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Dear Stephen

Cross Country franchise

Further to the release of the detailed invitation to tender for the new Cross Country franchise, Passenger Focus still seeks evidence that will help passengers better understand the rationale for breaking up much of the existing network.

In our submission to your consultation, we stated our disappointment at the lack of evidence provided to justify the cross country proposals. The recent Invitation to Tender stakeholder briefing released by your department does not address the weight of passenger evidence submitted, and the consistent views of many stakeholders, which makes the case to retain and build upon the current network.

In order to better understand how you arrived at your final conclusion on what you will be purchasing through this franchise, I would appreciate a response to the following questions:-

- i. The franchise specification mentions that 40% of cross country passengers already change at least once before they join a cross country service. What percentage of passengers will require a further change as a result of the proposals?
- ii. How many Cross Country passengers currently travel through Birmingham New Street without changing? How many Cross Country passengers will be required to interchange at Birmingham (or Wolverhampton) to complete the same journey, as a result of the proposals?



- iii. What evidence does the department have to suggest that three car TransPennine Express Desiros, with 169 seats (plus 12 tip up style) will be as suitable in terms of capacity, for passengers travelling from Manchester to Scotland, as four car voyagers with 188 seats and five car voyagers with 250 seats?
- iv. Your proposal suggests that you are providing more seats across the core of the network, at the expense of losing some long distance services. How many passengers will benefit from the overall proposal (better chance of getting a seat across the core of the network) compared with the number of passengers who will be inconvenienced, in terms of having a further interchange?

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Anthony Smith
Chief Executive