



A passenger focused franchise?

What passengers want from South Central

April 2008

## **Passenger Focus – who we are and what we do**

Our mission is to get the best deal for Britain's rail passengers. We have two main aims: to influence both long and short term decisions and issues that affect passengers; and to help passengers through advice, advocacy and empowerment.

With a strong emphasis on evidence-based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground. We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of rail passengers and we work with the rail industry, other passenger groups and Government to secure journey improvements.

Our vision is to ensure that the rail industry and Government are always

**‘putting rail passengers first’**

This will be achieved through our mission of

**‘getting the best deal for passengers’**

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# 1. Introduction

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Passenger Focus warmly welcomes the opportunity to respond to the invitation to provide a passenger perspective on the content of the specification for the re-franchise of South Central rail services.

We commend Ministers and the Department for Transport (DfT) for recognising the importance of a better understanding of passenger needs and this new attempt to place these, alongside other factors, at the heart of the franchising process.

We believe that Passenger Focus, as an evidence-based organisation with a track record of extensive engagement with rail passengers both across the country and, specifically, on the network services under consideration, is able to provide a structured and informed input into the re-franchising process and a clear indication of the issues that are of importance to those who will use the future services. We are pleased that our expertise and our commitment to informed dialogue with decision makers for the industry have been recognised and will play a role in determining the early decisions on the content of the next franchise.

We have worked closely with the Department's franchise specification team from the outset and appreciate the opportunities we have had to explore with them the parameters for the franchise. This early engagement has, significantly, allowed us to commission bespoke research to inform our input and given us a valuable understanding of the context in which the re-franchising process will be taken forward.

In developing our submission Passenger Focus has aimed to add value to the existing elements of the franchising process by bringing an enhanced understanding of passenger needs to all the parties involved. This submission is based on an informed consideration of the factors that will drive the next franchise and will highlight the issues we have identified from our research as significant for passengers.

The input we provide here, however, remains that of an independent consumer body and our perspective reflects our drive to represent the needs of all passengers who will use the rail network. We have neither been engaged in the detailed background analysis or the financial modelling and assessment that the DfT has undertaken, nor, ultimately, will we be party to the complex funding and strategic considerations that will determine the final decisions on the letting of the franchise. We do, though, wish to remain engaged in dialogue as the bidding and assessment process goes forward and hope that the promise of this early consideration of passenger needs is matched with appropriate weighting of these factors as the procurement concludes.

We note that there are three elements to the franchising process:

- **plan** – the specification of what the franchise should include and what the Government is prepared to buy
- **buy** – the procurement process of franchise bidding
- **do** – the day to day management of the franchise contract.

Whilst our principal focus at this stage is on the specification and affordability, Passenger Focus will also comment on aspects of the procurement and ongoing management of the franchise where we believe we can play a further role, providing additional input to improve the responsiveness to passenger needs over the whole life-cycle of the franchise.

## 2. Executive summary

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### **Priorities, content of the submission and recommendations**

The top priorities we identify for the franchise are set out below, followed by a short synopsis of the content of our submission. A full listing of all our recommendations concludes the executive summary.

### **Priorities for the franchise**

- 1. The key priority over the life of the franchise must be significant and sustained investment, creating increased capacity by providing more trains and more services to respond to demand from passengers.**
- 2. The specification should ensure sufficient and suitable rolling stock (above and beyond the 106 new carriages included in the DfT's Rolling Stock Plan) to operate all peak services at maximum possible length throughout the entire peak and, where there are specific needs, in the off-peak.**
- 3. Performance should be one of the main priorities for improvement. The franchise specification should include a target to achieve a Public Performance Measure (PPM)<sup>1</sup> of 93% by 2014, with a minimum of 90% for each individual route.**
- 4. The franchisee must have the ability and capacity to effectively plan and manage the change and disruption from major projects, consulting and communicating clearly with passengers.**
- 5. Bidders should set out how they would aim to deliver the frequency of service sought by passengers, with particular reference to the demands for more weekend and later-evening services.**
- 6. Fare structures should be transparent, simple to understand and include proposals to promote value for money and social inclusion. There should be no increases significantly above inflation for off-peak fares and the ability to flex individual regulated fares should be conditional on the quality of service delivered to passengers.**
- 7. Passenger demands for quality information, primarily at stations, about train times and platforms should be addressed. The franchise specification should seek improvements in information provision, particularly in terms of consistently reliable technology, backed up by well informed staff.**
- 8. The needs of passengers who value staff at ticket offices must be a consideration in bidders' retailing proposals. Alternative forms of ticketing must not be used as an excuse to eliminate staffing from stations.**
- 9. The Invitation to Tender (ITT) should require bidders to demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement in every area of activity and to be able to show how their organisational structure and practices will drive and support such improvement through the life of the franchise.**
- 10. Whatever the length of the awarded contract, there should be a series of defined, passenger focused targets and objectives that have to be met in order for the franchisee to remain in place.**

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<sup>1</sup> PPM is a measure of the punctuality and reliability of train services

## **Background to the franchise**

Our submission identifies key strategic issues that will impact on the delivery of future rail services on South Central. We note the demand growth anticipated on the routes and support the Network Rail enhancement strategy which will go some way towards providing the capacity the franchise will need. We believe that there will be a need for the franchisee to work with Network Rail to plan and implement further capacity enhancements beyond those specified and committed for Control Period 4 (2009 – 2014).

We emphasise the importance of provision of sufficient numbers and types of rolling stock suitable for the different purposes for which they will be used. We recommend that the specification should actively encourage bidders to propose additional vehicles over and above the 106 new carriages announced in the Rolling Stock Plan and that the DfT funding plan should be ready to accommodate this additional investment.

The likely impact of a range of major projects on the franchise is considered and we note the importance of the organisational and communication capabilities that will be required of the appointed franchisee. We recommend that the fares and compensation regime should reflect the disruption that is likely to occur.

The need for a balance between the needs of Greater London and the outer areas is noted.

We comment on the importance of continuous improvement and effective monitoring and transparent reporting. We seek a role for Passenger Focus in the 18 month franchise review.

We note the challenging agenda for the franchise and the high expectations that passengers anticipate will be met. We set out the expectation that the industry will apply maximum efforts to deliver an effective and responsive service.

## **Objectives for the franchise, length of contract, reviews and extensions**

We emphasise the need for the franchise objectives to be framed positively and highlight the need for these to include:

- a reduction in crowding, with targets for Metro, outer suburban, Main Line and other services
- a recognition of the role of the railway in the wider economy and to promote the concept of equitable maximisation of value for money for both taxpayers and passengers
- a proactive, passenger focused approach to major projects with an emphasis on consultation and communication with passengers
- improvements in the alignment of services and service quality with the aspirations of all stakeholders and in the accessibility of South Central services and stations
- an emphasis on the need for the integrated development of train and other public transport services in the South of England and beyond
- the requirement for an appropriate balance between Metro and longer distance services
- recognition of the need to work with Network Rail and others to plan for future investment for a rail service that meets the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- a commitment to a proactive and sustained approach to working in partnership with key stakeholders.

We recommend that, whatever the length of the awarded contract, there should be a series of defined passenger focused targets and objectives that have to be met in order for the franchisee to remain in place. At any review or potential extension there needs to be a clear framework against which delivery can be assessed and a rigorous analysis of performance undertaken.

## Gathering the evidence and framing the recommendations

Our submission is predicated on the principle that we will provide evidence-based input on what passengers want from the new franchise and suggest how these should be addressed in the franchise specification.

We have drawn on a wide range of sources to establish the evidence base for the submission, including specific new research into the priorities of passengers on eight different Southern routes<sup>2</sup>. We were also informed by the views of passengers and stakeholders.

We identify that what passengers buy is a **package**, with overall passenger experience derived from the sum of all the parts and no one element of the rail service sufficient in isolation. We stress that the **overall aspirations** of passengers must be a material consideration for the DfT and bidders.

Our new route based research identifies the importance that passengers place on various elements of the rail experience:

| Importance ranking - route based research<br>- all routes total | % ranking very important or important |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Punctuality/reliability of the train                            | 82                                    |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms            | 81                                    |
| Frequency of the trains on the route                            | 80                                    |
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to take                | 78                                    |
| Value for money for price of ticket                             | 77                                    |
| Being able to get a seat on the train                           | 76                                    |
| Ticket buying facility  | 75                                    |
| Personal security – stations                                    | 73                                    |
| Personal security – train                                       | 73                                    |
| Ease of getting to and from the station                         | 70                                    |
| Connections with other forms of transport                       | 66                                    |
| Not having to change trains                                     | 66                                    |
| Ease of getting on/off train                                    | 62                                    |
| Sample size : 6251  |                                       |

## Specific issues for the specification

In the main body of the report we examine specific themes, considering an array of research evidence, policy information and passenger/stakeholder feedback to highlight the significant issues for passengers and then draw conclusions and frame our recommendations for the franchise specification, including improvements to the measuring, monitoring and reporting of performance.

Finally, we look beyond the franchise specification and make some observations about the potential for Passenger Focus to add value to other stages of the process.

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<sup>2</sup> Summary reports of the findings from each of the eight routes are available in an accompanying volume – “Route based research – identifying what passengers want from South Central”, Passenger Focus April 2008.

## Full listing of recommendations

### Over-arching issues

- a. On the basis of current passenger usage, ongoing demand and stakeholder feedback it is our view that the current level of services (including those of the Redhill – Tonbridge services to be taken over from Southeastern) and the existing service standards of both Southern and Gatwick Express should be taken as a minimum starting point for the re-franchise, regardless of whether or not they are required commitments in the current franchises.
- b. The key priority over the life of the franchise must be significant and sustained investment, creating increased capacity by providing more trains and more services to respond to demand from passengers.
- c. There should be a requirement for the franchisee to work closely with Network Rail to plan and implement further capacity enhancements, beyond what is specified and committed in Control Period 4.
- d. The franchise specification should not constrain potential bidders from proposing additional rolling stock (above the 106 new carriages included in the Rolling Stock Plan), but should actively encourage them to do so to meet demand growth and alleviate overcrowding. Bidders should be invited to identify and propose provision of additional vehicles, and the DfT's funding plan for the franchise should be ready to accommodate this additional investment.
- e. The ITT should specify that any proposals for procurement of new trains should also state how Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and other relevant groups will be consulted at an early enough stage for their views to be taken fully into account.
- f. The ITT must require bidders to address the implications of major projects in detail and to show how they will build an organisation with the resources to provide passengers with assurance that performance and reliability will not be sacrificed to promises of future improvement.
- g. We consider there is a strong case for requiring bidders to think innovatively and to propose fares and compensation regimes that recognise the nature of the performance downsides for passengers during extended major works, and the fact that not everyone will benefit once those works are complete.
- h. The ITT should make clear that bidders are expected to propose improvements to their trains and stations to enhance facilities, increase personal safety, improve accessibility and encourage more passengers to travel – and should show the organisational capability to remain focused on delivering those improvements.
- i. We recognise the need for enhancements in Greater London and also beyond: our view is that service quality and service standards should be progressively equalised upwards and that there should be no detriment to reasonable expectations for longer distance and non-London routes, including ensuring an equitable balance when service development requires timetabling changes.
- j. The ITT should require bidders to demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement in every area of activity and to be able to show how their organisational structure and practices will drive and support such improvement through the life of the franchise.

k. The ITT should highlight that monitoring is not just about having suites of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in separate activity boxes, but also about reporting transparency and ensuring the passenger perspective is an integral part of the monitoring process. In addition, bidders should be required to demonstrate how their internal processes and structures will ensure that monitoring contributes to a virtuous circle of continuous improvement.

l. Whatever the length of the awarded contract, there should be a series of defined passenger focused targets and objectives that have to be met in order for the franchisee to remain in place.

m. At both the 18 month review stage and at any point at which a potential extension to the original franchise term is considered, a clear framework against which delivery can be assessed should be set out and a rigorous analysis of performance undertaken. Input from Passenger Focus, particularly in relation to National Passenger Survey (NPS) satisfaction scores, should be sought as an integral part of this process.

### **Operational performance**

1. In line with the the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) target for London and South East, and by staging incremental increases around major infrastructure works, the franchise specification should include a target to achieve 93% PPM by 2014. A minimum of 90% should be set for each individual route.

2. A decentralised 'route-management' approach to performance should be adopted, with specific responsibilities for this allocated to identified individuals.

Monitoring and reporting should focus on developing disaggregated PPM by route or at the lowest reporting level that can be achieved and making this data available to Passenger Focus and passengers.

### **Management of delays**

1. The ITT should establish a franchise target to reduce 'significant' delays (of over 30 minutes) in line with HLOS requirements, applying the sector target of a 21% reduction, staged in incremental improvements to 2014.

2. The ITT should also require bidders to set out a strategy detailing how they intend to address/minimise delays caused by disruption (both planned and unplanned).

The strategy on managing delays should include a monitoring regime.

### **Passenger compensation in the event of delays**

1. It has been confirmed that a delay–repay compensation regime will be included in the South Central franchise on the same basis as recent franchises. We firmly believe that, **in addition** to the delay- repay element, the franchise must require the implementation of a 'safety-net' compensation scheme for season ticket holders should they experience frequent delays.

2. Bidders should be required to demonstrate a commitment to a proactive policy of informing people of their right to claim in any given situation and to set out the procedures that would be adopted to make it easier to claim e.g reply paid cards distributed.

The measurement, monitoring and reporting of passenger compensation in the event of delays should include monitoring the promotion of rights to claim, publication of the number of claims for compensation under both delay-repay and the 'safety-net', the value of rail vouchers issued and redeemed, and the level of cash compensation paid to passengers.

### **Capacity and service patterns**

1. The specification should ensure sufficient and suitable rolling stock to operate all peak services at maximum possible length (subject to evidence of passenger demand) throughout the peak and, where there are specific needs, in the off-peak, where a maximum loading rule of 70%<sup>3</sup> should apply. Bidders should be required to have a rolling stock plan that facilitates this, utilises vehicles appropriate for the services for which they are used and allows for sufficient spares to operate the required maintenance programme and respond to any instances of train failure.
2. The franchise specification should require bidders to set out how they would aim to deliver the frequency of service sought by passengers, with particular reference to the demands for more weekend and later-evening services.
3. The particular issues relating to capacity and connectivity on the Brighton Main Line, the origin and destination for West London Line services, enhanced services at Redhill and limited restoration of services at Three Oaks and Winchelsea should be addressed in the base timetable for the franchise.
4. Our view is that service frequencies should be commensurate with the location and size of station, the local population served, identified passenger demand (existing and suppressed) and should provide meaningful opportunities to travel at relevant times of the day. The available resources should be applied equitably in relation to the basis above, regardless of whether the station is within the (TfL) London boundary.
5. The specification should set out requirements for Saturday services to continue to be as close as possible to weekday frequencies in order to match passenger requirements for a six day railway. Changing social patterns mean that the next franchisee should be required to work with Network Rail to identify how demand for services on Sundays and bank holidays can be met.
6. The specification should address the demands for later-evening services and require bidders, in conjunction with Network Rail, to identify how these can be delivered. If the desire for later-evening services conflicts with the need for engineering possessions, consideration should be given to prioritising later services for Thursday to Saturday evenings (i.e. traditionally the more popular days to socialise).
7. The demand for earlier morning services should be further explored with a view to introducing additional early services if warranted.
8. The DfT and bidders should conduct a structured dialogue with passengers and stakeholders to understand how specific aspirations for all routes can be evaluated and addressed from as early a stage in the franchise as possible.

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 4.20 of the White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' notes that with an average load factor of about 70%, some passengers will be travelling in conditions that are crowded

Weighing technology should be required in all new rolling stock so that an accurate picture of crowding can be built up, maintained and published.

## Fares

1. The application of the fare regulation framework should be changed. Should the basic RPI+1% formula for regulated fare baskets should remain as established (and we see this as a maximum conceivable level of increase) then the ability to flex individual regulated fares by the currently allowed +/-5% should be made conditional on the quality of service delivered to passengers. The quality of service measures should include PPM on a route by route basis and NPS scores.
2. The franchise should allow for implementation of the new fare structure<sup>4</sup> but require a commitment to no increases significantly above inflation for off-peak fares. Bidders should be required to provide transparency about off-peak fare levels by setting out their proposals in the bid.
3. The ITT should require bidders to set out proposals for improving value for money and social inclusion by introducing and actively promoting the benefits of new products/services including:
  - annual season ticket direct debit payment scheme
  - carnet
  - child level fares for 16-18 year olds in full time education while travelling to/from school/college.
4. Bidders should be asked to consider 'early/late-bird' schemes that incentivise passengers to travel at less busy times – especially in relation to any smartcard ticketing scheme. At the very least bidders should be required to build such provision into any new smartcard scheme structure.
5. Bidders should commit to work with employers to establish interest-free loan schemes and also flexible working times to allow passengers to travel outside peak hours.

## Ticketing

1. The needs of passengers who value staff at ticket offices must be a consideration in bidders' retailing proposals. Alternative forms of ticketing must not be used as an excuse to eliminate staffing from stations.
2. Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) – bidders should demonstrate how they will extend the range of tickets available for purchase, including extension tickets and all available walk-up discount/GroupSave tickets. Bidders should also introduce a facility to collect internet or telephone purchased tickets free of charge.
3. Bidders should indicate how they will translate the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) requirement to apply their 'reasonable endeavours' to meeting queuing time standards into effective action and what remedial action they would take should evidence demonstrate failings in this area.
4. We expect smartcard proposals to be included as with other recent franchises but believe that this should also include the requirement to not only accept but also retail Oyster (subject to appropriate arrangements agreed through TfL for commercial protection).

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<sup>4</sup> as set out in Table 10.1 page 98 of the White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway'

5. Bidders should be asked to outline a retailing/ticketing strategy with particular emphasis on Metro area, Coastway East and West routes and smaller D/E/F category stations.

Measuring, monitoring and reporting requirements should include an emphasis on monitoring and reporting of queuing times (both at the ticket office and for TVMs), TVM reliability and adherence to ticket office retailing hours. The results of the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) mystery shopping exercises monitoring the accuracy and impartiality of the ticketing process should also be published – the aim being to build up levels of trust among passengers.

### **Revenue protection**

1. Passenger Focus expects that the ITT will require bidders to set out their proposals for a revenue protection policy firmly linked to provision of adequate ticket purchase facilities and that ensures fare collection is maximised and ticketless travel is minimised.

### **Station environment**

1. The specification should invite bidders to propose a target for improvement of the overall station environment satisfaction scores on NPS within the first two years of the franchise. These should, as a minimum, bring franchise stations up to the national average of 65%.

2. There should be an investment programme for provision of new toilets at Coastway and Metro stations particularly. This should be focused firstly on stations with higher footfall and include a clear commitment to ensure facilities are open for use during all times that the station is staffed.

3. Bidders should be required to set out proposals for a general raising of station standards through the Service Quality Management System (SQMS) regime, which should, at a minimum, cover:

- lighting
- cleanliness
- provision of seats
- how quickly graffiti is removed
- maintenance targets (e.g. lifts etc)
- opening times and cleanliness of toilet facilities.

Bidders should be required to indicate what internal targets they intend to set, what the monitoring regime will be, how they will use internal benchmarks to drive up standards, and what they consider the acceptable standards to be to help achieve a significant improvement in NPS ratings.

4. The franchise specification should set out requirements for an improvement programme at Metro stations aimed at bringing them as close as possible to London Overground standards whilst ensuring value for money in relation to the resources available for this and other franchise needs.

5. The franchise agreement needs to make clear provision for the allocation of responsibility for all property and buildings and ensure that appropriate budgets are set for upkeep, improvements and repair for those parts allocated to the franchisee.

### **Passenger information at stations**

1. Passenger demands for quality information at stations about train times and platforms should be addressed. The franchise specification should seek improvements in information provision, particularly in terms of consistently reliable technology, backed up by well informed staff.

2. The franchise specification should ensure that any gaps in provision of electronic information at stations are remedied as a matter of priority, with particular attention to the provision of reliable information at stations that are unstaffed for all or part of the day. We believe that virtually every station should have modern visual passenger information technology, although we acknowledge that it may be appropriate to specifically exempt this requirement for a few particularly lightly used stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources.

3. Bidders should demonstrate how they propose to make all reasonable endeavours to adopt practices in the National Rail Enquiries good practice guides on passenger information, documents developed by the train companies in conjunction with Passenger Focus.

4. Reliability and availability of information screens should be routinely monitored as part of the SQMS regime and bidders should be required to demonstrate that they have processes in place to deal quickly and effectively with any defects, including any inconsistencies with PA announcements.

### **Station security**

1. Staffing is the best way to reassure passengers about their personal security while waiting for a train. Bidders should be required to set out their strategy for adequate staffing of stations at all hours that trains run. There should be no presumption that reduction in station staffing is acceptable.

