators (KPIs) should be set within the franchise specification*

We support the conversion of Voyager and Super Voyager fleet to be allowed in either diesel or electric mode.

However, other **High term priority** KPI's should be:

- Reduce the trackside graffiti and rubbish (jointly with Network Rail).
- Reduce trespass which can result to service disruption (jointly with Network Rail).
- Recycle rubbish produced by operator and passengers on train and on stations.

## 9 Appendix A – case for additional stops at Watford Junction

The December 2008 West Coast timetable resulted in a massive downgrade in the status of Watford Junction as an outer London railhead for inter-city services. For 30 years Watford had good services to most West Coast destinations. Almost all inter-city trains stopped there in the business peaks, and Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool had trains at least every two hours throughout the day. There were also morning and afternoon trains to Glasgow. Watford was a model for one of the aspirations in our “Requirements for Train Services”<sup>1</sup>, namely that

As a minimum, sufficient longer-distance services should call at key interchange stations in the London TravelWatch area in order to provide the following:

Out and back day return journey opportunities.

Out and back longer-stay journeys using discount tickets on both weekdays and for ‘Friday out - Sunday return’ journeys, with travel times suitable for leisure travellers, e.g. departures between 1000 & 1400.

Avoiding the need to double-back via London terminals.”

Since December 2008 Watford’s good inter-city service has been downgraded to little more than an hourly service to Birmingham and Wolverhampton. The only other trains are one each to Liverpool, Glasgow and Manchester departing between 0545 and 0650. For the rest of the day, passengers must go via Euston (increasing additional cost), go to Birmingham and change there (and transfer onto a slower service), or use the much slower London Midland non-inter-city service to Crewe and change there. All three stations, by their definition, provide a much slower service for Watford passengers.

During the consultation stage for this timetable, and subsequently, prolonged representations by London TravelWatch and others have yielded no movement on this issue.

We are therefore very pleased to note that the draft RUS has addressed this issue considered as an option to introduce an hourly inter-city train to Preston calling alternately at Watford Junction and Milton Keynes. This would provide Watford with a regular inter-city train every two hours, with significant improved

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<sup>1</sup> London TravelWatch Requirements for Train Services – Principles - June 2010  
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/4156/get>

'one change' connections at Crewe for North Wales, Liverpool and Manchester, and at Preston for Lancaster, Carlisle, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Regrettably, the draft RUS rejects this proposal because its benefit / cost ratio is unsatisfactory. Instead it recommends an alternative but similar configuration, but with the key difference that Milton Keynes is served every hour and Watford Junction is provided with no stops. There is no explanation for this difference, and as Milton Keynes already has an hourly train to Crewe and Chester, its case for an additional service every hour (rather than every two hours) is not obvious.

The draft RUS also proposes an acceleration of the London Midland service to Crewe. However this would still be very slow and still not an inter-city service, so we do not consider that this provides Watford with a suitable alternative.

There is also a recommendation for a fourth London – Manchester train every hour and the draft RUS states that this would require the timetable to be re-cast. We wonder if this would provide other possible ways of addressing the Watford issue.

**We ask that the RUS should:**

*Further review the issue of a day-long inter-city service from Watford Junction to the north, offering fast direct or 'one change' journeys to major destinations in North Wales, the north-west and Scotland.*

We would add that Watford Junction is located close to the M1 and the M25 making it accessible to a significant area of north London and south Hertfordshire. The planned improved service on the St. Albans Abbey branch when it is converted to light rail by Hertfordshire County Council will improve Watford Junction's effective catchment area future. The Croxley Link with through connections at Watford from the Metropolitan line (which we hope will include trains from the Aylesbury direction) will do the same. These should improve the business case for good inter-city services at Watford.