

Great Western Rail Franchise

Responses to Consultation document aT result of Public Meeting on Tuesday 23rd January 2018.

1. Do you agree with Objectives?

Yes. All objectives are key for the successful operation of Great Western franchise.

2. Do you agree or disagree with proposals for splitting franchise?

General feeling was that the franchise should not be split into smaller units.

3. Agree to options for both Greenford branch and Brighton/Southampton portion of current franchise.

4. What are main challenges to co-operation between train operator and Network Rail?

Punctuality and reliability are key priorities and challenges that need addressing.

5. Which routes etc would benefit from improvements to train frequencies?

Redoubling of Cotswold line between Worcester and Oxford has not resulted in greater frequencies of services. Between Hereford and Paddington there should be 2 hour frequency of through service. General feeling that Worcester–Hereford section has been left behind in planning of services. There should be a later direct service from Paddington to Hereford. Whilst there is a later service to Great Malvern and even later service to Worcester, lack of other transport eg buses means that late evening service falls short of passenger requirements.

At certain stations eg Evesham, Ledbury trains remain stationary for 10 minutes or more. These waiting times could be removed by better connectivity and co-ordination by and between service providers.

If services have to be curtailed, best times would be those of least demand.

6. Not applicable

7. Reduce journey times by reducing stops at intermediate stations.

As greater frequency of trains between Worcester and Paddington is planned, journey times between Hereford and Paddington could be speeded up by reducing stations stops on Worcester-Oxford section of service, and at stations such as Reading and Slough where there are frequent alternative options for this part of journey.

8. Which direct services should be preserved?

Paddington to Hereford direct service.

9. Seasonal trains.

There is not a great need for seasonal trains. The current level of service must be retained, and franchise operators need to be aware of specific events where passenger numbers will

be increased eg Poetry Festival in Ledbury, Victorian Christmas Fayre in Worcester, Plum Fayre in Pershore.

10. What other enhancements

Passenger comfort and dining cars should be retained/introduced on long-distance journeys.

11. Not applicable.

12. Rolling stock.

Comments included insufficient space on new trains for dog passengers including guide dogs. Luggage and wheelchair access onto trains are a priority. Retain 'quiet' carriages.

13. Accessibility.

In particular Ledbury Station where non-step access to Worcester platform. Passengers in wheelchairs or with prams have to travel to Hereford and change if they wish to access trains via Worcester. In light of Disability Discrimination Act this is totally unacceptable. On all stations which are unmanned for part or all the time, assistance is required to get passengers on and off train, and this must be addressed throughout whole of franchise. Driver only trains exacerbate the difficulties which such passengers have.

With growing passenger numbers and elderly demographic, access, passenger comfort etc all need attention. In particular Ledbury is planned to grow, possibly as much as by 50% and this needs to be addressed by franchise operators

14. Priorities for stations.

Car parking at Ledbury Station is at a premium, and needs addressing.

Co-ordination between various transport modes by better connectivity between providers.

Franchise operators could learn from countries on continent where best practice over many areas of rail travel is in place.

15. Ticketing and fares.

Concern expressed that prices had increased due to changes to which trains could be used with which fares eg 19.22 Paddington to Hereford train there was overcrowding on this service as passenger fares on 17.22 and 18.22 had risen.

Ticket machines for collection of pre-ordered tickets on line need to be introduced. At Ledbury 'permit to travel' machine is often 'not in use'.

Concern was expressed that on many services train tickets were not checked, so passengers were travelling without a valid ticket.

15. Ticketing and fares.

Generally agree with priorities.

Need for passengers to travel to Paddington and return home at a reasonable fare.

Other issues identified.

Secured lockers for bicycles need to be provided other than at major stations.

Great concern was expressed about reduction in cycle spaces on trains, especially as population is being encouraged to cycle.

Concern was expressed over increasing passenger numbers as Hereford is likely to become a University town.

Concern was expressed at increasing train cancellations because driver not available, train not available, train being curtailed because of late running and no assistance available, particularly at non-manned stations.

ATTACHED IS SECTION FROM LEDBURY TOWN PLAN 2016 WHICH ARE RELEVANT TO CONSULTATION.

Getting Around – Trains and buses

Issue: Access to the station

Objective: Improved facilities at/serving the Railway Station

Evidence: 252 identified access as an issue. Currently passengers can only cross via the footbridge to the Worcester-bound platform. Shortfall in car parking at/near station was noted by 469 respondents.

- Actions:**
- Continue to lobby for non-step access to the Worcester Platform
 - Expand the availability of car parking at/near the station
 - Improve the accessibility of the pedestrian link between the Station and the Town Centre – drop downs, road crossing etc.
 - Improve the bus service between the Town and the Station (See Objective TT10)
 - Review need for parking restrictions near the station and between the station and the Knapp Lane Junction to mitigate danger to pedestrians, cyclists and other road users
 - Review measures to reduce “nuisance parking” to residents and businesses nearby

Participants: LTC, HC, user groups, Network Rail, train operating companies

Priority/Timescale: Medium/3 years

Ref: TT8

Issue: Rail services

Objective: Retain and improve rail services to increase the use of sustainable transport/reduce car use

Evidence: 1,970 respondents said that they use trains at least occasionally, demonstrating a strong local need. 468 identified a later evening service (from Birmingham, Worcester and Malvern) as something particularly for improvement.

- Actions:**
- Investigate opportunity for later evening service from Malvern, Worcester and Birmingham to Ledbury
 - Lobby for retention and improvement of frequency of services when rail franchise renewal process commences (London Midland expires in June 2017, First Great Western in March 2019)
 - Develop and maintain links with rail user groups – Herefordshire & Cotswold Line groups

Participants: LTC, user groups, train operating companies

Priority/Timescale: Medium/1 year re service/ 1 to 2 years re franchises

Ref: TT9