2. The station investment programme should include CCTV and linked help-point provision at all stations that do not currently have these facilities. Where stations are currently unstaffed during any part of the day when trains operate, they should be priorities for such investment. We believe that virtually every station should have appropriate technology to enhance personal security, although we acknowledge that it may be appropriate to specifically exempt this requirement for a few particularly lightly used stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources.

3. The required target for the secure stations accreditation should be increased from 80% of footfall to 90%, with credit given for any bidder who proposes a higher target with evidence as to how it will be achieved. Bidders should also be required to provide evidence that they have covered all stations that are crime hot-spots, whether or not those stations are within the 90%. Consideration should be given to applying specific targets to stations on the Sussex Coast, whether that be in terms of footfall or station category, to overcome the fact that the high footfalls in the Metro area tends to concentrate attention within London with proportionately less coverage of the areas outside.

4. Bidders should be required to show an effective plan for ensuring secure car park accreditation at all A-D category stations with a car park by the end of year three of the franchise at the latest, with credit given to bidders who demonstrate a commitment to extend this to other station car parks during the life of the franchise.

5. Bidders should be required to propose a target increase in passenger satisfaction with personal security and to demonstrate how they will monitor the success of measures they propose, in terms of making passengers feel more secure. This should include improving satisfaction scores for the NPS.

### **Getting to the station**

1. Additional car parking spaces, particularly where existing provision is over-subscribed, must be a key priority for investment and bidders should be required to develop plans which maximise additional spaces, especially on the Uckfield line.
2. At least the same number of additional secure cycle parking spaces should be provided as additional car parking spaces.
3. There should be a requirement for bidders to commit to pilot station travel plan schemes in the first year of the franchise with rollout more widely from year two and throughout the life of the franchise. Pilot stations should include a range of station types, and Passenger Focus should be consulted about which stations would be most appropriate.
4. The 18 month franchise review should establish a target for the percentage of stations to be covered by an implemented station travel plan by the end of the franchise.
5. Bidders should be required to demonstrate how they will work with local authorities, transport providers and other agencies to improve accessibility to stations by all modes. Where identifiably beneficial schemes for passengers can be delivered by other partners, they should be both encouraged and their future assured. The franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

### **Trains – personal security**

1. New trains should have good security built into the specification, with high-quality evidence standard CCTV and designs that facilitate movement and communication through the train, including connections between carriages and the facility for staff to make announcements.
2. Bidders should be required to consider security issues holistically and, in particular, to set clear standards and expectations for on-board staff, where, for example, regular ticket checking can provide passengers with a sense of security, as well as providing revenue protection benefits. Frequency of through-train patrols and on-train announcements should be part of the SQMS regime and could potentially also be monitored through mystery shopping exercises.
3. Bidders should be required to demonstrate that their staff training plans equip on-train staff with the skills and technology they need to be able to provide the proactive presence that will enhance passenger satisfaction with personal security.
4. Bidders should be required to propose targets for improved NPS scores in relation to on-train security. Metro scores in particular should be targeted for improvement to at least the current average of 70%, with an aspiration to reach at least 78% overall by the end of the franchise. Bidders should receive credit for proposing higher targets, provided they give robust evidence of how those targets will be achieved.

### **Trains - on-board facilities**

1. Bidders should demonstrate that they are taking a targeted approach to the on-train environment which takes into account different journey purposes and different lengths of journey.

2. Where new rolling stock is acquired bidders should give consideration to improvements to luggage space, reliability of toilets and inclusion of power points and Wi-Fi facilities. Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and other relevant groups should be consulted on design plans at an early enough stage for views to be taken fully into account.

The SQMS regime should cover both availability and cleanliness of train toilets. There should be a requirement to publish statistics about the frequency of train toilet 'failures' and the length of time taken to bring them back in to service.

### **Accessibility**

1. Bidders generally should be required to make a commitment to comply with industry codes of practice and best practice and to facilitate train travel by passengers with a disability or other access needs, including making information readily available in different formats.

2. Improvements need to be made to existing arrangements to ensure that assistance booked actually arrives. This includes putting robust measures in place to measure and monitor provision and potentially establishing a database of passenger details to reduce likelihood of errors made in booking and the need for frequent repetition of basic details, which is especially useful for regular journeys.

3. Bidders should also be required to commit to:

- A rigorous staff training programme to cover awareness across the whole range of disabilities, as well as safe and appropriate ways to help. In particular, staff should be trained to be alert to the needs of vulnerable passengers at times of disruption and the franchisee's service recovery plan should cover those issues specifically.
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date database of station details to make it easier for passengers with a disability to plan their journeys.
- Ensure that priority seating areas are much more clearly labelled and that the purpose of such seats is much more clearly displayed, along with better policing of occupancy.
- Ensure that rail replacement bus services are capable of carrying wheelchair using and mobility impaired passengers or that special alternative arrangements are made for such passengers. This will be particularly important given the scale of infrastructure works planned for the franchise.

### **External engagement and identity**

a. Bidders for the South Central franchise should be required to make a commitment to genuine and meaningful engagement with passengers and stakeholders. The specification should require details of what elements of the business and services any successful bidder would consult upon and/or provide information about and the range of mechanisms that they would use for these purposes.

b. The franchise specification should seek details of the bidders' proposed mechanisms for dealing with passenger complaints and concerns and bidders should be appraised upon their committed intentions to honour the spirit of any obligations or requirements, not just meet the minimal requirements.

c. A clear mechanism – with ring-fenced funds attached – should be established for the handling of any complaints or appeals that have not been resolved by the time the new franchise commences.

d. The ways in which franchise names are owned and utilised in the future should be reviewed and, where possible, ongoing consistency should be maintained.

## 3. Background to the franchise

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This section sets the context for Passenger Focus's approach to this submission and highlights our initial recommendations about the scope of, and requirements for, the franchise.

### 3 a The current franchise

The current franchise has seen substantial passenger growth and has responded to this by development of the service and the timetable. Much of the provision is outside the requirements of the original Passenger Service Requirement and the Network Rail rules of the plan have been successfully adapted to facilitate the timetable pattern that currently exists.

**On the basis of current passenger usage, ongoing demand and stakeholder feedback it is our view that the current level of services (including those of the Redhill – Tonbridge services to be taken over from Southeastern) and the existing service standards of both Southern and Gatwick Express should be taken as a minimum starting point for the re-franchise, regardless of whether or not they are required commitments in the current franchises.**

### 3 b Strategic issues going forward

#### Demand growth

Network Rail's route planning and the analysis undertaken for both the Brighton Main Line (BML) and draft South London Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs) make clear that the franchise will experience significant demand growth over the medium term. Particularly significant is the acknowledgement that demand is suppressed by current capacity constraints by around 10%, at the same time as passengers are experiencing overcrowding across the majority of Main Line and suburban services during the peak.

With projected demand growth at around 25% to 2019 for South London services (10% suppressed demand + 15% growth) and BML background growth at 1-3% per annum, together with the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) requirement to accommodate 11% additional passenger kilometres on the Sussex routes, it is clear that **the key priority over the life of the franchise must be significant and sustained investment, creating increased capacity by providing more trains and more services to respond to demand from passengers.**

Developments around the franchise, including employment and leisure growth in the Brighton and Portsmouth areas, employment growth at London Bridge and other London locations, and the impact of the Olympics, strengthen the case for investment in capacity, which should bring about economic growth and benefits for users and non-users of the railway, particularly in containing increases in car usage on already constrained and congested road networks.

#### Enhancement strategy

We fully support the service and infrastructure enhancement strategy set out in Network Rail's 2007 Strategic Business Plan, which will deliver the outputs of the Route Utilisation Strategies for the franchise and go some way towards providing the capacity the franchise will need.

We understand that not all the outputs that Network Rail believes are necessary are included within the HLOS baseline, such as the Redhill remodelling and West Croydon track capacity work, and we are also disappointed that the Uckfield line and Marshlink line are not currently priority considerations for infill electrification. We are aware that these are not issues to be resolved in the context of the franchise.

However, to make the franchise fully fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, further development will be needed and should be planned in good time so that the franchise delivers maximum value for passengers and the wider economy.

**We therefore believe that there should be a requirement for the franchisee to work closely with Network Rail to plan and implement further capacity enhancements, beyond what is specified and committed in Control Period 4.**

The enhancement strategy will require additional rolling stock to increase train lengths and provide additional capacity in the peak and shoulder peaks. New carriages for the Southern franchise have already been announced, but this is likely to be insufficient to meet the HLOS growth requirement and will still result in unacceptable levels of overcrowding on key routes. It is notable that the DfT's published rolling stock plan refers only to 106 Electric Multiple Units (EMU) which is substantially below the Network Rail Route Plan estimates of a requirement in excess of 200 vehicles, including diesel.

**The franchise specification should therefore not constrain potential bidders from proposing additional rolling stock, but should actively encourage them to do so to meet demand growth and alleviate overcrowding. Bidders should be invited to identify and propose provision of additional vehicles, and the DfT's funding plan for the franchise should be ready to accommodate this additional investment.**

Nearly as important as the number of vehicles is the type and configuration of vehicles, especially on this franchise where different routes have different requirements. There have been instances where the consultation process in relation to new trains planning has been poor at best, with the consequent risk that new trains do not meet passengers' legitimate needs and expectations. Given it is anticipated that the South Central franchisee will be in the lead in relation to procuring the new generation of suburban EMU trains, it is particularly important that consultation with passengers is open and continuous.

**The Invitation to Tender (ITT) should therefore specify that any proposals for procurement of new trains should also state how Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and other relevant groups will be consulted at an early enough stage for their views to be taken fully into account.**

### **Major projects**

Implementation of the Thameslink and East London Line projects, together with the introduction of ten car suburban operations into Victoria, will dominate the franchise throughout its life. This programme of major works, while bringing significant future benefits to passengers, has implications across a range of issues, including:

- project and resource planning
- dealing with service disruption, both planned and unplanned
- planning and implementing major multiple timetable changes
- staff awareness and training
- fares and compensation policies.

Network Rail's partnership strategy for major projects is welcome, as is their approach of taking advantage of synergies to carry out smaller enhancements or maintenance work as part of a phase of a bigger project. But the greater the number of dependencies, the more scope there is for even minor perturbations in the programme to have significant knock-on effects. Although Network Rail will be clearly accountable for project planning and implementation, we believe there is a need for the

incumbent franchisee to play an active part in that process, so that projects are planned and executed around the needs and expectations of passengers, and not just operational efficiency. Also, when things go wrong, the franchisee must have effective contingency plans that are ready for implementation, including, critically, sufficient well-trained staff supported by consistently reliable information technology so that passengers are proactively helped out of travel difficulties that are not of their making.

**Passenger Focus's view is that the ITT must require bidders to address the implications of major projects in detail and to show how they will build an organisation with the resources to provide passengers with assurance that performance and reliability will not be sacrificed to promises of future improvement. In particular, the ITT should require:**

- An organisational capability to engage effectively with Network Rail on project and possessions planning to ensure that disruption to passengers is minimised and proactively managed.
- High quality timetable and resource planning capability, both for longer-term changes to take advantage of new journey opportunities, but also to be able to react effectively to engineering over-runs.
- A sophisticated communication capability to provide reliable and consistently accurate information to passengers about short-term service changes.
- A capability to handle effectively numerous timetable consultations and timetable changes.
- Sufficient staff to provide passengers with quality information and assistance on the ground, both in relation to short-term disruption and at times of timetable change.
- Staff that are effectively trained and fully informed, supported by accurate real-time information technology.

In relation to fares and compensation, the scale of the investment programme and the associated – almost continual – disruption and performance risk that passengers on one route or another will face, requires a more creative approach, rather than the traditional formulaic RPI+ for the franchise as a whole and the standard Passenger Charter compensation scheme. While Passenger Focus has no issue, in principle, with passengers paying an equitable additional amount for service improvements, we do object to passengers funding investment costs in advance of the benefits being realised, particularly in view of the significant disruption likely to be experienced.

In addition, the standard compensation regime does not take proper account of the inconvenience suffered by passengers when service patterns, frequencies and journey times are changed to accommodate planned disruption to the network. Significant numbers of passengers will have their journey patterns permanently changed, whether because a well-used interchange is no longer possible, or as a result of a different station destination for their train. Given that people build their own and their families' lives around travel to work and travel to leisure opportunities some will experience long-term disruption in the form of extended journey times and potential multiple interchanges.

We accept that these are difficult issues and that equitable solutions are not easy to find. However, **we consider there is a strong case for requiring bidders to think innovatively and to propose fares and compensation regimes that recognise the nature of the performance downsides for passengers during extended major works, and the fact that not everyone will benefit once those works are complete.** Passenger Focus would welcome the opportunity to discuss emerging thoughts with bidders as they develop ideas during the bid stage.

## Other projects

The focus on major projects across the franchise carries a risk that smaller projects could be relegated to the sidelines. This would not be acceptable. There is a raft of smaller improvements, particularly at stations, where the train operator can make an immediate difference to the travelling environment.

**The ITT should make clear that bidders are expected to propose improvements to their trains and stations to enhance facilities, increase personal safety, improve accessibility and encourage more passengers to travel – and should show the organisational capability to remain focused on delivering those improvements.**

## Transport for London (TfL)

We believe that the Southern franchise will be the first one for which TfL will be able to exercise their powers to specify requirements for services within Greater London. Passenger Focus has been liaising with TfL to understand their priorities, welcomes their active involvement, and supports their aspirations for improvements that will benefit passengers. There is a risk, however, that TfL's clear aspirations and funding proposals for inner suburban improvements could lead to a perception that the balance is weighted away from outer suburban and Coastway services.

**We recognise the need for enhancements in Greater London and also beyond: our view is that service quality and service standards should be progressively equalised upwards and that there should be no detriment to reasonable expectations for longer distance and non-London routes, including ensuring an equitable balance when service development requires timetabling changes.**

This is an area that will need to be explored in detail through consideration of TfL and Passenger Focus proposals, as part of the iterations of the specification before it is finalised.

A specific area of concern relates to Oyster ticketing technology, where the TfL system is well established and well ahead of the national rail compatible equivalent. Due to the nature of the franchise, there are likely to be cross-boundary technology, commercial and funding issues to be addressed and resolved. Rather than requiring each bidder to consider and make proposals to deal with these, we believe it would be more cost-efficient, as well as potentially more beneficial to passengers, if those issues could be discussed and resolved before the ITT is finalised. Passenger Focus would welcome the opportunity to be consulted on emerging proposals and their implications for passengers.

## Continuous improvement

No franchise can be set in stone. Passenger Focus does not want to see a franchise that focuses solely on major projects, or that makes improvements in the early years and then loses momentum. Passenger expectations will change and customers will continue to become more demanding, partly because, as fares increase, they will be looking for additional value for their money, and partly because of comparisons with standards and quality for other modes of transport.

Enhancement and smaller projects will contribute to improvements, but **the ITT should also require bidders to demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement in every area of activity and to be able to show how their organisational structure and practices will drive and support such improvement through the life of the franchise.**

The 18 month franchise review is, in our view, an ideal opportunity to take stock and to set an improvement agenda to provide additional value to passengers in the light of early experience. This review must be driven by the needs and expectations of passengers and must look at improvements that can be delivered throughout the life of the franchise. This process should also provide additional value for the taxpayer, since improvements made will result in a healthy and forward-looking franchise when the time comes to re-tender. Passenger Focus should contribute to such reviews as a matter of course, since we will be able to provide input both by evidenced based information gained through research (principally the National Passenger Survey (NPS) and, potentially, mystery shopping) and a passenger perspective that complements and adds to the franchisee's own knowledge.

### **Measuring, monitoring and reporting**

It is a truism that what gets measured gets done. The franchise agreement already includes many important measures, including performance and financial targets, and franchisees use a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitoring techniques to manage their businesses. What is not generally clear is how measuring and monitoring takes full account of passenger experience and perception, nor how the mass of data available translates into action for improvement. In recent franchise agreements, there are, for example, no targets for improvement in NPS scores, and in some areas (handling disruption is a prime example), there seems to be an unspoken agreement that passenger satisfaction will always be low and there is little that can be done to improve satisfaction ratings. Management techniques such as Service Quality Management System (SQMS) can be valuable monitoring tools, but depend critically on a realistic baseline, challenging targets and concerted action to drive up scores across the franchise.

Reporting is also variable, in terms of standards, transparency and degrees of useful detail, which means that it can be difficult to understand and assess whether lessons are being learned and translated into an improved service for passengers.

In framing specific recommendations for franchise outputs and performance, we have aimed to include standards that we believe are appropriate and to highlight the importance of monitoring and the reporting of it in a more open and transparent manner. In several areas, we believe there is a greater role for Passenger Focus than is now universally the case. For example, we believe that we can add value from the passenger perspective as a partner in determining and then examining SQMS monitoring reports, and in lessons learned exercises following network disruption.

As a general principle, however, **we believe the ITT should highlight that monitoring is not just about having suites of KPIs in separate activity boxes, but also about reporting transparency and ensuring the passenger perspective is an integral part of the monitoring process. In addition, bidders should be required to demonstrate how their internal processes and structures will ensure that monitoring contributes to a virtuous circle of continuous improvement.**

### **3c A challenging agenda**

The franchise faces a period of continual change. Demand growth will be strong. Potential new developments are exciting and will ultimately be beneficial for passengers.

However, the scale of the projects makes it inevitable that the franchise will face major challenges and that the reality for many passengers is a period of disruption and, in some places, a potential decline in service standards or changes to service patterns that could result in disrupted travel patterns for many regular passengers. In addition, the focus on large projects could be at the expense of focus on smaller

local improvements which can have immediate impact on passenger needs and satisfaction. And, some of the impact of major works will be experienced by passengers who may never themselves reap the benefits; they will have the pain without the gain.

The impact of the scale of investment on fares has not yet been established but there are significant issues around the levels of potential fares increases and the equity of passengers paying in advance for benefits several years ahead, not least when performance may be impacted.

From a passenger perspective, however, despite the challenges set out above, expectations for the new franchise will be high. For customers paying for a service, the demand will be for the industry to effectively manage the necessary projects, renewals and maintenance and ensure that any impacts on the services they utilise are minimised.

**In this submission Passenger Focus will remain mindful of the context in which the new franchise will operate but intends to articulate the legitimate needs of the passenger in the expectation that the industry will apply maximum efforts to deliver an effective and responsive service.**

## 4. Objectives for the franchise

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### Introduction

This section considers and comments upon the high level objectives being established for the franchise in the light of the previous section, which sets the context and the overarching strategic issues that Passenger Focus believe need to be taken into account in setting the specification.

### Scope of the franchise:

- comprises the current Southern and Gatwick Express franchises and will include Tonbridge to Redhill services currently operated by Southeastern
- services in London, Surrey, East and West Sussex, Kent, Hampshire and Hertfordshire.

### DfT Draft franchise objectives<sup>5</sup>:

- *“To serve and develop both suburban, Main Line and Coastway services and to accommodate current and anticipated future growth in passenger demand and potentially reduce crowding levels.”*

We do not believe it is acceptable for the franchise objective to be confined to ‘potentially’ reducing crowding levels. DfT’s own rolling stock plan envisages maximum average load factors at main London termini of 67% in the peak three hours and 76% in the peak hour. If the South Central franchise is not required to deliver reduced crowding levels with major infrastructure work and additional rolling stock (potentially beyond the number DfT has specified) then passengers will rightly question why they will be required to pay higher fares and what additional quality and value for money they will be getting. The objective should be framed much more positively in terms of achieving a reduction in crowding and the ITT should include targets for reductions on Metro, outer suburban, Main Line and other services.

- *“To achieve sustainable value for money of the franchise for the taxpayer within the constraints of the overall franchise budget”*

We are aware that this is a standard objective for franchising. However, the objective does not recognise that taxpayer value lies not only in minimising the franchise budget, but also in the wider non-user benefits that a well-run, effective franchise will bring, particularly in terms of environmental benefits and benefits to the economy as a whole. Neither does the objective recognise that there should be an equitable balance between taxpayer and passenger value for money. This objective should be updated, both to recognise the role of the railway in the wider economy and to promote the concept of equitable maximisation of value for money for both taxpayers **and** passengers.

- *“To facilitate the implementation of and realise the benefits to passengers from the Brighton Main Line and South London Route Utilisation Strategies, Thameslink Programme, East London Line extension project and output metrics specified in HLOS, and to effectively manage the process of change that all these projects will involve, including communications to passengers.”*

Given the scale and nature of change that the project programme will involve and the importance of a proactive, passenger focused approach to every phase of the programme, we believe that this objective should make clear that effective management will be needed in relation to planning, as well as ‘change’, and that the final part of the objective should include consultation as well as communication with passengers.

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<sup>5</sup> DfT South Central Franchise Replacement Stakeholder Briefing 10 January 2008

- *“To maintain and improve the operational performance of the South Central franchise to contribute towards national performance targets (including the significant lateness targets).”*
- *“To seek to benchmark and improve the overall environmental performance of the franchise.”*
- *“To seek to improve the alignment of services and service quality with aspirations of all stakeholders, to improve overall customer satisfaction, specifically in the areas of service quality (both on train and station), ticketing purchasing and retailing (including smartcards) and information (before and during the journey).”*

In relation to this and the following objective, we believe that rather than ‘seek to’ improve, the wording should be more challenging and simply refer to ‘improve’. After all, in a climate where passengers are expected to take an increasing share of the funding burden it will be a poor return if there is little or no tangible improvement to show for it.

