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Our Ref: Lett5034/O'Brien/AS/ad

Dear Richard

**Re: Industry Briefing on the proposed alliance between Network Rail and South West Trains**

Thank you for inviting views on the briefing document.

While we acknowledge that the briefing document is aimed at an internal audience we would still like to see more reference to the ultimate consumer – the passenger. The document does refer to “putting passengers first” and para 4.3 talks of maintaining levels of customer satisfaction but there is merit in having a specific section on what this all means for passengers and how it will make things better. There is also a need for an external version - the ultimate aim behind the alliance must be to make things better for passengers so why not tell them as well?

Aligning incentives and working more closely together can certainly help improve efficiency. We know from our research that passengers want a sense of someone being in charge when it comes to the delivery of services, especially during times of disruption. But it cannot just be a case of aligning Network Rail and train company processes to achieve cost-savings, such processes must also be aligned with passengers' priorities. If the end-game is better services for passengers then internal processes and systems must work towards this rather than vice versa.

Achieving this will require the new management team to take a very outward-looking approach from the very beginning. Passengers will judge the new alliance on how well it provides services. We know from our research that passengers on South West Trains place huge importance on the 'core product' – a punctual, frequent service on which they get a seat. Our work on NPS shows that punctuality is the biggest single driver of satisfaction while managing delays is the biggest cause of dissatisfaction. It will be essential that the new management team remains focussed on delivery to the end-user rather than on the complex engineering and logistical inputs. These are, of course, important but they must not drown out the passenger voice.



The alliance also presents an opportunity for this franchise to achieve a step-change in transparency. The 'open-data' agenda is driving the industry towards higher levels of information being in the public domain. We know from our research with the Office of Rail Regulation that passengers want access to more tailored information (i.e. data that is relevant to their route/journey). A new, more responsive alliance could make a very public commitment towards accountability by promising greater transparency from the outset. This would be a clear demonstration that 'times have changed'.

Passenger Focus will play its part in all this. We will continue to use NPS to measure passenger satisfaction and to benchmark performance. We will also continue to break NPS down into 'building blocks' showing satisfaction on different service groups/routes within SWT.

I have copied this to Tim Shoveller.

Yours sincerely

**Anthony Smith**  
**Chief Executive**