- *“To seek to improve accessibility to all South Central services and stations, including car parking and access to stations, as well as access for disabled passengers.”*
- *“To facilitate locally sponsored increments and decrements, and specifically implement the results of the investigation into the role of TfL in the franchise specification process.”*

We do not foresee circumstances where decrements will be applicable. All existing services and standards should be the starting point for development of the base specification. Where funding bodies have specific proposals for rebalancing or changing elements of current standards and service patterns, these need to be rigorously assessed to ensure overall higher standards for passengers and be accompanied by a plan for mitigating any adverse effects on any disadvantaged minority.

- *“To ensure alignment of the South Central service specification with the specification of other Train Operating Companies across the network, especially First Capital Connect and the London Rail Concession (TfL).”*

In addition to the specific points made above, there are some important generic objectives which we do not believe the current draft adequately addresses:

- The need for the franchisee – working with others - to play an active role in integrated development of train and other public transport services in the South of England and, where applicable, beyond and to ensure that passengers are informed of and consulted on all timetable changes by any operator that may impact on the services and connectivity of the franchise.
- The need to ensure the appropriate balance between Metro and longer distance services (a particular issue now that TfL has some very clear aspirations for Metro services and facilities); to ensure that longer distance services do not become a ‘Cinderella’ and that national resources are equitably distributed across the whole of the franchise.
- The need to establish that the franchisee will have to work with Network Rail and others to plan for future investment to build the foundations for a rail service that meets the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the changing needs and expectations of passengers.
- The need to demonstrate a proactive and sustained approach to working in partnership with key stakeholders, including Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch, Regional Development Agencies and local authorities.

### **Length of the franchise – reviews and extensions**

Passenger Focus generally believes that longer franchises have merit, providing opportunities for higher levels of investment that can bring benefits for passengers.

We understand, however, that the significant changes to routes and timetabling that will be associated with final arrangements for Thameslink services will potentially necessitate letting the South Central franchise for a shorter period to accommodate the changes that may arise from completion of the programme.

**Whatever the length of the awarded contract, however, we strongly believe that, in any franchise, there should be a series of defined targets and objectives that have to be met in order for the franchisee to remain in place.**

With reference to the South Central franchise, **we recommend that at both the 18 month review stage and at any point at which a potential extension to the original franchise term is considered, a clear framework against which delivery can be assessed should be set out and a rigorous analysis of performance is undertaken and that input from Passenger Focus, particularly in relation to NPS satisfaction scores, should be sought as an integral part of this process.**

## 5. Gathering the evidence and framing recommendations

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The Passenger Focus submission in relation to the re-franchise is based on the principle that we will provide evidence based input on what passengers want from the new franchise and suggest how these should be addressed in the franchise specification.

### Gathering the evidence

Passenger Focus has drawn on a range of sources to establish the evidence base for this submission. In addition to utilising relevant information from our extensive portfolio of existing research and our established policy positions, we also specifically commissioned research<sup>6</sup> to investigate the views and priorities of passengers on eight different Southern routes, spread across inner London Metro, outer suburban, Main Line and Coastway services.

This specific 'route-based' research is an extension of previously conducted research into passenger priorities at the regional and national level and has enabled us to identify where there are similarities and differences across the Southern network. It provides particular information with which we can amplify the indications from more broadly based studies.

Valuable contextual information has also been received from passengers and stakeholders. This forms a backdrop to our evidence base and provides a wealth of detail about local aspirations. We have included some of the verbatim comments to illustrate relevant points within the submission. We have also emphasised to local groups the importance of providing direct input to the Department, particularly at the public consultation stage. Nevertheless, we can provide details of specific input received or signposting to contacts where further local information is required.

Details of the research and background information relevant to this submission are provided in a series of technical appendices, together with information about the methodology on which our approach has been based.

### Framing the recommendations

In reviewing our research findings and considering the input from passengers and stakeholders, it is evident that what passengers buy is a **package**. No one element of the rail service is sufficient in isolation and the overall passenger experience is derived from the sum of all the parts. For example, punctual and reliable trains are only of value if the passenger has information about when and where to catch them, can get to the station and afford the fare.

Passenger Focus recognises, however, the real world constraints within which the franchise specification must be framed and we are, therefore, approaching our recommendations on a theme by theme basis and indicating the priorities we have identified within each element. Nevertheless, the **overall aspirations** of passengers must be a material consideration, pertinent both to the DfT as specifier/purchaser, as well as any bidder who may ultimately be charged with delivery, of a service where passenger satisfaction is a key element on which performance will be judged.

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<sup>6</sup> Summary reports of the findings from each of the eight routes are available in an accompanying volume – 'Route based research – identifying what passengers want from South Central'. Passenger Focus April 2008.

Our route based research identifies the importance that passengers place on various elements of the rail experience:

| <b>Importance ranking - route based research<br/>- all routes total</b> | <b>% ranking very<br/>important or<br/>important</b> |
|---|--|
| Punctuality/reliability of the train                                    | 82   |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms                    | 81   |
| Frequency of the trains on the route                                    | 80   |
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to take                        | 78   |
| Value for money for price of ticket                                     | 77   |
| Being able to get a seat on the train                                   | 76   |
| Ticket buying facility  | 75   |
| Personal security – stations  | 73   |
| Personal security – train   | 73   |
| Ease of getting to and from the station                                 | 70   |
| Connections with other forms of transport                               | 66   |
| Not having to change trains   | 66   |
| Ease of getting on/off train  | 62   |
| Sample size : 6251  |  |

In the following sections on specific issues for the submission we set out key elements of evidence and policy to substantiate the conclusions and recommendations we identify for the franchise. We also identify specific recommendations for the measuring, monitoring and reporting of performance where we believe improvements to customary regimes should be implemented.

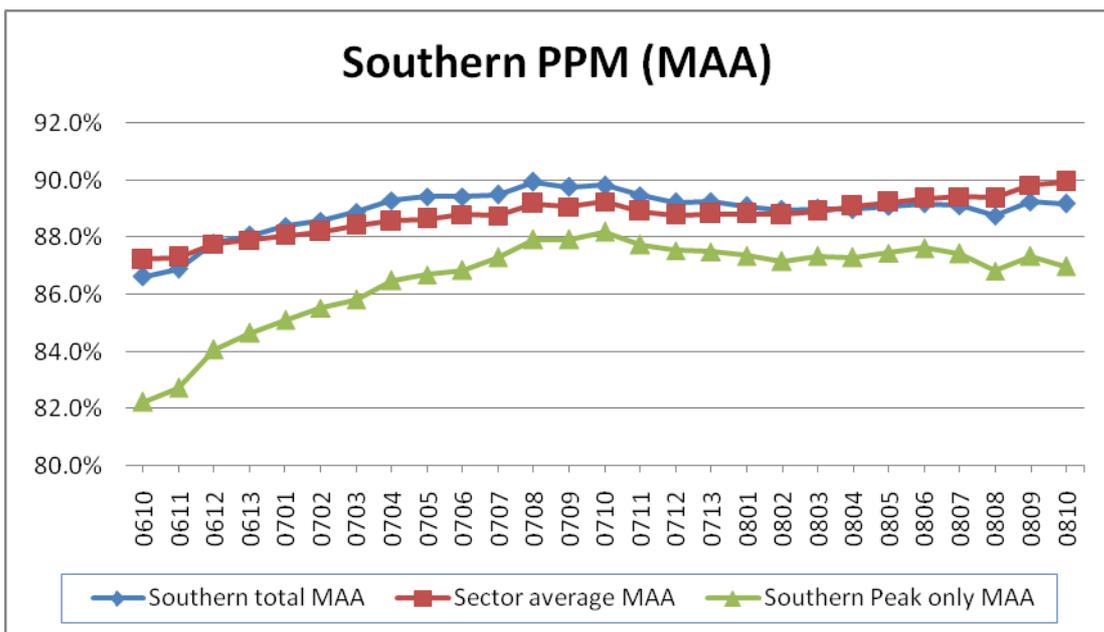
## 6. Specific issues for the specification

### Operational performance - punctuality, management of delays and compensation

#### Punctuality

Punctuality and reliability of trains is highly significant to passengers. Our route based research placed punctuality as the overall most important factor of the journey, as the table above shows, and, nationally, our research found that punctuality was the third highest priority for improvement (ranked only behind value for money and frequency of service)<sup>7</sup>. We also know from multivariate (statistical) analysis of the NPS that punctuality and reliability of the train is the main factor that determines overall customer satisfaction, both nationally and for the vast majority of Train Operating Companies (TOCs) including Southern<sup>8</sup>.

Public Performance Measure (PPM) data for the current franchise shows a trend that is, at best, static over the past year and that has declined over the months leading up to period 0810 (December 2007). Southern has slipped from a position above the London and South East sector average during 2006, with performance (as of December 2007) of 89.2% across all trains now below South West Trains (SWT) and on a par with Southeastern. Performance on Southern during peak hours is also worse than the 'all-day' average.



Passenger satisfaction reflects this decline in performance. Autumn 2007 NPS shows satisfaction with punctuality to be 77%, down from 84% on Autumn 2006. Although this is still close to the London & South East sector average (78%) it is well down on scores recorded for its 'southern region' peers – SWT and Southeastern (82% and 80% respectively).

Breaking Southern NPS scores into route groups reveals further concerns:

<sup>7</sup> Passengers' Priorities for Improvements in Rail – June 2007 – Passenger Focus

<sup>8</sup> National Passenger Survey multivariate report Autumn 2007

| <b>Satisfaction with punctuality –<br/>NPS – Autumn 2007</b> |            |
|--|------------|
| Sussex Coast – Main Line                                     | 87%        |
| Sussex Coast – Coast   | 75%        |
| Metro/South London   | 72%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>77%</b> |
| Sample size: 1171 Metro/London, 555 Main Line, and 144 Coast |            |

Even allowing for a smaller sample size on Sussex Coast-Coast route, this indicates that satisfaction on Main Line services is pulling up the overall average. Metro/South London services appear a particular cause for concern.

### **Conclusions**

Current performance is not acceptable. It is, taken at best, static rather than mirroring improvements in other franchises. It is also now below the London and South East sector average.

Declining performance, coupled with declining satisfaction and the highest level of importance for passengers indicates that this should be one of the main priorities for improvement. It is therefore important that this is reflected in the franchise agreement.

NPS results show that satisfaction can differ widely from route to route – something that is not reflected in PPM figures which are just reported at the overall TOC level. Passengers paying to travel on a particular route should have a right to know what level of performance is being provided on that route. In the interests of greater transparency we believe the franchise should require greater dissemination of route based data and take a decentralised ‘route-management’ approach to performance, allocating specific responsibility for this to identified individuals.

### **Recommendations – punctuality**

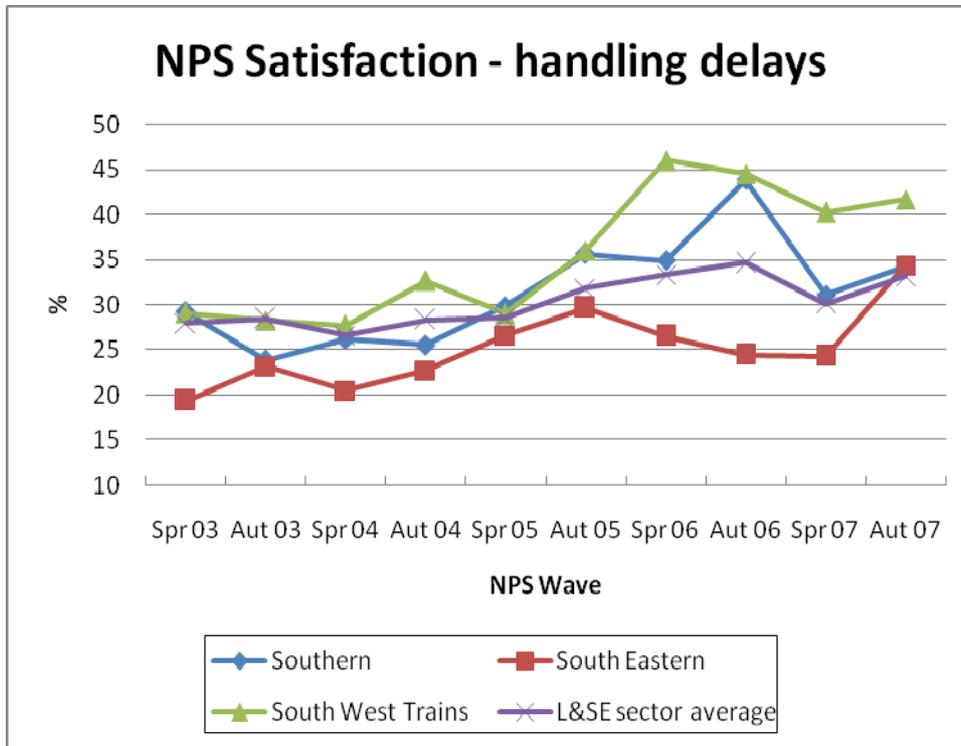
1. In line with the HLOS target for London and South East, and by staging incremental increases around major infrastructure works, the franchise specification should include a target to achieve 93% PPM by 2014. A minimum of 90% should be set for each individual route.
2. A decentralised ‘route-management’ approach to performance should be adopted, with specific responsibilities for this allocated to identified individuals.

### **Recommendation for measuring, monitoring and reporting of punctuality**

Requirements should focus on developing disaggregated PPM by route or at the lowest reporting level that can be achieved and making this data available to Passenger Focus and passengers. At a minimum this should break down performance into four categories: Coastway services, Brighton Main Line, South London Metro and intermediate suburban routes (Redhill, Tonbridge, Uckfield and East Grinstead).

**Management of delays**

Passengers rate the current performance on handling delays poorly. In the NPS Autumn 2007 wave on Southern only 34% were satisfied with the way this was done. This is a very low score (albeit an improving trend) but is very much in line with Southern’s peers and the London and South East average.



However, breaking the 34% overall satisfaction figure into route-groups reveals specific concerns in the Metro/Suburban area:

| Satisfaction with handling of delays<br>National Passenger Survey Autumn 2007 |            |
|---|------------|
| Sussex Coast – Main Line  | 39%        |
| Sussex Coast – Coast  | 43%        |
| Metro/South London  | 31%        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>34%</b> |
| Sample size: 1171 Metro/London, 555 Main Line, and 144 Coast                  |            |

We know from supplementary questions within the Autumn 2007 NPS that a lack of information is the most significant reason why passengers feel a delay has been handled poorly, with 76% of London passengers and 68% of passengers in the South East region citing this as the reason for their dissatisfaction.

*“(Passengers) seem understanding that things will go wrong and trains may be delayed. However, the way in which they are kept informed (...) is the area that causes the most concern. Improvements have*

*been made but still passengers wish to be kept better informed and held up for the shortest time possible.*<sup>9</sup>

The lack of a staff presence was the second highest cause of dissatisfaction, given as a reason by 43% of London passengers and 32% of South East passengers.

Other Passenger Focus research, as detailed below, supports the view that the provision of information in the event of a delay is an important issue for passengers:

- National research into priorities for improvement in 2007 found this to be the fifth highest priority out of 30 criteria, a leap up from the 17<sup>th</sup> rank in 2005.
- Our route based research asked passengers to select what they saw as the most important facilities at stations. Accurate announcements about delays was ranked as the fourth most important facility (behind, in rank order, accurate visual information about arrivals/departures, toilets and staff). We found no significant differences by route but, as might be expected, commuters placed a higher importance on this than business or leisure passengers.
- Research into passenger information<sup>10</sup> showed the importance of improving information during times of disruption. It specifically highlighted the need to keep passengers informed in a timely manner and recommended that there be a PA announcement within two minutes of an unscheduled stop or a train being delayed.

The London Borough of Lambeth agrees: *“Appropriate number and type of on-board announcements, not too many, but clear information about any disruption, the cause of disruption and the length of time/ alternative options etc.”*

Stakeholder feedback also identified an issue with ‘skip-stopping’, where timetabled intermediate stations are missed following service disruption, in order for the train company to recover performance:

*“(...) an end to trains departing early, and to trains not stopping at intermediate stations (e.g. Carshalton) if running late, due to punctuality targets, which have also resulted in unnecessary slack being built into some timetables.”<sup>11</sup>*

Richard Light from Burgess Hill also comments: *“(There should be) heavy fines for cancelling intermediate stops. More flexibility to stop fast trains when other services are delayed or cancelled”*.

Passenger Focus understands that there needs to be a balance between providing the service that passengers expect at the smaller stations, whilst maintaining a reliable service for passengers travelling longer distances on the route, however, ‘skip-stopping’ should be minimised wherever possible. Where it is unavoidable, it is vital that those passengers affected receive immediate and reliable information about their alternatives and are compensated for delays to their journey.

## **Conclusions – management of delays**

Research shows that management of delays is important to passengers and that there is currently a very low level of satisfaction with the way they are handled. This suggests a strong case for addressing this issue in the franchise, particularly in light of the major projects that have the potential to make this a feature on the network during the life of the franchise.

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<sup>9</sup> Sussex Community Rail Partnership

<sup>10</sup> Passenger Information: what, when, where and how? - September 2004 - Rail Passengers Council in collaboration with Network Rail, ATOC and the SRA.

<sup>11</sup> London Borough of Sutton

## **Recommendations – management of delays**

1. The ITT should establish a franchise target to reduce ‘significant’ delays (of over 30 minutes) in line with HLOS requirements, applying the sector target of a 21% reduction, staged in incremental improvements to 2014.

2. The ITT should also require bidders to set out a strategy detailing how they intend to address/minimise delays caused by disruption (both planned and unplanned). This should include specific reference to:

- Their ability to muster sufficient buses/alternative transport in a timely manner.
- A commitment to establishing clear protocols to balance ‘skip-stopping’ to achieve service recovery against the need to ensure services to intermediate stations are provided swiftly and fairly.
- A communication plan setting out how they intend to keep passengers informed.
- A commitment to set out passengers’ rights/entitlements in the event of delays within the Passenger’s Charter. We would commend the wording and commitments in the National Express East Coast Passenger Charter<sup>12</sup>, especially those covering situations where the TOC cannot get passengers to their destinations.

## **Recommendations for measuring, monitoring and reporting of the management of delays**

It is important that the strategy on managing delays also includes a monitoring regime. As well as the PPM measures of delay and the new target for ‘significant delay’ this must also focus on the results from other quantitative and qualitative aspects of delay handling. The latter should draw from NPS satisfaction scores and should also encompass an element of ‘mystery shopping’ designed to monitor:

- timeliness of information (measured against the two-minute threshold outlined above)
- clarity of announcements
- accuracy of information.

The results of the mystery shopping along with the measure of significant delay should also be made publicly available.

## **Passenger compensation in the event of delays**

Where passengers experience disruption to their journey it is entirely reasonable that they should be compensated in relation to the inconvenience that they have experienced.

Passenger Focus believes that DfT should seek to achieve common compensation arrangements across all train companies over time; and that all new compensation regimes should include the following:

- 50% refund after 30 minutes delay
- 100% refund after 60 minutes delay<sup>13</sup>
- passengers should have the choice of taking compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers
- applicable to holders of any valid ticket, irrespective of type (including season ticket holders and irrespective of where the ticket was bought)
- no exclusions, entitlement should apply irrespective of the cause of delay
- postage free claim cards

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<sup>12</sup> National Express East Coast Passenger Charter - ‘How we will take care of you if things go wrong’ - Page 16

<sup>13</sup> 50%/100% of the cost of a single ticket, or 50%/100% of the cost of either portion of a return ticket, or 50%/100% of the ‘price per day’ of a season ticket

- a proactive approach to increasing passenger awareness of their entitlement.

In addition to the 'delay-repay' arrangements applicable to **all** ticket holders set out above, Passenger Focus firmly believes that a 'safety-net' mechanism is required for monthly and longer-validity season ticket holders, who should be entitled to compensation if they have experienced frequent delays over 10 minutes duration. This 'safety net' is needed because with a 30 minute trigger, season ticket holders are exposed to the risk that 29 minute delays in each direction every day attract no compensation at all. We believe ten minutes is the appropriate length of delay on which to base arrangements for season ticket holders.

Passengers should also have the choice of accepting compensation in cash or National Rail vouchers and irrespective of whether they are renewing their season ticket. A means must also be devised so that a season ticket holder who uses a National Rail route suffering poor performance, but who has bought his/her ticket from another operator (such as London Underground), is not disadvantaged.

We commend the fact that a 'safety-net' mechanism is applied alongside delay-repay on First ScotRail<sup>14</sup> but note that this still falls short of the full compensation requirements Passenger Focus recommends above. We are also aware that the lack of an agreed definition of 'sustained poor performance' and the operation of the delay-repay scheme on London Midland is the major source of complaints to the local Passenger Transport Executive. We suggest that lessons be learned from this and wish to work with the department and operators to establish a mechanism that provides fair redress to season ticket holders for delays.

### **Recommendations – passenger compensation in the event of delays**

1. It has been confirmed that a delay–repay compensation regime will be included in the South Central franchise on the same basis as recent franchises. We firmly believe that, **in addition** to the delay-repay element, the franchise must require the implementation of a 'safety-net' compensation scheme for season ticket holders should they experience frequent delays.

2. Bidders should be required to demonstrate a commitment to a proactive policy of informing people of their right to claim in any given situation and to set out the procedures that would be adopted to make it easier to claim, such as reply paid cards distributed.

### **Recommendation for the measurement, monitoring and reporting of passenger compensation in the event of delays**

Requirements should include monitoring the promotion of rights to claim, publication of the number of claims for compensation under both delay-repay and the 'safety-net', the value of rail vouchers issued and redeemed, and the level of cash compensation paid to passengers.

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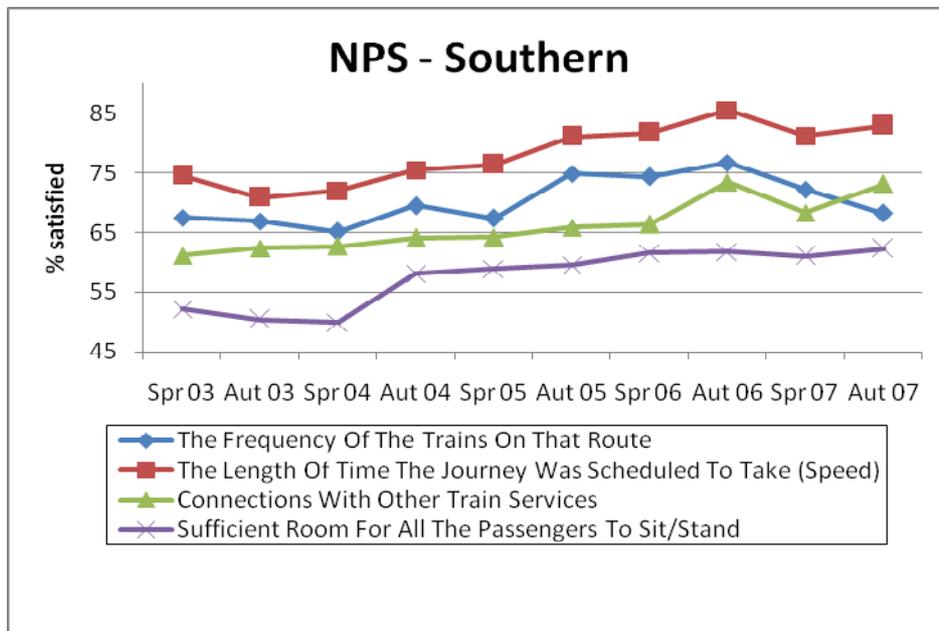
<sup>14</sup> First ScotRail Passenger Charter 2008

### Capacity – room for passengers, frequency, service patterns and connections

The HLOS commitments, together with the demand projections that the Brighton Main Line and South London RUSs seek to address, set the context for any discussion of capacity for the South Central franchise. The RUSs identify that, on this commuter orientated franchise, it is the provision of peak capacity that represents the greatest challenge and both examine ways in which more and longer trains can be accommodated within the infrastructure constraints.

The National Passenger Survey (NPS) provides information about passenger satisfaction on four relevant criteria: sufficient room for all the passengers to sit/stand, frequency of trains on the route, the length of time the journey was scheduled to take and connections with other train services.

Trend wise, there has been improvement in all categories except frequency which has dropped in the last two waves. But, satisfaction with room to sit or stand is only marginally improved in the last three years and passengers are less satisfied with this factor than the other capacity and service related criteria:



In comparison with peers and the sector average, Southern appears broadly in line except for frequency of service which is below the sector average. And, notably, for all three operators and the sector average, satisfaction with room to sit or stand is the lowest of these four NPS scores.

| % satisfied – NPS Autumn 2007                     |          |              |      | London South East sector average |
|---|----------|--------------|------|----------------------------------|
|   | Southern | Southeastern | SWT  |                                  |
| Frequency of trains on that route                 | 68       | 72           | 77   | 73                               |
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to take  | 83       | 81           | 81   | 82                               |
| Connections with other train services             | 73       | 66           | 72   | 71                               |
| Sufficient room for all passengers to sit / stand | 62       | 59           | 66   | 61                               |
| Sample size                                       | 1870     | 1756         | 2318 | 16655                            |

NPS Autumn 2007 results for Southern demonstrate a marked difference between the satisfaction levels of peak and off-peak passengers in relation to sufficient room to sit/stand, with only 38% of peak passengers satisfied compared with 71% in the off-peak. Peak passengers are also less satisfied with the frequency of trains (62% satisfied) than off-peak passengers (70%). These figures reinforce the challenges identified in the South London and Brighton Main Line RUSs.

The breakdown of NPS results by service group also shows that for sufficient room to sit/stand and for frequency of trains on the route, Metro passengers have lower levels of satisfaction whilst Coastway passengers' ratings are higher than average.

| <b>Southern - % satisfied<br/>NPS Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Sussex Coast<br/>- Main Line</b> | <b>Sussex Coast<br/>- coast</b> | <b>Metro/ South<br/>London</b> |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sufficient room for all passengers to sit / stand | 62           | 65                                  | 67                              | 60                             |
| Frequency of trains on that route                 | 68           | 72                                  | 73                              | 66                             |
| Sample size                                       | 1870         | 555                                 | 144                             | 1171                           |

The NPS figures indicate that sufficient room to sit/stand and frequency of service, especially on peak and Metro/South London services are issues that require further attention, an assessment backed up by these comments from a London Borough and a South London rail user:

*“Lambeth, as an inner London borough, has an expectation for six trains per hour on weekday services... infrastructure must be in place to ensure that these services can follow a regular clock face timetable and avoid bunching and gaps, particularly in the morning peak.”<sup>15</sup>*

*“...at peak times i.e. 07.45 – 09.00 there are trains only every 15 – 20 minutes but throughout the day every ten minutes. The train is packed with people and does not make the journey comfortable.”<sup>16</sup>*

Capacity problems on peak services on the Main Line are also of concern, as indicated by Brighton Line Commuters:

*“We have brought to the attention of Southern the critical overcrowding on morning peak services from the West Coastway. The 06.33, 06.43 and 07.03 from Littlehampton are now frequently full and standing before they arrive at Hove.”<sup>17</sup>*

Our route-based research also shows that service issues are high in importance to passengers. Frequency of service is ranked third most important factor, length of journey time ranked fourth and being able to get a seat ranked sixth.

Gap analysis<sup>18</sup> from the route-based findings reveals that improvement to frequency is in the top two priorities for all routes bar both Coastway East and West and London Bridge to Uckfield. Increasing

<sup>15</sup> London Borough of Lambeth

<sup>16</sup> Safia Higham, individual response from a member of Southwark Rail User Group

<sup>17</sup> BML December 2008 timetable consultation response, Brighton Line Commuters

<sup>18</sup> Explanation of gap analysis/methodology – Appendix D

speed of journey also appears in the weighted gap analysis. It was third highest priority for Victoria to East Croydon, Coastway West and Victoria to Horsham:

*“Re: Worthing/Shoreham-by-Sea/Hove – London: Much room for improvement. Trains to London are no faster than they were fifty years ago and at certain times of the day it has been quicker to change at Brighton.”<sup>19</sup>*

### Specific aspirations for service patterns

The route based work asked specific questions around frequency/service patterns and generated some clear aspirations.

### Frequency

We asked passengers how satisfied they were with the current frequency of services:

| % very or fairly satisfied | Total | Route 1<br>Victoria<br>-East<br>Croydon | Route 2<br>London<br>Bridge -<br>East<br>Croydon | Route 3<br>Victoria-<br>Brighton | Route 4<br>Coastway<br>East | Route 5<br>Coastway<br>West | Route 6<br>Victoria<br>-<br>Redhill | Route 7<br>London<br>Bridge -<br>Uckfield | Route 8<br>Victoria -<br>Horsham |
|----------------------------|-------|---|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Weekdays                   | 66    | 69                                      | 65   | 71                               | 67                          | 68                          | 71                                  | 60  | 57                               |
| Weekends                   | 42    | 43                                      | 43   | 46                               | 45                          | 45                          | 42                                  | 39  | 37                               |
| Sample size                | 6251  | 741                                     | 777  | 892                              | 772                         | 796                         | 726                                 | 750                                       | 797                              |

This seems to give a clear indication that satisfaction with frequency of service at weekends is much lower than that for weekdays. The particularly low satisfaction for the routes from London Bridge to Uckfield and Victoria to Horsham is illustrated by comments from the Sussex Community Rail Partnership which has long called for earlier and later trains for Uckfield at weekends. They note:

*“The current Sunday service (is) poor in comparison with the weekday service....The last train back from London Bridge is 20.32 and the first train out of Uckfield does not arrive in London until 11.52, both legs of the journey require changes with long waits for connection, despite this the service is well subscribed.”*

### Frequency weekday peak and off-peak

We asked passengers how often trains should run during the weekday peak and off-peak. Summarising the findings we can identify passenger aspirations for the following frequencies:

<sup>19</sup> Simon Shreeve, on behalf of Peter Bottomley, MP for Worthing West

## Weekday Peak

| <b>Mon-Fri - Peak<br/>Trains per hour<br/>(tph)</b>                                       | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria<br/>-East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria-<br/>Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway<br/>East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway<br/>West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria<br/>-<br/>Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria -<br/>Horsham</b> |
|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Mean tph <sup>20</sup>  | 4.7   | 4.5   | 3.3                                       | 3.0                                  | 2.5                                  | 3.6   | 2.5   | 3.5                                       |
| Majority tph <sup>21</sup><br>[point at which<br>cumulative<br>preference exceeds<br>50%] | 6   | 6   | 4   | 3                                    | 3                                    | 4   | 3   | 4   |
| Sample size   | 741   | 777   | 892                                       | 772                                  | 796                                  | 726   | 750   | 797                                       |

## Weekday Off-peak

| <b>Mon-Fri – Off-Peak<br/>Trains per hour<br/>(tph)</b>                  | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria<br/>-East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria-<br/>Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway<br/>East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway<br/>West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria<br/>-<br/>Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria -<br/>Horsham</b> |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Mean tph   | 3.6   | 3.5   | 2.4                                       | 2.3                                  | 1.9                                  | 2.6   | 1.7   | 2.5                                       |
| Majority tph [point at<br>which cumulative<br>preference exceeds<br>50%] | 4   | 4   | 2   | 2                                    | 2                                    | 2   | 2   | 2   |
| Sample size  | 741   | 777   | 892                                       | 772                                  | 796                                  | 726   | 750   | 797                                       |

## Saturdays

| <b>Saturday<br/>Trains per hour<br/>(tph)</b>                            | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria<br/>-East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria-<br/>Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway<br/>East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway<br/>West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria<br/>-<br/>Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria -<br/>Horsham</b> |
|--|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Mean tph   | 3.4   | 3.2   | 2.3                                       | 2.3                                  | 1.9                                  | 2.3   | 1.6   | 2.3                                       |
| Majority tph [point at<br>which cumulative<br>preference exceeds<br>50%] | 4   | 4   | 2   | 2                                    | 2                                    | 2   | 2   | 2   |
| Sample size  | 741   | 777   | 892                                       | 772                                  | 796                                  | 726   | 750   | 797                                       |

<sup>20</sup> Passengers were given a series of time-bands (every ten minutes, 15 minutes etc.) and asked to select their preferred option. This gave an average time between services which could be translated into the mean number of trains per hour (tph)

<sup>21</sup> This looks at the point at which cumulative preference for a particular time-band exceeds 50% (i.e. the majority view). If, say, this occurred in the 'at least every ten minute' time-band it would equate to six tph, if in the 'at least every 15 minute' time-band it would equate to four tph etc.

Sundays

| <b>Sunday Trains per hour (tph)</b>                             | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria - East Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London Bridge - East Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria - Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria - Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London Bridge - Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria - Horsham</b> |
|---|--|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Mean tph  | 2.8  | 2.8   | 2                                      | 1.9                              | 1.6                              | 2                                     | 1.3   | 1.9                                   |
| Majority tph [point at which cumulative preference exceeds 50%] | 3  | 3   | 2                                      | 2                                | 2                                | 2                                     | 1   | 2                                     |
| Sample size   | 741  | 777   | 892                                    | 772                              | 796                              | 726                                   | 750   | 797                                   |

Combining the aspirations above we can summarise passenger aspirations for the mean number of trains per hour across the week as follows:

| <b>Average number of Trains per hour (tph)</b> | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria - East Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London Bridge - East Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria - Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria - Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London Bridge - Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria - Horsham</b> |
|--|--|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Mon-Fri-Peak                                   | 4.7  | 4.5   | 3.3                                    | 3.0                              | 2.5                              | 3.6                                   | 2.5   | 3.5                                   |
| Mon-Fri Off-peak                               | 3.6  | 3.5   | 2.4                                    | 2.3                              | 1.9                              | 2.6                                   | 1.7   | 2.5                                   |
| Saturday                                       | 3.4  | 3.2   | 2.3                                    | 2.3                              | 1.9                              | 2.3                                   | 1.6   | 2.3                                   |
| Sunday   | 2.8  | 2.8   | 2                                      | 1.9                              | 1.6                              | 2                                     | 1.3   | 1.9                                   |
| Sample size                                    | 741  | 777   | 892                                    | 772                              | 796                              | 726                                   | 750   | 797                                   |

Clearly, the match between passenger aspirations and frequencies on any given route will depend on the service patterns at both the origin and destination stations. But, taking the overall summary set out above, it is notable (if unsurprising) that Metro routes have higher demand at all times and particularly in the peak. This finding adds weight to the TfL view that services should be at least four tph. London TravelWatch have also confirmed their view of the need for, generally, four trains per hour or above in a paper to Passenger Focus and DfT<sup>22</sup>.

Outside the Metro area, the match between existing service provision and passenger aspirations at specific localities warrants further more detailed exploration, particularly in view of the feedback received by Passenger Focus from across the network. This indicates that there are multiple demands for service enhancements and judgements will be required about which improvements should be prioritised within the current and likely future capacity of the infrastructure.

Passenger needs are best served when frequencies are regular and served by a clock face timetable, as the London Borough of Sutton comments:

<sup>22</sup> New South Central Franchise. Note to Passenger Focus re: Main themes for franchise specification. London TravelWatch, 2008.

*“A more frequent and regular clockface service on all lines, to create a ‘turn-up-and-go’ Metro style service with trains at least every 15 minutes. More even spacing of trains as they are ‘bunched’ at the moment between Sutton and Victoria, particularly in the evenings and at weekends”.*

There is little difference in the aspirations between Monday-Friday off peak and Saturday, which adds emphasis to the increasingly prevalent concept of a six day railway which should continue to be considered for service planning.

There are also passenger and industry aspirations for changing social patterns to be recognised in a move towards a seven day railway, with improvements to the provision and frequency of services on Sundays, which are notorious for engineering disruption.

London TravelWatch has made specific requests for a move towards equalisation of services on Saturday and Sunday, aside from a later start of service. They note:

*“Currently service patterns and frequencies are well below that provided during the week and it has long been an issue of concern to stakeholders and through our postbag.”<sup>23</sup>*

The need for improved Sunday services has also been noted on the Coastway:

*“... as it is the second busiest shopping day of the week there needs to be a better service to reflect this ... You only need to look at traffic on the A27 around Chichester or through Worthing to see the potential for growth.”<sup>24</sup>*

Similarly, in light of changing social behaviour, the franchise should also require the operator to explore and respond to the demand for improved services for special events and holidays, particularly for services within the London area and on the Brighton Main Line on Boxing Day and New Years Eve.

### Early morning trains

The route-based research demonstrates some demand for earlier morning trains on weekdays but virtually none at weekends:

| Do you need trains to run earlier in the morning than at present? |       |   |  |                                  |                             |                             |                                     |   |                                  |
|---|-------|---|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| % saying yes  | Total | Route 1<br>Victoria<br>-East<br>Croydon | Route 2<br>London<br>Bridge -<br>East<br>Croydon | Route 3<br>Victoria-<br>Brighton | Route 4<br>Coastway<br>East | Route 5<br>Coastway<br>West | Route 6<br>Victoria<br>-<br>Redhill | Route 7<br>London<br>Bridge -<br>Uckfield | Route 8<br>Victoria -<br>Horsham |
| Weekdays  | 14    | 17                                      | 22   | 12                               | 10                          | 11                          | 13                                  | 17  | 10                               |
| Weekends  | 5     | 6                                       | 7  | 3                                | 4                           | 6                           | 4                                   | 4   | 5                                |
| Sample size   | 6251  | 741                                     | 777  | 892                              | 772                         | 796                         | 726                                 | 750                                       | 797                              |

<sup>23</sup> Tim Bellenger, London TravelWatch

<sup>24</sup> Simon Bell, Southampton City Council

However, given that our research surveys started at 07.00 onwards, it is possible that the demands of earlier travellers were not picked up in this particular research and this may merit further exploration.

Of the 14% who did want earlier services at weekdays the demand was for substantially earlier services between 04.30 – 05.30:

| <b>If yes - what time should the first train be: WEEKDAYS</b> |         |  |  |                                |                            |                            |                                 |                                       |                                 |
|---|---------|--|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Base: those wanting earlier trains</b>                     | Total % | Route 1<br>Victoria -East<br>Croydon % | Route 2<br>London Bridge - East<br>Croydon % | Route 3<br>Victoria-Brighton % | Route 4<br>Coastway East % | Route 5<br>Coastway West % | Route 6<br>Victoria - Redhill % | Route 7<br>London Bridge - Uckfield % | Route 8<br>Victoria - Horsham % |
| 04.30-04.59   | 32      | 38                                     | 38   | 39                             | 40                         | 37                         | 32                              | 11                                    | 27                              |
| 05.00-05.29   | 25      | 30                                     | 25   | 17                             | 19                         | 19                         | 25                              | 34                                    | 27                              |
| 05.30-05.59   | 18      | 16                                     | 11   | 15                             | 5                          | 18                         | 18                              | 37                                    | 21                              |
| 06.00-06.29   | 11      | 10                                     | 9  | 8                              | 12                         | 12                         | 13                              | 12                                    | 13                              |
| 06.30-06.59   | 4       | 2                                      | 5  | 9                              | 9                          | 7                          | 3                               | 2                                     | 1                               |
| 07.00-07.29   | 3       | 3                                      | 4  | 5                              | 3                          | 3                          | 5                               | 3                                     | 1                               |
| 07.30-07.59   | 2       | 0                                      | 4  | 3                              | 8                          | 3                          | 1                               | 0                                     | 2                               |
| 08.00-08.29   | 1       | 0                                      | 1  | 1                              | 1                          | 0                          | 1                               | 1                                     | 1                               |
| 08.30-08.59   | 0       | 0                                      | 0  | 0                              | 0                          | 1                          | 0                               | 1                                     | 1                               |
| Sample Size   | 877     | 124                                    | 170  | 110                            | 78                         | 91                         | 91                              | 131                                   | 82                              |

As Bexhill Rail Action Group comments on one specific example: *“The current first train from Hastings at 05.07 does not arrive at Gatwick until 06.41, too late to check in for many early morning flights.”*

### Later-evening trains

Our route-based findings demonstrate a fair level of demand for later-evening trains, particularly for Metro and suburban routes.

| <b>Do you need trains to run later in the evening than at present?</b> |         |  |  |                                |                            |                            |                                 |                                       |                                 |
|--|---------|--|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Base: those wanting later-evening trains</b>                        | Total % | Route 1<br>Victoria -East<br>Croydon % | Route 2<br>London Bridge - East<br>Croydon % | Route 3<br>Victoria-Brighton % | Route 4<br>Coastway East % | Route 5<br>Coastway West % | Route 6<br>Victoria - Redhill % | Route 7<br>London Bridge - Uckfield % | Route 8<br>Victoria - Horsham % |
| Weekdays   | 24      | 22                                     | 32   | 18                             | 18                         | 17                         | 23                              | 37                                    | 25                              |
| Sample Size  | 1490    | 162                                    | 247  | 164                            | 138                        | 182                        | 168                             | 277                                   | 202                             |

| Do you need trains to run later in the evening than at present? |         |   |  |                                       |                                  |                                  |  |  |  |
|---|---------|---|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Base: those wanting later-evening trains                        | Total % | Route 1<br>Victoria -East<br>Croydon<br>% | Route 2<br>London Bridge -<br>East<br>Croydon<br>% | Route 3<br>Victoria-<br>Brighton<br>% | Route 4<br>Coastway<br>East<br>% | Route 5<br>Coastway<br>West<br>% | Route 6<br>Victoria<br>-<br>Redhill<br>% | Route 7<br>London<br>Bridge -<br>Uckfield<br>% | Route 8<br>Victoria<br>-<br>Horsham<br>% |
| Weekends  | 25      | 27  | 32   | 20                                    | 23                               | 22                               | 21                                       | 27   | 25                                       |
| Sample size   | 1538    | 203                                       | 249  | 176                                   | 181                              | 178                              | 153                                      | 199  | 199                                      |

When asked at what time the last train should run, the favoured time is for a service between 01.30-01.59:

| If yes - what time should the last train be: WEEKDAYS |         |  |   |                                       |                                  |                                  |  |  |  |
|---|---------|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Base: those wanting later-evening trains              | Total % | Route 1<br>Victoria<br>-East<br>Croydon<br>% | Route 2<br>London<br>Bridge -<br>East<br>Croydon<br>% | Route 3<br>Victoria-<br>Brighton<br>% | Route 4<br>Coastway<br>East<br>% | Route 5<br>Coastway<br>West<br>% | Route 6<br>Victoria<br>-<br>Redhill<br>% | Route 7<br>London<br>Bridge -<br>Uckfield<br>% | Route 8<br>Victoria<br>-<br>Horsham<br>% |
| 10.30-10.59   | 4       | 2  | 6   | 2                                     | 4                                | 8                                | 1  | 4  | 8  |
| 11.00-11.29   | 4       | 2  | 1   | 2                                     | 4                                | 5                                | 2  | 11   | 4  |
| 11.30-11.59   | 8       | 1  | 2   | 2                                     | 5                                | 13                               | 3  | 23   | 5  |
| 12.00-12.29   | 14      | 6  | 11  | 8                                     | 18                               | 11                               | 11                                       | 24   | 19                                       |
| 12.30-12.59   | 15      | 20   | 19  | 12                                    | 15                               | 16                               | 11                                       | 14   | 15                                       |
| 1.00-1.29   | 15      | 15   | 19  | 18                                    | 15                               | 11                               | 24                                       | 8  | 17                                       |
| 1.30-1.59   | 36      | 52   | 40  | 52                                    | 38                               | 34                               | 47                                       | 14   | 29                                       |
| Sample Size   | 1490    | 162  | 247   | 164                                   | 138                              | 132                              | 168                                      | 277  | 202                                      |

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the desire for services in the 01.30-01.59 time slot is even more pronounced at weekends.

| If yes - what time should the last train be: WEEKENDS |         |   |  |                                |                            |                            |                                 |                                       |                                 |
|---|---------|---|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Base: those wanting later-evening trains              | Total % | Route 1<br>Victoria - East<br>Croydon % | Route 2<br>London Bridge - East<br>Croydon % | Route 3<br>Victoria-Brighton % | Route 4<br>Coastway East % | Route 5<br>Coastway West % | Route 6<br>Victoria - Redhill % | Route 7<br>London Bridge - Uckfield % | Route 8<br>Victoria - Horsham % |
| 10.30-10.59   | 2       | 0                                       | 2  | 2                              | 1                          | 3                          | 0                               | 2                                     | 4                               |
| 11.00-11.29   | 2       | 0                                       | 1  | 0                              | 1                          | 3                          | 1                               | 5                                     | 2                               |
| 11.30-11.59   | 5       | 0                                       | 1  | 2                              | 5                          | 7                          | 1                               | 18                                    | 6                               |
| 12.00-12.29   | 8       | 4                                       | 5  | 6                              | 11                         | 8                          | 4                               | 15                                    | 10                              |
| 12.30-12.59   | 10      | 6                                       | 10   | 6                              | 10                         | 12                         | 7                               | 14                                    | 14                              |
| 1.00-1.29   | 16      | 13                                      | 20   | 16                             | 17                         | 13                         | 14                              | 18                                    | 15                              |
| 1.30-1.59   | 52      | 73                                      | 53   | 61                             | 52                         | 45                         | 71                              | 25                                    | 43                              |
| Sample size   | 1538    | 203                                     | 249  | 176                            | 181                        | 178                        | 153                             | 199                                   | 199                             |

The needs of Gatwick Airport illustrate the demands for improved travel opportunities across the board:

*“The changing profile of Gatwick’s passengers over recent years has led to a shift towards early morning departures. This means more passengers arriving early in the morning for check-in, at times when few rail services are operating. Late evening flight arrivals incur the same problem, as does the reduced timetable on many routes on a Sunday.”<sup>25</sup>*

Similarly, the needs of Gatwick Airport staff, many of whom work shift patterns and are drawn from local communities where the rail services do not match their travel needs, are noted by Daniel Wright of Surrey County Council:

*“Local access to Gatwick Airport is currently very poor. Train services don’t reflect the shift pattern of airport workers.”*

### Connections

NPS results also suggest that the need to improve connections with other train services for the Coastway should be explored:

| Southern - % satisfied<br>NPS Autumn 2007 NPS    | Total | Sussex Coast<br>- Main Line | Sussex Coast<br>- coast | Metro/ South<br>London |
|--|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to take | 83    | 83                          | 84                      | 83                     |
| Connections with other train services            | 73    | 75                          | 65                      | 73                     |
| Sample Size                                      | 1870  | 555                         | 144                     | 1171                   |

<sup>25</sup> BAA Gatwick

Comments from two local railway groups lend support to this:

*"Improved train service Hassocks to Brighton between 08.00 and 10.00 (very important for people travelling to work and college in Brighton or for connections to the East and West Coastway routes for work and college)"<sup>26</sup>*

*"...provide timely connections at Ashford between [South Central] services and the limited stop London services to and from St Pancras and Charring Cross/Cannon Street."<sup>27</sup>*

Remarks about the broader agenda for integrated train services have also been made:

*"I am concerned about the increasing compartmentalisation of train services...Whatever the specification is to be...it ought to be part of a wider national plan to provide affordable and convenient rail travel across the country....Forcing a change or several changes of train to reach a destination does not encourage rail travel."<sup>28</sup>*

In general, with a quarter or more of passengers across the current franchise dissatisfied with connections with other train services, we would reiterate the importance of the franchise requirements including a commitment to pursue integration of services with those of other operators, especially at the margins or nodal points of the network where onward connections are likely to be required.

### **Other service issues**

In addition to the findings from the NPS and our route based research there are a number of other service issues that arise from our work with passengers and stakeholders on the current franchise, which we believe that the new franchise needs to address. We note below issues of particular significance for the base specification for the franchise. However, further specific information has also been received about passenger aspirations for many routes within the franchise and we suggest that the DfT and bidders should conduct a structured dialogue with passengers and stakeholders to understand how these can be evaluated and addressed at as early a stage in the franchise as possible.

**Brighton Main Line:** A principal concern relates to the allocation of capacity between services on the Brighton Main Line where the implementation of the BML RUS has yet to take effect. It is vital that the usage of stock and paths by the Gatwick Express is monitored closely. If the new service pattern proves to be sub-optimal, particularly in relation to the provision of journey opportunities to and from East Croydon and Clapham Junction and for the alleviation of over-crowding in the Metro area then the franchise must allow for review and change to better respond to passengers' travel needs.

Brighton Line Commuters have highlighted the potential problems in their response to the timetable proposals for December 2008:

*"Regular calls at Clapham Junction with direct trains from Brighton should be included in the morning peak. The gap with no calls at Clapham Junction that starts at 07.55 and does not close until after 09.00 needs to be closed....We are worried that the lack of direct services to Clapham Junction will cause excessive numbers of passengers changing at East Croydon from London Bridge and FCC services causing unnecessary and unwelcome problems at that station."*

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<sup>26</sup> Hassocks Amenity Association Railway Group

<sup>27</sup> Marsh Link Action Group

<sup>28</sup> Simon Shreeve, on behalf of Peter Bottomley, MP for Worthing West

**West London Line:** Passenger Focus and others have already made representation in relation to the proposed termination of West London Line services at Clapham Junction. We hope that a means has now been found to ensure continuation of the service from Watford at least as far as Croydon but if this issue remains outstanding then the new franchise must identify the rolling stock to facilitate this and, preferably, allow for the extension of some trains as far as Milton Keynes.

**Redhill and Reigate:** Services to and from Redhill are not commensurate with the usage, as well as likely growth at this designated joint transport hub with Reigate and enhancements are required. Surrey County Council comments that:

*“Redhill needs an express fast link to London and Reigate has no off-peak service to London at all and needs one.”*

**Three Oaks and Winchelsea:** We also propose that there should be a limited restoration of services to Three Oaks and Winchelsea that, at a minimum, enables passengers to travel to and from work/school/leisure activities at appropriate times of the day.

The local group comments:

*“The train currently travels very slowly through Winchelsea and Three Oaks. We note from the published timetable that stopping at only one of these small stations would simply add 1.5 minutes to the overall journey time”<sup>29</sup>*

### **Conclusions – capacity**

- low passenger satisfaction with room to sit or stand indicates that capacity is a key issue that the franchise must address
- the particularly low levels of satisfaction with room to sit/stand amongst peak and Metro passengers will require particular attention
- it is self-evident that the availability of suitable rolling stock is central to the provision of room for passengers to sit/stand as this is governed by the both the length and number of trains serving any given route and their internal layout
- it is imperative that the Brighton Main Line and South London RUS successfully deliver enhanced capacity, particularly in the peak.

### **Conclusions – frequency and connections**

From our route based research we conclude:

- Improvement to frequency is a high priority for all routes bar Coastway East and West and London Bridge-Uckfield.
- Metro routes have higher demand at all times and, unsurprisingly, especially in the peak.
- There is little difference in frequency desired between Monday-Friday off peak and Saturday. This gives added emphasis to six day railway concept (i.e. Saturday is a ‘normal’ day).
- We only identified a small overall demand for earlier trains weekdays (but more so for Metro routes) and virtually none at weekends. Where demand does exist for weekdays it is for services in the region of 04.30-05.30.
- There is much more of a demand for later-evening services, again seemingly higher for Metro/suburban routes. For weekdays the desired time is for 01.30-01.59. The desire for weekend

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<sup>29</sup> Three Oaks and Winchelsea Action for Rail Transport (THWART)

services in the 01.30-01.59 time slot is even more pronounced at weekends. This agenda clearly has some implications for the way that engineering work is carried out

- The findings from Metro routes (routes one and two) suggest that TfL aspirations to bring train services in line with 'tube' hours has some support amongst passengers
- There is a need to improve connections with other services, particularly for passengers on Coastway.

## Recommendations

1. The specification should ensure sufficient and suitable rolling stock to operate all peak services at maximum possible length (subject to evidence of passenger demand) throughout the entire peak and, where there are specific needs, in the off-peak where a maximum loading rule of 70%<sup>30</sup> should apply. Bidders should be required to have a rolling stock plan that facilitates this, utilises vehicles appropriate for the services for which they are used and allows for sufficient spares to operate the required maintenance programme and respond to any instances of train failure.

2. The franchise specification should require bidders to set out how they would aim to deliver the frequency of service sought by passengers, with particular reference to the demands for more weekend and later-evening services.

3. The particular issues relating to capacity and connectivity on the Brighton Main Line, the origin and destination for West London Line services, enhanced services at Redhill and limited restoration of services at Three Oaks and Winchelsea should be addressed in the base timetable for the franchise.

4. Our view is that service frequencies should be commensurate with the location and size of station, the local population served, identified passenger demand (existing and suppressed) and should provide meaningful opportunities to travel at relevant times of the day. The available resources should be applied equitably in relation to the basis above, regardless of whether the station is within the TfL London boundary.

5. The specification should set out requirements for Saturday services to continue to be as close as possible to weekday frequencies in order to match passenger requirements for a six day railway. Changing social patterns mean that the next franchisee should be required to work with Network Rail to identify how demand for services on Sundays and Bank Holidays can be met.

6. The specification should address the demands for later-evening services and require bidders, in conjunction with Network Rail, to identify how these can be delivered. If the desire for later evening services conflicts with the need for engineering possessions, consideration should be given to prioritising later services for Thursday to Saturday evenings (traditionally the more popular days to socialise).

7. The demand for earlier morning services should be further explored with a view to introducing additional early services if warranted.

8. The DfT and bidders should conduct a structured dialogue with passengers and stakeholders to understand how specific aspirations for all routes can be evaluated and addressed from as early a stage in the franchise as possible.

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<sup>30</sup> Paragraph 4.20 of the White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' notes that with an average load factor of about 70%, some passengers will be travelling in conditions that are crowded.

### **Recommendation for measurement, monitoring and reporting capacity on trains**

Weighing technology should be required in all new rolling stock so that an accurate picture of crowding can be built up, maintained and published.

## Fares – value for money, complexity, flexibility and consumer protection

### Value for money for price of ticket

Passengers rank improving value for money as a top priority. Our national priorities research<sup>31</sup> demonstrated that this was the highest priority for improvement (out of 30 rail service attributes) for passengers.

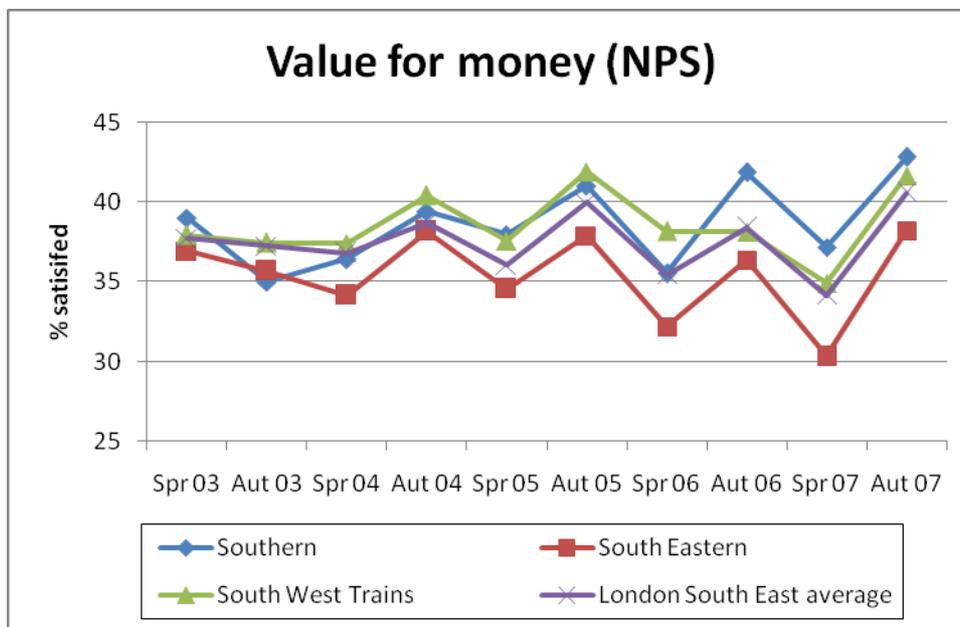
At first glance the route based research reveals a slightly different picture for Southern's existing passengers. When asked to rank criteria as important or very important, value for money only came fifth out of 13 factors, much lower than the national research. However, when looked at purely from those giving a 'very important' ranking, value for money moves up to the third highest, only punctuality and information about train times being higher.

| Importance ranking - route based research            | % ranking very important |
|--|--------------------------|
| Punctuality/reliability of the train                 | 64                       |
| Provision of information about train times/platforms | 57                       |
| Value for money for price of ticket                  | 52                       |
| Frequency of the trains on the route                 | 51                       |
| Ticket buying facility                               | 50                       |
| Being able to get a seat on the train                | 47                       |
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to take     | 44                       |
| Personal security – train                            | 43                       |
| Personal security – stations                         | 41                       |
| Ease of getting to and from the station              | 33                       |
| Not having to change trains                          | 33                       |
| Connections other forms of transport                 | 32                       |
| Ease of getting on/off train                         | 29                       |
| Sample size  | 6251                     |

It is clear, therefore, that value for money is a key consideration for passengers. It is equally clear, though, from the NPS scores that passenger satisfaction with value for money is low. The Autumn 2007 NPS results show only 43% of Southern's passengers were satisfied with the value for money of the price of their ticket:

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<sup>31</sup> Passengers' Priorities for Improvements in Rail Services – June 2007 – Passenger Focus



Further analysis indicates a significant difference in satisfaction between peak and off-peak travellers. In Autumn 2007 just 31% of peak passengers were satisfied, whereas this was 47% for off-peak travellers.

This difference is backed up by fares research<sup>32</sup> conducted by Passenger Focus which demonstrated a much lower level of satisfaction amongst commuters:

| <i>Overall, how satisfied are you with the value for money of the price of the ticket you are travelling with today?</i> | Commuters | Leisure | Business |
|--|-----------|---------|----------|
|  | %         | %       | %        |
| Very satisfied   | 10        | 36      | 20       |
| Fairly satisfied   | 30        | 32      | 31       |
| Neither  | 24        | 14      | 25       |
| Fairly dissatisfied  | 21        | 10      | 14       |
| Very dissatisfied  | 13        | 5       | 6        |
| Don't know   | 1         | 5       | 3        |
| Sample size  | 719       | 760     | 643      |

The same research also looked in more depth at value for money among season ticket holders. It found a very low level of awareness of the benefits available through season tickets, particularly the number of weeks 'free' travel offered by the annual season ticket.

Regular commuters who travelled using daily tickets were also asked why they did not obtain a season ticket. Almost six out of ten cited irregular travel patterns as the main reason, identified as the greatest barrier. Other reasons for non-purchase related primarily to cost. Either commuters didn't see the season ticket as offering value for money (and given the lack of awareness of the amount of free travel provided by season tickets identified in the research cited above, this was not surprising) or they could not afford to pay the lump sum in advance.

<sup>32</sup> Passenger Requirements of Rail fares – July 2006 – Passenger Focus

| <b>Why don't you have a season ticket?</b><br><i>(Base: regular travellers with no season ticket)</i> | <b>%</b> |
|---|----------|
| Irregular travel patterns   | 59       |
| Not value for money   | 19       |
| Haven't got money to pay in advance   | 14       |
| Can't afford one  | 11       |
| Don't want to commit  | 9        |
| Haven't got round to it   | 7        |
| Have to get a photocard   | 4        |
| Don't know how to   | 2        |
| Other/Don't Know  | 15       |
| Sample size   | 209      |

We also tested the appeal of being able to pay for an annual season ticket in equal instalments over a 12 month period (at 0% interest) and of a carnet of ten train tickets (no mention of price or discounts).

Slightly under a fifth of commuters travelling without season tickets said they would be very likely to buy one if they had the options to do so, interest free, over a 12 month period. An additional 22% would be fairly likely to pursue this offer if it were available. There was a higher interest in the 26-44 year old age group whilst those least interested included, perhaps not surprisingly, those who are earning in excess of £50k pa.

| <b>Likelihood of buying annual season ticket if pay by equal instalments over 12 months at 0% interest</b><br><i>(Base: regular traveller with no season ticket)</i> | <b>%</b> |
|--|----------|
| Very likely  | 17       |
| Fairly likely  | 22       |
| Neither  | 17       |
| Fairly unlikely  | 9        |
| Very unlikely  | 26       |
| Don't know   | 10       |
| Sample Size  | 234      |

Cost is, therefore, a significant barrier to purchase and a substantial number of passengers would purchase a season ticket if help was available, either from employers or in the form of an interest free purchase facility.

The carnet concept was also very well received by those who didn't have a season ticket but travelled regularly. Indeed, over 80% of these commuters (and almost 90% of females) expressed an interest in acquiring a carnet whilst almost half were very interested in doing so:

| <b>Interest in buying book of 10 tickets<br/>(Base: regular travellers with no season ticket)</b> | <b>%</b> |
|---|----------|
| Very interested   | 47       |
| Fairly interested   | 36       |
| Neither   | 7        |
| Fairly uninterested   | 5        |
| Very uninterested   | 3        |
| Don't know  | 2        |
| Sample size   | 239      |

In addition to these research findings Passenger Focus is routinely contacted by parents commenting on the need for 'child-fares' to remain applicable to 16-18 year olds who are in full time education while travelling to/from school or college. For example:

*"Is there any way that a scheme could be brought in whereby young people could continue to pay half fare until the end of compulsory schooling? It could involve a special photocard, either issued by schools or by booking offices on receipt of an official letter."*<sup>33</sup>

This is important for both social inclusion and encouraging extended education and is part of Passenger Focus's overall policy on fares.

The promotion of increased patronage in the off-peak (where 47% of passengers expressed satisfaction with value for money) might be achieved if consideration was given to the suggestion from one campaigning group to:

*"Remove the 'Network Card' restrictions on minimum spending, at least within the area covered by the franchise"*<sup>34</sup>

### **Conclusions – value for money**

The evidence points towards a need to improve value for money overall and, in particular, to address concerns about this issue for commuters/peak time travellers. Some of this will involve improvements to quality of service as well as the cost of the ticket<sup>35</sup> but the research points to some possible interventions:

- Commuters have the lowest level of satisfaction. Season tickets provide relative savings and yet the research above shows that passengers are not fully aware of this. There is clearly a need for much greater promotion of the benefits and value that season tickets offer to the regular traveller.
- There is also strong support for a direct debit scheme by which passengers can buy an annual ticket – and access the benefits it provides - in monthly instalments. This also has positives in terms of social inclusion as there was higher than average interest amongst females and those under the age of 26 (although it should be noted that this is based on a relatively small sample).
- There are many people who work part-time and travel three days a week. It does not generally pay to buy a weekly season and so three daily tickets must be bought. This, in turn, helps to clog-

<sup>33</sup> Richard Madge, Bexhill Rail Action Group

<sup>34</sup> Railfuture Coastway Division

<sup>35</sup> Qualitative Research Among Rail Customers – RPC and SRA – August 2001

up ticket queues. A carnet style ticket system would allow books of tickets to be bought in advance, presumably offering a small discount, and improve queuing times. The above research shows that this was well received by those who don't have a season ticket but travel regularly, especially among females.

- Currently sixth form and college students find themselves suddenly having to pay full fare rather than the half-fare child rate available up to this point. Addressing this has benefits in terms of improving social inclusion.
- Increased off-peak patronage might be achieved if the 'Network Card' spending restrictions were removed.

### Complexity of the fare structure

Fares research by Passenger Focus<sup>36</sup> found that, for many passengers, finding the right ticket can be a frustrating experience. Only approximately half of commuters and leisure travellers asked felt confident of being able to find the best value tickets for the journeys they make. Business passengers were generally less confident of being able to do this:

| <b>% agreeing to the following statement</b>                              | <b>Commuters</b> | <b>Leisure</b> | <b>Business</b> |
|---|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| I am confident of being able to find the best value ticket for my journey | 50%              | 48%            | 36%             |
| Sample size   | 719              | 673            | 604             |

| <b>% agreeing to the following statement</b>          | <b>Leisure</b> | <b>Business</b> |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| I understand the range of tickets and fares available | 44%            | 34%             |
| Sample size   | 661            | 609             |

The existing initiative to simplify the fare structure – standard terms and conditions for each ticket type and the introduction of common fare names and types across the network (Anytime, Off-peak and Advance)<sup>37</sup> - should help. Passenger Focus research<sup>38</sup> shows that passengers felt the new fare names to be sensible (more so for Anytime and Advance than off-peak); and that it had the potential to make choosing the right ticket easier.

### Conclusions - complexity

The research shows that the existing structure is seen as an obstruction rather than an aid to making an informed choice.

The complexity of fares needs to be addressed to help passengers feel they are getting the best value ticket for their journey. The proposed simplified fare structure should help. The acid test, however, is how bidders would look to implement the introduction of a two-tier off-peak fare structure (i.e. off-peak and super off-peak). On South West Trains, for instance, this resulted in an increase of up to 20% on off-

<sup>36</sup> Passenger Requirements of rail fares – July 2006 – Passenger Focus

<sup>37</sup> As set out in Table 10.1 page 98 of the White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway'

<sup>38</sup> Fare Structure? – May 2007 – Passenger Focus

peak fares. If the new fare structure is seen by passengers as a means of increasing off-peak fares then the message about simplification will be lost.

### Flexibility of Travel

Passenger Focus has a body of work looking at the ability of passengers to shift their travel patterns to avoid the busiest times of travel.

Fares research in 2006 showed that up to 48% of passengers might travel earlier or later to avoid the busiest periods if ticket costs were reduced by 20%<sup>39</sup>.

Focus group findings<sup>40</sup> in 2007 also showed that passengers could be incentivised to change their travel times but they would need confidence that the off-peak journey would be reliable and would require discounts of around 25-30%. The focus groups also demonstrated a desire to be rewarded for ‘good behaviour’ rather than being penalised for ‘bad’. Participants resented pricing strategies that penalised peak travel and ticketing strategies that forced them into travelling at certain times. They liked the idea that the reward for off-peak travel might accrue in some way and that tickets could be flexible enough to reward them when they travelled at off-peak times and not penalise them when they didn’t.

Our route based work confirms this potential for passengers to be incentivised to change travel patterns:

| <b>How likely is it that you could travel earlier or later to avoid the busiest trains?</b> |                 |                 |                |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>(Base: all those who normally travel in the peak)</b>                                    | <b>Commuter</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Leisure</b> |
| <b>% Very or fairly likely with 20% discount</b>  | 43              | 39              | 47             |
| Sample size   | 2097            | 209             | 1066           |

Recent research conducted by Passenger Focus with employers<sup>41</sup> found that one in five businesses is amenable to the idea of flexitime to allow employees to take advantage of less crowded services. This rises to a quarter among companies currently using rail. We also found that the larger the company, the more amenable they are to this idea and that the public sector is more in favour than the private sector.

### Conclusions - flexibility

Passenger Focus is against raising fares to discourage train travel, which in itself runs directly counter to the Government’s desire to get more people out of their cars and onto public transport. However, we are not against using fares to help re-distribute train travel by, for instance, offering lower fares to passengers prepared to travel outside the main peaks.

The research above indicates that there is support for the concept of ‘early/late bird’ incentive schemes as a short-term means of reducing congestion/crowding. While none of the research was detailed enough to draw any conclusions as to by exactly how much congestion could be alleviated, there is enough evidence to suggest that incentives should be actively considered. We believe, therefore, that train companies should explore the potential for an incentive scheme, especially before considering

<sup>39</sup> Passenger Requirements of rail fares – July 2006 – Passenger Focus

<sup>40</sup> Encouraging edge of morning peak travel - October 2006 – Passenger Focus

<sup>41</sup> Employers’ requirements from rail and priorities for improvement - February 2008 – by FDS for Passenger Focus

more punitive measures to restrict demand through measures such as increasing peak fares or restricting ticket validities.

We believe that the franchise specification should include options for such incentive schemes. Focus group findings<sup>42</sup> clearly point to the need for any system to be flexible. Existing Early Bird schemes have tended to specify an arrival time (such as you must arrive before 07.30) with season ticket-holders travelling outside this time penalised with an excess fare. The research indicates that commuters do not want to be tied down, they want to be rewarded for those days they travel outside the peak rather than be penalised when they travel within. The idea being that passengers accrue a benefit by avoiding the peak and the more often they do so, the higher the overall benefit. This would require a relatively sophisticated ticketing system capable of recording actual journey details. It is likely, therefore, that any successful introduction of an early/late bird scheme for commuters would need to be linked with the roll-out of smart-card technology (i.e. ITSO/Oyster). This makes it crucial that the technology includes (or at least includes the option for) scope for an early/late bird scheme.

### **Adequacy of consumer protection**

Passenger Focus has expressed concern at the amount of consumer protection afforded to rail passengers. South West Train's decision to increase unregulated, off-peak fares by up to 20% and First Great Western's ability to increase regulated fares by up to 10% both led to formal complaints from Passenger Focus to the regulatory authorities.

### **Conclusions**

The existing formula for regulated fares (RPI+1%) has undoubtedly provided some protection for passengers but we believe that there are a number of issues that still need to be addressed in order to provide a greater degree of consumer protection:

#### **More transparency**

In applying fare increases TOCs need some flexibility but the current system allows them too much (i.e. they can change individual fares by +/-5% as long as the average remains at RPI+1). The fares basket flexibility is so great that when DfT announces that protected fares will rise by RPI + 1% this can bear no relation to individual increases – e.g. First Great Western in December 2007, where some regulated fares remained the same, while some increased by 4.8% and others by 9.8%.

#### **Disconnect between quality of service and fare increases**

It is hard for passengers to understand why they can experience a poor level of service and still receive an above average fare increase.

Passenger Focus believes, therefore, that there is a need to review fares regulation. Our suggestion is that should the basic RPI +1% formula for regulated fares remain as established (and we see this is a maximum conceivable level of increase) then the ability to flex this by the +/-5% currently allowed should be made conditional on quality of service delivered to passengers. If a TOC is delivering a good/improving level of service then they get the full amount of flexibility; if not they get a reduced level of flexibility or even no flexibility at all.

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<sup>42</sup> Encouraging edge of morning peak travel - October 2006 – Passenger Focus

This would not prevent a TOC from increasing prices overall on regulated fares by RPI+1% so it would not affect Government's financial projections but it would narrow the gap between routes/stations within a TOC's area. TOCs would still have flexibility with unregulated fares.

This would, though, require some form of quantifiable/auditable mechanism which would determine whether a TOC had the full +/-5% flexibility or not. We believe the 'triggers' should be:

- PPM Performance figures on a route by route basis
- qualitative measures such as NPS satisfaction scores.

Providing this tighter connection with quality of service/performance could help to prevent scenarios whereby poorer performing routes get the higher fare increases.

The South Central franchise offers the chance to address this.

### **Recommendations – value for money, complexity, flexibility and consumer protection**

1. The application of the fare regulation framework should be changed. Should the basic RPI+1% formula for regulated fare baskets remain as established (and we see this is a maximum conceivable level of increase) then the ability to flex individual regulated fares by the +/-5% currently allowed should be made conditional on the quality of service delivered to passengers. The quality of service measures should include PPM on a route by route basis and NPS scores.

2. The franchise should allow for implementation of the new fare structure<sup>43</sup> but require a commitment to no increases significantly above inflation for off-peak fares. Bidders should be required to provide transparency about off-peak fare levels by setting out their proposals in the bid.

3. The ITT should require bidders to set out proposals for improving value for money and social inclusion by introducing and actively promoting the benefits of new products/services including:

- annual season ticket direct debit payment scheme
- carnet
- child level fares for 16-18 year olds in full time education while travelling to/from school/college.

4. Bidders should be asked to consider 'early/late-bird' schemes that incentivise passengers to travel at less busy times, especially in relation to any smartcard ticketing scheme. At the very least bidders should be required to build such provision into any new smartcard scheme structure

5. Bidders should commit to work with employers to establish interest free loans schemes and also flexible working times to allow passengers to travel outside peak hours.

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<sup>43</sup> as set out in Table 10.1 page 98 of the White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway

## Ticketing and revenue protection

Passenger satisfaction with ticket buying facilities on the current Southern franchise is broadly in line with its peers and the sector average. However, a breakdown of the NPS Autumn 2007 scores by route groups shows significant differences, with satisfaction being much lower in the Metro/South London area.

| <i>Satisfaction with ticket buying facilities (NPS)</i> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Sussex Coast Main Line</b> | <b>Sussex Coast – coast</b> | <b>Metro/ South London</b> |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| % satisfied   | 65           | 69                            | 75                          | 62                         |
| Sample size   | 1870         | 555                           | 144                         | 1171                       |

Our route based work goes some way to support this showing a noticeably worse level of experience on the Metro routes (East Croydon – Victoria, East Croydon-London Bridge) with the next lowest satisfaction on the London Bridge to Uckfield route.

| <i>Ticket buying facilities – by route</i> |              |  |   |                                       |                                  |                                  |                                       |   |                                       |
|--|--------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>% ranking very or fairly good</b>       | <b>Total</b> | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria - East Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London Bridge - East Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria- Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria - Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London Bridge - Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria - Horsham</b> |
| Experience/satisfaction                    | 60           | 51   | 49  | 62                                    | 64                               | 67                               | 63                                    | 57  | 62                                    |
| Sample size                                | 6251         | 741  | 777   | 892                                   | 772                              | 796                              | 726                                   | 750   | 797                                   |

We also identify a worse experience for commuters:

| <i>Ticket buying facilities – by journey purpose</i> |                 |                 |                |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>% ranking very or fairly good</b>                 | <b>Commuter</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Leisure</b> |
| Experience/satisfaction                              | 48              | 71              | 68             |
| Sample size  | 2568            | 399             | 3117           |

The route based work did not identify ticket buying facilities as one of the high-importance factors, it being seventh out of the 13 criteria tested. However, weighted gap analysis (which compares expectation against experience and then weights this by relative importance) reveals that improving ticket buying facilities is a specific priority for Coastway West and Coastway East routes.

The route based work also asked passengers about their likelihood of using particular methods of ticket purchase in the future.

| <b>How likely are you to use the following methods of ticket purchase?</b> |              |  |   |   |                                      |                                      |   |   |   |
|--|--------------|--|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>% very or fairly likely</b>   | <b>Total</b> | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria -<br/>East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria-<br/>Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway<br/>East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway<br/>West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria<br/>-<br/>Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria -<br/>Horsham</b> |
| Ticket office  | 77           | 67   | 68  | 79  | 80                                   | 83                                   | 80  | 83  | 76  |
| Ticket Machine   | 59           | 61   | 58  | 63  | 61                                   | 56                                   | 58  | 51  | 58  |
| Internet   | 25           | 25   | 25  | 33  | 21                                   | 21                                   | 27  | 26  | 21  |
| Telephone  | 6            | 5  | 8   | 5   | 5                                    | 5                                    | 6   | 6   | 4   |
| Smartcard - like an Oyster   | 29           | 47   | 49  | 58  | 15                                   | 12                                   | 30  | 25  | 28  |
| Sample size  | 6251         | 741  | 777   | 892                                       | 772                                  | 796                                  | 726   | 750   | 797                                       |

| <b>How likely are you to use the following methods of ticket purchase?</b> |                 |                 |                |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>% very or fairly likely</b>   | <b>Commuter</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Leisure</b> |
| Ticket office  | 77              | 79              | 78             |
| Ticket machine   | 57              | 66              | 59             |
| Internet   | 23              | 36              | 26             |
| Telephone  | 5               | 7               | 5              |
| Smartcard - like an Oyster   | 35              | 26              | 26             |
| Sample size  | 2568            | 399             | 3117           |

The results show that the traditional method of buying from the ticket office remains the most likely method of purchase, which would mirror the degree of importance given to reducing queuing times in Passenger Focus' research on national priorities for improvement (reducing queuing times at stations being the sixth highest priority for improvement out of 30 criteria). However, it is also evident that there is demand for ticket machines and, to a lesser degree, for smart card and internet retailing.

Findings from a Mystery Shopping Study on Southern in 2007<sup>44</sup> suggest that the provision of ticket machines should be improved at smaller stations. Nearly four in ten of the surveys undertaken at the smallest D/E/F category stations found no ticket machines, despite the fact that these were the stations most likely to have more limited ticket office opening hours.

<sup>44</sup> Southern Railway mystery shopping study, FDS for Passenger Focus, September 2007

Our research on fares<sup>45</sup> asked passengers to indicate the extent to which they trust different ticket sources to provide them with the best value for money tickets for train journeys. The results (see table below) confirmed that face-to-face contact at the ticket office is highly valued by all groups of passengers and is the most trusted source.

| <b>Trust in Ticket Sources</b>         |                  |                |                 |
|--|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
|  | <b>Commuters</b> | <b>Leisure</b> | <b>Business</b> |
|  | <b>%</b>         | <b>%</b>       | <b>%</b>        |
| <b>Ticket office at train station</b>  |                  |                |                 |
| Trust entirely                         | 87               | 88             | 82              |
| Distrust                               | 5                | 5              | 9               |
| <b>Ticket machine at train station</b> |                  |                |                 |
| Trust                                  | 48               | 36             | 34              |
| Distrust                               | 24               | 30             | 33              |
| <b>Internet</b>                        |                  |                |                 |
| Trust                                  | 57               | 55             | 68              |
| Distrust                               | 16               | 19             | 12              |
| <b>Telephone</b>                       |                  |                |                 |
| Trust                                  | 44               | 46             | 54              |
| Distrust                               | 21               | 25             | 18              |
| Sample size                            | 702              | 673            | 625             |

It is noticeable that ticket machines attract the highest levels of distrust. Research by Soroptimist International<sup>46</sup> highlights some of the reasons why this might be – e.g. concerns that the full range of ticket options is not available.

Our route based research asked whether passengers might be interested in alternative ways of receiving tickets. The response showed a good degree of support (53% across all routes) for a means of printing tickets at home, especially for business travel (66% likely) and with a notably high level of interest (65%) on the Brighton Main Line route.

## **Conclusions**

Research/evidence shows that main areas to address are:

- Metro / suburban area
- Coastway West and East
- commuter needs
- smaller D/E/F category stations.

Ticket offices are conclusively shown to be trusted, valued and remain the most likely method of purchase for passengers. We are conscious of industry efforts to reduce the cost of retailing, of which a very big part must constitute staff in booking offices. The above research indicates why the industry /

<sup>45</sup> Passenger Requirements for Rail Fares – July 2006 – Passenger Focus

<sup>46</sup> "It takes a bit of knowing" - Users' experience of railway ticket Machines – October 2006. Soroptimist International of South East England

bidders must think very carefully before doing so. While there may be good grounds to address the balance of staffing such as bringing retail staff out from behind the counter to help passengers use ticket machines, there are no grounds for de-staffing stations/ closing ticket offices.

This research also indicates that ticket machines do have a part to play but there must be a concerted effort to address passengers' mistrust/apprehension – such as having staff to assist passengers and offering a full range of tickets/discounts.

There is sufficient support for new ticketing initiatives to warrant some consideration of the way new technology can play a role in a ticketing strategy, which stakeholders such as London Borough of Merton support:

*“The accelerated introduction of ITSO compliant/Oyster card operation across the entire network should be promoted. This should be combined with simple to understand fare structures”*

It is assumed that the specification will include a commitment to introduce a smartcard scheme (as per recent franchises). If so, it is important that this contains a commitment to retail as well as accept the Oyster card in the London area. Currently South West Trains passengers will be able to use Oyster on the trains but not buy Oyster products at the station.

All these issues can help to address the need to decrease queuing times. The level of importance attached to this in the national priorities work shows the need for queuing time standards to have a higher profile. There ought, therefore, to be more emphasis on monitoring queuing times.

### **Recommendations - ticketing**

1. The needs of passengers who value staff at ticket offices must be a consideration in bidders' retailing proposals. Alternative forms of ticketing must not be used as an excuse to eliminate staffing from stations.
2. TVMs – bidders should demonstrate how they will extend the range of tickets available for purchase, including extension tickets and all available walk-up discount/GroupSave tickets. Bidders should also introduce a facility to collect internet or telephone purchased tickets free of charge.
3. Bidders should indicate how they will translate the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA) requirement to apply their 'reasonable endeavours' to meeting queuing time standards into effective action and what remedial action they would take should evidence demonstrate failings in this area.
4. We expect smartcard proposals to be included as with other recent franchises but believe that this should also include the requirement to not only accept but also retail Oyster (subject to appropriate arrangements agreed through TfL for commercial protection).
5. Bidders should be asked to outline a retailing/ticketing strategy with particular emphasis on Metro area, Coastway East and West routes and smaller D/E/F category stations.

### **Measuring monitoring and reporting**

Requirements should include an emphasis on monitoring and reporting of queuing times (both at the ticket office and for TVMs), TVM reliability and adherence to ticket office retailing hours.

The results of the periodic ATOC mystery shopping exercises monitoring the accuracy and impartiality of the ticketing process should also be published – the aim being to build up levels of trust among passengers.

### **Revenue protection**

Passenger Focus has long advocated the importance of rail operators collecting all the money that is due to them, largely to minimise pressures on the fare box but also to ensure equity for the paying passenger. Hand in hand with this we have promoted the need for the provision of accessible and timely means by which passengers can purchase the appropriate tickets for their journey.

Passengers, amongst whom there is generally low satisfaction with value for money, should be able to expect that train operators ensure that all fares due are collected and that fare evasion is minimised and penalised. Havant Borough Council comments:

*“More use needs to be made of Security Industry Authority accredited guards on certain journeys. This would help with revenue protection which could also be significantly improved, thereby raising the income.”*

Recent exercises in gating and expansion of revenue protection teams on current franchises, including Southern, have demonstrated that investments to secure fare collection deliver returns that outweigh the costs.

TfL also believe that there is significant potential for improving on fare evasion levels and that gating and all day station staffing would enhance security at stations and on trains.

### **Recommendation**

1. Passenger Focus expects that the ITT will require bidders to set out their proposals for a revenue protection policy firmly linked to provision of adequate ticket purchase facilities and that ensures fare collection is maximised and ticketless travel is minimised.

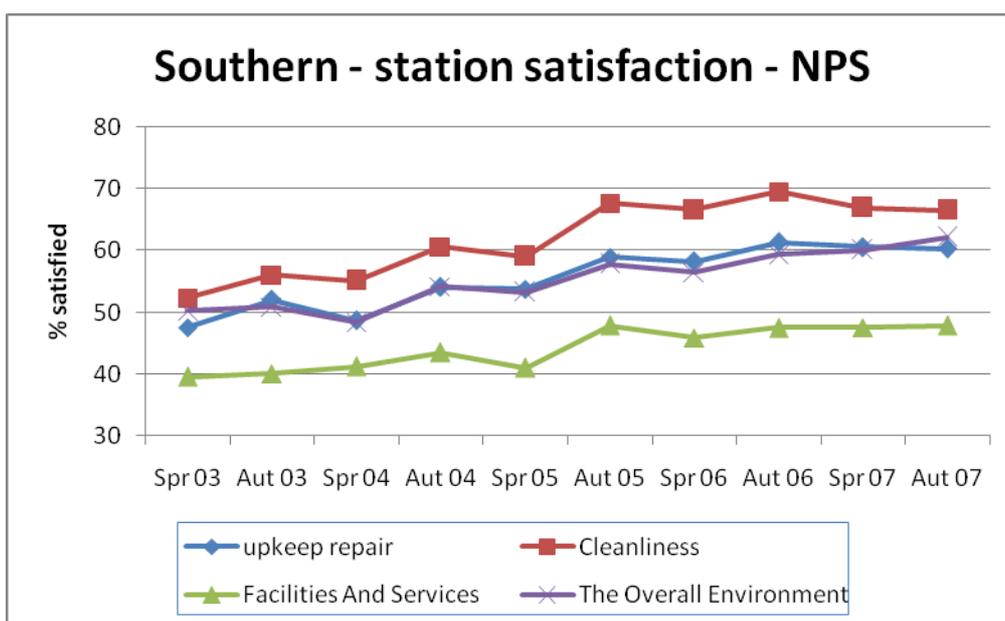
## Stations – environment, passenger information, security and staffing and getting to the station

### Station environment

Passenger satisfaction with the station environment and elements of it across the Southern network is broadly on a par with Southeastern and the sector average, but consistently below the South West Trains satisfaction scores (which are not particularly high).

| Station criteria - % satisfied – NPS Autumn 2007 | Southern | Southeastern | SWT  | London South East sector average |
|--|----------|--------------|------|----------------------------------|
| Overall environment                              | 62       | 60           | 68   | 63                               |
| Upkeep repair of station buildings/ platform     | 60       | 62           | 63   | 62                               |
| Facilities and services                          | 48       | 47           | 53   | 50                               |
| Cleanliness                                      | 66       | 68           | 70   | 68                               |
| Sample size                                      | 1870     | 1756         | 2318 | 16655                            |

The overall trend is an improving one, with significant improvements since Spring 2003, but the trend for upkeep and facilities and services has flattened since Autumn 2006, and satisfaction with cleanliness has declined.



Findings from a mystery shopping study on Southern in 2007<sup>47</sup> give some indication of issues that may lie behind the NPS scores:

Issues highlighted included:

- 21% of station shops found evidence of deteriorating infrastructure or buildings/brickwork/surfaces in poor condition, most often platforms and platform seating and subways/overbridges
- in station toilets a fifth of shops found no toilet paper and in a quarter of shops no soap was found.

The overall NPS figures, however, mask significant differences in satisfaction by route. The satisfaction figures for the Metro/South London area are consistently lower than the franchise average, pointing to the need for a specific focus on those stations.

| Satisfaction with station environment /facilities % satisfied - Autumn NPS | total | Sussex Coast - Main Line | Sussex Coast - coast | Metro/ South London |
|--|-------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Overall environment  | 62    | 67                       | 76                   | 58                  |
| Upkeep repair of station buildings/ platform                               | 60    | 63                       | 67                   | 58                  |
| Facilities and services  | 48    | 55                       | 63                   | 42                  |
| Cleanliness  | 66    | 68                       | 75                   | 64                  |
| Sample size  | 1870  | 555                      | 144                  | 1171                |

Examples of the range of issues that influence perceptions are given in the following comments:

*“... General ambience is very poor at many stations such as Streatham, Clapham High Street, Wandsworth Road. Information about interchange opportunities and local amenities is also important.”<sup>48</sup>*

*“(Stations need) improved waiting facilities, including opening waiting rooms and toilets at all times the station is open; more ticket machines and longer opening hours for ticket offices; staffing of smaller stations for longer/ at all times the station is open; better cleanliness/provision of bins; improved availability of pocket timetables; sufficient good quality cycle parking.”<sup>49</sup>*

In terms of national priorities for improvement<sup>50</sup>, station cleanliness and facilities are not, overall, ranked as highly as issues related to the rail journey itself and value for money.

<sup>47</sup> Southern Railway mystery shopping study, FDS for Passenger Focus, September 2007

<sup>48</sup> London Borough of Lambeth

<sup>49</sup> London Borough of Sutton

<sup>50</sup> Passengers’ Priorities for Improvements in Rail Services – June 2007 – Passenger Focus

| National priorities – attribute (rank out of 30 criteria) | GB rank | South East rank | London rank |
|---|---------|-----------------|-------------|
| Facilities at stations are plentiful and of good quality  | 18      | 22              | 21          |
| Station environment always pleasant and comfortable       | 26      | 26              | 26          |
| Stations are cleaned to a high standard                   | 27      | 27              | 27          |
| All station buildings maintained to a high standard       | 28      | 29              | 29          |
| Sample size   | 3965    | 315             | 291         |

Nevertheless Passenger Focus has amassed a wealth of information from passengers setting out a range of issues that they identify for improvement at stations and which they wish to be addressed as part of the franchise. We have also received comments about difficulties caused by lack of clarity or division of ownership of different parts of the station and approaches to it as illustrated below:

*“We have a real problem of ownership at South Croydon. The access path to the station from the A212 is split between NR and BRB. It should be leased and maintained by the TOC.”<sup>51</sup>*

The franchise agreement needs to make clear provision for the allocation of responsibility for all property and buildings and ensure that appropriate budgets are set for upkeep, improvements and repair.

We also note the aspirations of TfL and London TravelWatch for enhancements to the physical environment of Metro stations and, in view of the low levels of satisfaction expressed by passengers in London, Passenger Focus believes that this is an area where improvements are warranted. However, we are mindful of the competing demands for resources across the franchise and suggest that the proposed improvement programme should be assessed against value for money criteria before requirements are set out in the franchise specification, together with an identified source and amount of funding to be allocated to this purpose.

In the longer term we expect that standards set and delivered within the Metro area should be the benchmark for further improvements across the entire franchise.

Our route based work investigated the issue of station facilities in more depth and asked two specific questions:

- What do you consider the most important facilities at a station?
- What additional facility would you want at your station?

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<sup>51</sup> London Borough of Bromley

| <b><i>Most important facilities to have?</i></b>                 | <b>Total</b> | <b>Commuter</b> | <b>Business</b> | <b>Leisure</b> |
|--|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
|  | <b>%</b>     | <b>%</b>        | <b>%</b>        | <b>%</b>       |
| Accurate <u>visual</u> information as to when trains will arrive | 52           | 57              | 60              | 49             |
| Toilets  | 47           | 43              | 49              | 51             |
| Staff at station   | 44           | 45              | 44              | 44             |
| Accurate <u>announcements</u> about <u>delays</u>                | 34           | 41              | 35              | 30             |
| Accurate <u>announcements</u> on <u>arrival/departure times</u>  | 30           | 33              | 32              | 29             |
| Car parking  | 28           | 24              | 38              | 29             |
| Convenient connecting buses                                      | 26           | 24              | 23              | 29             |
| Waiting shelters   | 25           | 25              | 17              | 26             |
| Security cameras   | 24           | 25              | 13              | 24             |
| Information board showing printed timetable                      | 21           | 21              | 25              | 22             |
| Waiting room   | 20           | 21              | 17              | 21             |
| Bicycle parking  | 9            | 11              | 8               | 8              |
| Step free access from the station entrance to the train          | 8            | 8               | 7               | 9              |
| Interactive help point   | 6            | 5               | 4               | 7              |
| Other  | 9            | 10              | 10              | 8              |
| Sample size  | 6251         | 2568            | 399             | 3117           |

NB. Respondents could choose up to four categories

This shows a clear top three of: visual information, toilets and staff. Next highest is announcements about delays and arrival / departure times. There was a broadly consistent picture across all routes, with only a couple of exceptions:

- Coastway East and West where toilets were the most important facility requested
- on the Uckfield line – where car parking was second highest.

This is backed up to some extent by the answers to the question: what additional facility not currently present at your station would you like? Whilst a high proportion of people did not answer this question, of those that did, the main preference was for toilets (9% of total). It was noticeable, though, that on Route 2 (East Croydon – London Bridge) 17% selected this as the preference.

A wealth of information about specific aspirations for individual stations has been gathered by Passenger Focus during dialogue with passengers and other stakeholders. Our sources will be made available to DfT and bidders for further investigation and to inform potential investment strategies.

Finally, the opportunities for station improvements that can be achieved from working collaboratively with other organisations or local groups and utilising the available resources from joint-funding schemes or from programmes such as the Network Rail National Stations Improvement Programme and DfT Access for All funding should not be overlooked. Bidders should be required to give a commitment to a proactive approach to all such working and the establishment of a franchise-long funding stream to be available to contribute to such initiatives.

## Conclusions

Stations are the shop window for the railway. As our route based priority research shows, station issues tend to have a lower overall priority amongst passengers than core issues of punctuality and fares. Nevertheless, the station environment is, consciously or unconsciously, a factor when people make choices about their mode of travel, and different types of traveller will have a different view about a satisfactory station environment. For example, an experienced commuter would tend to have different needs than less experienced travellers.

Station maintenance, cleanliness and information all contribute to other aspects of passenger satisfaction, including personal security.

It is clear from the NPS that there is much room for improvement in terms of facilities and services at stations (only 48% satisfaction), especially in the London area (42%). Our route based work provides further intelligence and indicates that the additional facility considered most important is toilets, especially on Coastway routes and Metro routes.

## Recommendations

1. The specification should invite bidders to propose a target for improvement of the overall station environment satisfaction scores on NPS within the first two years of the franchise. These should, as a minimum, bring franchise stations up to the national average of 65%.
2. There should be an investment programme for provision of new toilets at Coastway and Metro stations particularly. This should be focused firstly on stations with higher footfall and include a clear commitment to ensure facilities are open for use during all times that the station is staffed.
3. Bidders should be required to set out proposals for a general raising of station standards through the SQMS regime, which should, at a minimum, cover:
  - lighting
  - cleanliness
  - provision of seats
  - how quickly graffiti is removed
  - maintenance targets (e.g. lifts etc)
  - opening times and cleanliness of toilet facilities.

Bidders should be required to indicate what internal targets they intend to set, what the monitoring regime will be, how they will use internal benchmarks to drive up standards, and what they consider the acceptable standards to be to help achieve a significant improvement in NPS ratings.

4. The franchise specification should set out requirements for an improvement programme at Metro stations aimed at bringing them as close to possible to TfL Overground standards whilst ensuring value for money in relation to the resources available for this and other franchise needs.
5. The franchise agreement needs to make clear provision for the allocation of responsibility for all property and buildings and that ensure appropriate budgets are set for upkeep, improvements and repair for all parts allocated to the franchisee.

## Passenger Information

This section covers the more routine aspects of passenger information (train times, destinations, platforms) while information during disruption is dealt with in section on managing delays, above. The Autumn 2007 NPS scores show that the satisfaction levels for Southern are above the sector average. However, breaking NPS scores into service groups shows a significant variation in satisfaction between routes, with Metro / South London scores lowest on both, and a large gap between Main Line and Metro satisfaction on provision of information during the journey.

| % satisfied – NPS Autumn 2007                         | Southern | Southeastern | SWT  | London South East sector average |
|---|----------|--------------|------|----------------------------------|
| Provision of information about train times/ platforms | 79       | 77           | 83   | 77                               |
| The provision of information during the journey       | 74       | 61           | 77   | 64                               |
| Sample size   | 1870     | 1756         | 2318 | 16655                            |

| Southern - % satisfied – NPS Autumn 2007              | Total | Sussex Coast - Main Line | Sussex Coast - coast | Metro/ South London |
|---|-------|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Provision of information about train times/ platforms | 79    | 82                       | 83                   | 77                  |
| The provision of information during the journey       | 74    | 83                       | 80                   | 69                  |
| Sample size   | 1870  | 555                      | 144                  | 1171                |

National research<sup>52</sup> shows that information on train times/platforms is one of the highest priorities for improvement. It comes seventh out of 30 attributes.

<sup>52</sup> Passengers' Priorities for Improvements in Rail Services – June 2007 – Passenger Focus

| National priorities - attribute                             | GB rank | South East rank | London Rank |
|---|---------|-----------------|-------------|
| Information on train times/platforms accurate and available | 7       | 8               | 7           |
| Useful information provided throughout the journey          | 22      | 23              | 20          |
| Sample size   | 3965    | 315             | 291         |

Gap analysis for the route based research reveals an even higher level of importance. Provision of information on train times emerged as the top priority for improvement on four routes (East Croydon to Victoria and London Bridge and Coastway East and West) and was second priority on a further two (Victoria to Brighton and Victoria to Horsham).

When asked about the importance of station facilities, information about train times and departures features strongly. Visual information is top and in fourth and fifth place overall are announcements on train times and announcements on delays.

Examples of the ways in which information provision could be improved on the routes where it is a priority comes from a passenger using both East Croydon and London Bridge, although these suggestions are also likely to be applicable elsewhere:

*“In the refranchise could we update the CIS on the East Croydon platforms that tell you the next departures to the top 20 destinations [to] have a page 3 so that it shows 30 destinations? There are a number of destinations that you can't work out if it is the right train from the existing [display]. It is not uncommon on CIS screens to have three pages of info now the technology is available. Could we also have train departure screens at the end of the platforms at London Bridge so that you can check that it is the correct train before you get half way up the platform.”<sup>53</sup>*

Earlier research<sup>54</sup> undertaken by Passenger Focus asked passengers what type of information they wanted and when. The conclusions were that electronic real time visual displays have the widest acceptance and use, although during times of disruption the sound of a human voice via a public address (PA) announcement can be reassuring.

This can be seen as understandable in circumstances described below:

*“Trains are shown on time until two minutes before departure and then suddenly are xx minutes late – in disrupted situations when they are most needed they are seldom much help.”<sup>55</sup>*

<sup>53</sup> Charles King, MBE, East Surrey Transport Committee

<sup>54</sup> Passenger Information: what, when, where and how? - September 2004 - Rail Passengers Council in collaboration with Network Rail, ATOC and the SRA.

<sup>55</sup> Arun Valley CRP

## Conclusions

Despite there being a relatively high level of satisfaction to date the route based work makes passenger information at stations a clear top priority for improvement. It is self-evident that without good and consistently reliable information, passengers will find it more difficult to access the railway with confidence and, for discretionary travellers, could decide to use another mode.

As such there is a clear case to seek improvements in information provision, particularly in terms of consistently reliable technology, backed up by well-informed staff.

## Recommendations

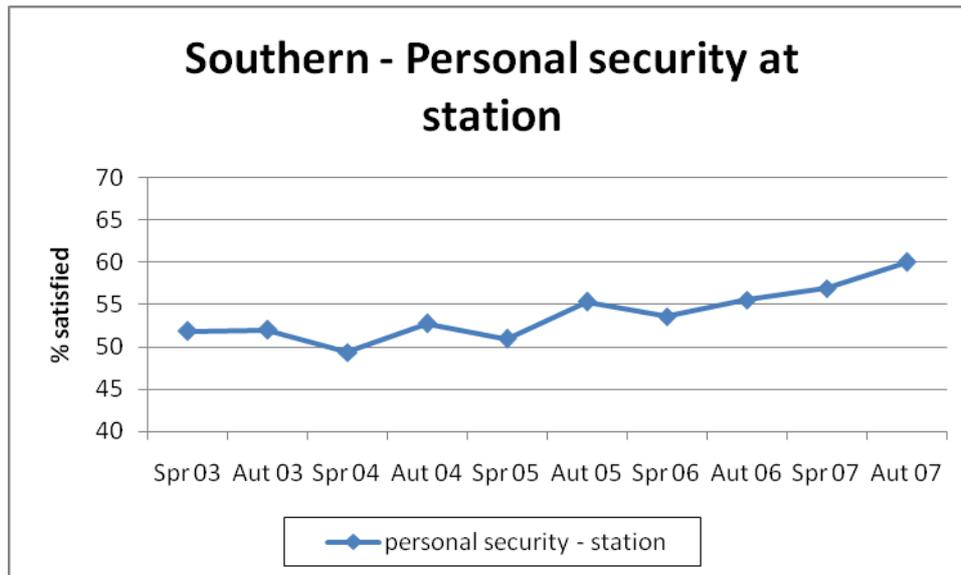
1. Passenger demands for quality information at stations about train times and platforms should be addressed. The franchise specification should seek improvements in information provision, particularly in terms of consistently reliable technology, backed up by well informed staff.
2. The franchise specification should ensure that any gaps in provision of electronic information at stations are remedied as a matter of priority, with particular attention to the provision of reliable information at stations that are unstaffed for all or part of the day. We believe that virtually every station should have modern visual passenger information technology, although we acknowledge that it may be appropriate to specifically exempt this requirement for a few particularly lightly used stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources.
3. Bidders should demonstrate how they propose to make all reasonable endeavours to adopt practices in the National Rail Enquiries Good Practice Guides on passenger information, documents developed by the train companies in conjunction with Passenger Focus.
4. Reliability and availability of information screens should be routinely monitored as part of the SQMS regime and bidders should be required to demonstrate that they have processes in place to deal quickly and effectively with any defects, including any inconsistencies with PA announcements.

## Station Security

Passenger satisfaction with personal security at stations is in line with the sector average, but significantly lower than for South West Trains and significantly lower for passengers on the Metro/South London routes. However, the improving trend since Spring 2003 is welcome.

| <b>% satisfied – NPS Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Southern</b> | <b>Southeastern</b> | <b>SWT</b> | <b>London South East sector average</b> |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------|---|
| Personal security - station          | 60              | 56                  | 65         | 60                                      |
| Sample size                          | 1870            | 1756                | 2318       | 16655                                   |

| Southern - % satisfied – NPS Autumn 2007 | Total | Sussex Coast Main Line | Sussex Coast - coast | Metro/ South London |
|--|-------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Personal security - station              | 60    | 65                     | 71                   | 56                  |
| Sample size                              | 1870  | 555                    | 144                  | 1171                |



National research into priorities for improvement<sup>56</sup> ranked improvements to personal security as 11<sup>th</sup> out of 30 criteria.

| National priorities – attribute (out of 30)                  | GB rank | South East rank | London Rank |
|--|---------|-----------------|-------------|
| Personal security at stations is improved through CCTV/Staff | 11      | 12              | 12          |
| Sample size  | 3965    | 315             | 291         |

The route-based analysis asked passengers to rank 13 criteria in terms of importance: Personal security came eighth highest. It could be that both scores reflect the significant efforts that have been made in recent years to improve the station environment with, for example, better lighting, and more prevalent use of CCTV.

The major caveat on this is that it was undertaken amongst existing rail passengers, many of whom will have experienced the improvements in personal security that have been made over the last few years and consider the residual risk to be acceptable. However, concerns about personal security are likely to

<sup>56</sup> Passengers' Priorities for Improvements in Rail Services – June 2007 – Passenger Focus

be significantly higher amongst irregular passengers and non-rail users, who may be put off rail travel because of those concerns. There is a body of research that places a much higher emphasis on security:

*Perceptions of safety from crime on public transport - Department for Transport (1996)*

This found that despite low levels of reported and recorded crime, passengers have real fears for their personal safety whilst using public transport. There is evidence that these fears influence their decisions to travel and, in particular, their use of public transport. Some people avoid travelling after dark, some avoid particular modes of transport or particular routes or locations, while others do not see public transport as a viable option and resort to either the perceived relative safety of their car or to staying at home.

When asked to rate the effectiveness of eight different possible means of improving safety while waiting the largest vote went to the presence of staff at stations.

*People's perceptions of personal security and their concerns about crime on public transport - March 2004 - Department for Transport*

This supported the case for increased staffing at stations. It found that the absence of visible transport staff is a key contributing factor to insecurity. Participants, however, placed greater emphasis on the need for staff to be trained, proactive and in control of the travelling environment.

*Evaluation of different staffing options for personal security over the 'whole journey' using public transport - Stafford and Pettersson (2005)*

The top priority for passengers after dark was for staff to prevent access to or move on drunk or rowdy people. (This is also matched by responses to the NPS survey which identifies anti-social behaviour as the prime reason for worries about personal security). In contrast, most staff gave this role a very low priority. This is clearly a mismatch between how passengers and staff see their role. There was, however, recognition from passengers of the difficulty of taking such action, especially when staff are working alone.

Passengers want the member of staff to be recognisable, visible and accessible. They also want to be able to rely on the deployment of staff to know that they will be there.

*Home Safe Research - Merseytravel (1993)*

Arrangements for the manning and supervision of stations are often optimised for operational convenience and cost minimisation rather than concern for passenger security. The result is that stations are frequently unstaffed at times when travellers feel most vulnerable.

Replacement of station booking office staff by machines for ticket vending heightens perception of risk.

*What passengers want at stations - Rail Passengers Council (2005)*

Found that stations being staffed would be the most effective way of improving station security.

The clear message from all this research is that passengers value staff at stations and that this is by far the most important factor in helping passengers feel more secure.

Our route-based research confirms this, with station staff being the third most important 'facility' to have at a station. London Borough of Merton agrees:

*“To create a greater feeling of safety there should be an increased staff presence across the network, including in the evenings. Where patronage is low and a dedicated presence cannot yet be justified, new and imaginative approaches should be developed.”*

### **Conclusions on security/staffing**

We see no reason to change our existing policy position, as set out in our response to the Transport Select Committee investigation into: ‘Personal Passenger Safety in Railway Stations’ 2006.<sup>57</sup> In summary our policy is:

- We want stations to be staffed wherever possible. This is not only to provide ticket sales and direct revenue protection but also to provide a reassuring staff presence for both personal security and information and as a deterrent to crime.
- The role of staff should be complemented, not replaced, by technology.
- We support initiatives such as the Secure Stations and Secure Car Parks schemes, but believe that their effectiveness (and entitlement to continuing accreditation) should be related to their measured impact on passengers’ perceptions of security, not simply a checklist of physical features.
- We accept that the railway does not operate in a vacuum and suffers from the same problems with crime and disorder as the rest of society. Tackling issues of security on the railway is, therefore, a wider social issue and not a problem for the industry to resolve in isolation.

### **Recommendations**

1. Staffing is the best way to reassure passengers about their personal security while waiting for a train. Bidders should be required to set out their strategy for adequate staffing of stations at all hours that trains run. There should be no presumption that reduction in station staffing is acceptable.

2. The station investment programme should include CCTV and linked help point provision at all stations that do not currently have these facilities. Where stations are currently unstaffed during any part of the day when trains operate, they should be priorities for such investment. We believe that virtually every station should have appropriate technology to enhance personal security, although we acknowledge that it may be appropriate to specifically exempt this requirement for a few particularly lightly used stations in order to ensure best use of limited resources.

3. The required target for secure stations accreditation should be increased from 80% of footfall to 90%, with credit given for any bidder who proposes a higher target with evidence as to how it will be achieved. Bidders should also be required to provide evidence that they have covered all stations that are crime hot-spots, whether or not those stations are within the 90%. Consideration should be given to applying specific targets to stations on the Sussex Coast, whether that be in terms of footfall or station category, to overcome the fact that the high footfalls in the Metro area tends to concentrate attention within London with proportionately less coverage of the areas outside.

4. Bidders should be required to show an effective plan for ensuring secure car park accreditation at all A-D category stations with a car park by the end of year three of the franchise at the latest with credit given to bidders who demonstrate a commitment to extend this to other station car parks during the life of the franchise.

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<sup>57</sup> Personal passenger safety in railway stations 2006 – Passenger Focus response to Select Committee investigation

5. Bidders should be required to propose a target increase in passenger satisfaction with personal security and to demonstrate how they will monitor the success of measures they propose, in terms of making passengers feel more secure. This should include improving satisfaction scores for the NPS.

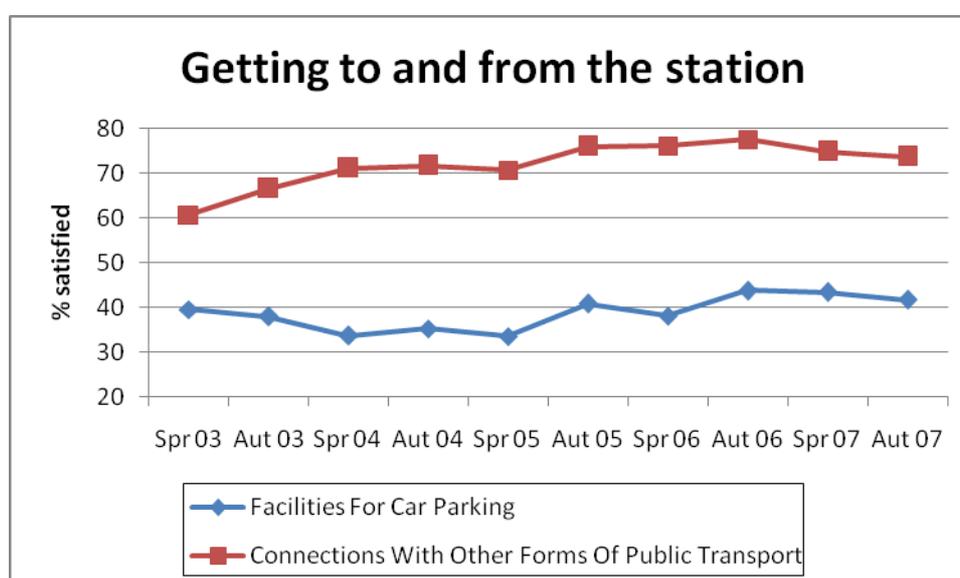
### Getting to the Station

While passenger satisfaction scores for car parking in the Autumn 2007 NPS are low (only 42% satisfied) they are in line with sector averages. This comes as no surprise, given the pressure there is on space around stations in the South East. Passenger satisfaction with connections with other forms of public transport is much higher (74%) and is in line with the London and South East sector average.

In terms of trends, satisfaction with both indicators has declined since Autumn 2006, and satisfaction with car parking has remained broadly static since Spring 2003.

| <b>% satisfied – NPS<br/>Autumn 2007</b>         | <b>Southern</b> | <b>Southeastern</b> | <b>SWT</b> | <b>London<br/>South<br/>East<br/>sector<br/>average</b> |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|------------|---|
| Facilities for car parking                       | 42              | 42                  | 48         | 44  |
| Connections with other forms of public transport | 74              | 73                  | 74         | 74  |
| Sample size                                      | 1870            | 1756                | 2318       | 16655   |

| <b>Southern - % satisfied –<br/>NPS Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Sussex<br/>Coast - Main<br/>Line</b> | <b>Sussex<br/>Coast -<br/>coast</b> | <b>Metro/<br/>South<br/>London</b> |
|---|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Facilities for car parking                          | 42           | 45                                      | 71                                  | 36                                 |
| Connections with other forms of public transport    | 74           | 77                                      | 69                                  | 72                                 |
| Sample size   | 1870         | 555                                     | 144                                 | 1171                               |



Research<sup>58</sup> into national passenger priorities ranks easy connections with other forms of transport as a higher priority for improvement than car parking. This could be for any number of reasons, including how passengers are predisposed to access the station, the geographical location of stations, and the distribution of passengers and potential passengers around stations.

| National priorities – attribute<br>(rank out of 30 criteria) | GB<br>rank | South<br>East<br>rank | London<br>Rank |
|--|------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Good easy connections with other forms of transport          | 12         | 18                    | 11             |
| High quality car parking                                     | 29         | 28                    | 30             |
| Sample size  | 3965       | 315                   | 291            |

However, in the Southern route based research, the question was framed in terms of ‘ease of getting to the station’, which revealed a different picture. ‘Ease of getting to the station’ features in the priorities for improvement thrown up by the weighted gap analysis for four routes:

- route seven – Uckfield line (top priority)
- route four – Coastway West (second highest)
- route three – Victoria – Brighton (third highest)
- route one - East Croydon-Victoria (fifth highest)

As part of the research we then looked at how passengers got to the station. The results show a hierarchy of modes. Overall, across all routes, the breakdown was:

- walking – 49%
- car – 17% (8% parking their car at or near the stations and 9% being dropped off by car)
- bus/coach – 10%
- cycling - 2% (1% parking the bicycle at the station and 1% taking them on the train).

The outlier was the Uckfield line where car use totalled 26% (well above the 17% average). The greater preponderance towards car as an access mode is likely to explain why car parking was the highest priority for improvement for users of the line, and may contribute to East Sussex County Council’s view that *“there needs to be a practical commitment to bus/rail integration on the Uckfield to London line”*.

Further research<sup>59</sup> in the East Anglia region found that:

- A lack of car parking space could actually suppress overall demand for rail.
- If passengers couldn’t park at their station some would drive to the next station or drive all the way to the destination. Either way, the net effect is to increase car use.
- Some people would travel earlier in order to get a parking space but that can add to congestion on board the train, particularly when people who could travel in the shoulder peak travel at busier periods when they don’t need to.

<sup>58</sup> Passengers’ Priorities for Improvements in Rail Services – June 2007 – Passenger Focus

<sup>59</sup> ‘Getting to the station’ - March 2007 – Passenger Focus

An earlier report<sup>60</sup> by the Rail Passengers Council 'Strategy to Reality: Using Local Transport Plans to deliver on rail' highlighted the importance of making a station easy to access by all modes, including walking.

Feedback from stakeholders seems to indicate an increased emphasis on the station access agenda and considerable scope for partnership working with local authorities and other agencies to improve station accessibility. This is likely to be particularly relevant in terms of improving pedestrian and cycle access to stations, with better signage, lighting and road crossings as well as the provision of cycle storage facilities.

Sustrans states, *"We would like to see a franchise commitment to Station Travel Plans."* And also says, *"We would like to explore targets to provide cycle parking as part of the franchise commitment."*

A local authority Employer Travel Plans Co-ordinator says, *"Local authorities and employers need a better interface with the TOCs to promote station access and sustainable travel to and from work; we would like TOCs to engage with travel plan co-ordinator forum meetings."*<sup>61</sup>

Our route based research indicates a very small proportion of rail passengers currently access stations by bicycle, only 2% on Southern, but with an increasing awareness of environmental and health benefits, this proportion could increase significantly. Experience in Brighton and Hove bears this out:

*"All cycle parking at all of the stations in Brighton and Hove is currently at capacity. City cycling levels have increased 47.3% since the year 2000, with all indications suggesting further growth."*<sup>62</sup>

Recent experience on Southern has shown that where new cycle parking provision is made, this rapidly fills, indicating a level of suppressed demand that was previously not readily identified, as Daniel Wright at Surrey County Council describes:

*"Our work with Southern on providing cycle parking facilities at stations has been a great success. At locations such as Ashted and Dorking, putting in new shelters has enabled the whole car park/station environment to be freed of the clutter of bicycles being locked up randomly to any available structure. The new shelters at both these locations provided spaces for the same number of bicycles as were usually found across the station sites."*

*However, within 12 months, both facilities were full and were subsequently expanded, with the new capacity being increasingly well-used ever since. Even at smaller stations with a less obvious demand for cycling, the installation of more modest facilities has usually led to the regular appearance of parked cycles where previously these were rarely seen."*

Another local authority evidences their ongoing commitment to this agenda, confirming that, *"(The) Council has identified £10,000 in next year's work programme to help improve cycle parking across the County (including near transport hubs)."*<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> 'Strategy to Reality: Using Local Transport Plans to deliver on rail' – February 2005 – Rail Passengers Council

<sup>61</sup> Rob Dickin, Brighton and Hove Council

<sup>62</sup> Brighton and Hove Council

<sup>63</sup> West Sussex County Council

We note the frustrations of cyclists who cannot take solid-framed bicycles on peak time trains but we accept that it would be unreasonable to require more cycle spaces on these generally very crowded services. However, we do believe it right folding cycles should be carried on trains free of charge at all times and that the number of secure cycle parking spaces at stations should be increased, with particular attention paid to the siting of such spaces so that cyclists can be reassured about their personal safety and the security of their bikes.

An example of the involvement of other agencies in major station access schemes is the £1m+ investment by Surrey County Council in the public transport interchange within the station car park at Horley. Where identifiably beneficial schemes for passengers can be delivered by other partners, they should be both encouraged and their future assured. The franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

## **Conclusions**

The fact that stations need to be easy to access by all modes of transport is unassailable and there are many options for improvement across all modes.

Car parking at stations is important, and all options should be explored, not only for increasing the number of spaces, but also to create space for shoulder-peak and off-peak passengers, both to spread demand away from the busiest trains, and also to encourage more off-peak and leisure use of rail services. And car parks need to be secure, so that passengers can use them with confidence.

Integration and ease of connection with other modes of public transport are also important, and there is no reason why train and bus operators cannot work very closely together to ensure joined up thinking about bus/train interchange, including information about services, way-finding, siting of bus stops, and integration of timetables to make interchange easier and more reliable at key times of day.

It is clear that there is no 'one size fits all'. Priorities for improvements need to be considered station by station, taking into account station location (town centre, more isolated), existing facilities (buses, taxis), passenger distribution around the station (how far do passengers have to travel to access the station), passenger demographics (how likely are passengers to want to walk, cycle, use a bus or be dropped off). Passenger Focus is therefore very supportive of the 'station travel plan' concept, which will consider the needs of passengers station by station and develop plans tailored to passenger needs and expectations.

## **Recommendations**

1. Additional car parking spaces, particularly where existing provision is over-subscribed, must be a key priority for investment and bidders should be required to develop plans which maximise additional spaces, especially on the Uckfield line.
2. At least the same number of additional secure cycle parking spaces should be provided as additional car parking spaces.
3. There should be a requirement for bidders to commit to pilot station travel plan schemes in the first year of the franchise with rollout more widely from year two and throughout the life of the franchise. Pilot stations should include a range of station types, and Passenger Focus should be consulted about which stations would be most appropriate.

4. The 18 month franchise review should establish a target for the percentage of stations to be covered by an implemented station travel plan by the end of the franchise.

5. Bidders should be required to demonstrate how they will work with local authorities, transport providers and other agencies to improve accessibility to stations by all modes. Where identifiably beneficial schemes for passengers can be delivered by other partners, they should be both encouraged and their future assured. The franchise should accommodate commitments to the future operation of any facilities provided.

## Trains – personal security and on-board facilities

### Personal security on board

NPS asks about satisfaction with security on board the train. The Autumn 2007 wave shows higher levels of satisfaction on the train than at the station and may be a reflection that the introduction of new trains itself creates a perception of greater personal safety. However, Southern satisfaction scores are significantly below those for SWT, and the score for the Metro/South London area is particularly poor – both of which suggest there is more the franchisee can do to improve the on-train environment.

| <b>% satisfied – NPS<br/>Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Southern</b> | <b>Southeastern</b> | <b>SWT</b> | <b>London<br/>South<br/>East<br/>sector<br/>average</b> |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|------------|---|
| Personal security - station              | 60              | 56                  | 65         | 60  |
| Personal security – train                | 70              | 62                  | 78         | 68  |
| Sample size                              | 1870            | 1756                | 2318       | 16655   |

| <b>Southern - % satisfied –<br/>NPS Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Sussex<br/>Coast - Main<br/>Line</b> | <b>Sussex<br/>Coast -<br/>coast</b> | <b>Metro/<br/>South<br/>London</b> |
|---|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Personal security - station                         | 60           | 65                                      | 71                                  | 56                                 |
| Personal security – train                           | 70           | 82                                      | 74                                  | 63                                 |
| Sample size   | 1870         | 555                                     | 144                                 | 1171                               |

In terms of priority, personal security on-train is tenth overall (out of 30 criteria) in the national priorities for improvement research<sup>64</sup> and, perhaps unsurprisingly, slightly higher in the London area. The route-based research ranked on-train security ninth out of 13 factors but, even so, 73% of respondents rated on-train security as very important or important.

| <b>National priorities – attribute (out of<br/>30)</b>        | <b>GB<br/>rank</b> | <b>South<br/>East<br/>rank</b> | <b>London<br/>Rank</b> |
|---|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Passengers experience a higher level of security on the train | 10                 | 10                             | 9                      |
| Sample size   | 3965               | 315                            | 291                    |

Local authorities have highlighted on-train security issues:

*“Increase on-train staff presence/visibility on all services, but particularly off-peak and at night.”<sup>65</sup>*

*“Security – (need) more open carriage layout, avoiding hiding areas, more open carriage ends.”<sup>66</sup>*

<sup>64</sup> Passengers’ Priorities for Improvements in Rail Services – June 2007 – Passenger Focus

<sup>65</sup> Horsham District Council

## Conclusions

Although personal security is an important issue for passengers, the research does not give a clear view on specific actions that are additional to what we know from previous research (see references in station section) makes passengers feel safer when they travel. A uniformed staff presence, with well-trained proactive staff, will always provide reassurance to passengers, particularly later at night. As with station security, it is notable that the relatively low level of satisfaction in the Metro /South London area needs to be addressed.

## Recommendations

1. New trains should have good security built into the specification, with evidence-quality CCTV and designs that facilitate movement and communication through the train, including connections between carriages and the facility for staff to make announcements.
2. Bidders should be required to consider security issues holistically and, in particular, to set clear standards and expectations for on-board staff, where, for example, regular ticket checking can provide passengers with a sense of security, as well as providing revenue protection benefits. Frequency of through-train patrols and on-train announcements should be part of the SQMS regime and, could potentially also be monitored through mystery shopping exercises.
3. Bidders should be required to demonstrate that their staff training plans equip on-train staff with the skills and technology they need to be able to provide the proactive presence that will enhance passenger satisfaction with personal security.
4. Bidders should be required to propose targets for improved NPS scores in relation to on-train security. Metro scores in particular should be targeted for improvement to at least the current average of 70%, with an aspiration to reach at least 78% overall by the end of the franchise. Bidders should receive credit for proposing higher targets, provided they give robust evidence of how those targets will be achieved.

## Facilities on trains

NPS includes a range of questions on the train environment. Although in general terms Southern is above the sector average, the scores are below that of South West Trains in almost every indicator.

| <b>% satisfied – NPS<br/>Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Southern</b> | <b>Southeastern</b> | <b>SWT</b> | <b>London South East<br/>sector average</b> |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|------------|---|
| Cleanliness of the train                 | 75              | 66                  | 81         | 70  |
| Up keep and repair of the train          | 77              | 68                  | 85         | 70  |
| The space for luggage                    | 46              | 43                  | 53         | 46  |
| The toilet facilities                    | 44              | 24                  | 44         | 34  |
| The comfort of the seating area          | 71              | 63                  | 77         | 66  |
| Sample size                              | 1870            | 1756                | 2318       | 16655                                       |

<sup>66</sup> London Borough of Lambeth

Breaking NPS results down by service group analysis again shows that Southern's overall satisfaction scores are pulled down by Metro / South London routes on every indicator except luggage space, which is less of an issue for shorter journeys.

| <b>Southern - % satisfied - Autumn 07 NPS</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Sussex Coast - Main Line</b> | <b>Sussex Coast - coast</b> | <b>Metro/ South London</b> |
|---|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cleanliness of the train                      | 75           | 84                              | 79                          | 70                         |
| Up keep and repair of the train               | 77           | 87                              | 83                          | 71                         |
| The space for luggage                         | 46           | 43                              | 44                          | 47                         |
| The toilet facilities                         | 44           | 55                              | 55                          | 34                         |
| The comfort of the seating area               | 71           | 77                              | 79                          | 68                         |
| Sample size                                   | 1870         | 555                             | 144                         | 1171                       |

As part of our route-based research, we asked passengers how likely they would be to use certain facilities onboard trains:

| <b>How likely would you be to use the following facilities</b> |              |   |   |   |                                      |                                      |   |   |   |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>% very or fairly likely to use</b>                          | <b>Total</b> | <b>Route 1<br/>Victoria<br/>-East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 2<br/>London<br/>Bridge -<br/>East<br/>Croydon</b> | <b>Route 3<br/>Victoria-<br/>Brighton</b> | <b>Route 4<br/>Coastway<br/>East</b> | <b>Route 5<br/>Coastway<br/>West</b> | <b>Route 6<br/>Victoria<br/>Redhill</b> | <b>Route 7<br/>London<br/>Bridge<br/>Uckfield</b> | <b>Route 8<br/>Victoria -<br/>Horsham</b> |
| Trolley service  | 42           | 31  | 32  | 49  | 49                                   | 55                                   | 33                                      | 44  | 38  |
| Wi-Fi  | 33           | 29  | 31  | 42  | 31                                   | 32                                   | 33                                      | 35  | 28  |
| Power points for laptops, mobiles etc                          | 45           | 43  | 39  | 54  | 44                                   | 48                                   | 48                                      | 46  | 38  |
| Quiet carriages  | 48           | 47  | 46  | 50  | 45                                   | 46                                   | 54                                      | 51  | 49  |
| Bike racks   | 24           | 20  | 26  | 27  | 30                                   | 30                                   | 20                                      | 18  | 22  |
| Sample size  | 6251         | 741   | 777   | 892                                       | 772                                  | 796                                  | 726                                     | 750   | 797                                       |

To a large extent, the results are unsurprising. Passengers on longer distance routes are keen on catering trolley services, while passengers on the two Coastway routes have a higher desire for cycle racks. Overall quiet coaches are as desirable as power points, though passengers on longer-distance routes rate provision of both relatively highly.

## **Conclusion**

The research does not indicate that this is one of the main priorities for improvement, although luggage space and toilet facilities are clearly issues that need to be addressed. The former is an issue that cannot easily be remedied for existing trains given the capacity constraints that exist and the fact that more luggage space will inevitably mean fewer seats. However, when new trains are specified, luggage

space needs to be taken into account at the design stage, particularly if the new franchisee wishes to grow off-peak and leisure revenue.

In relation to toilets, we know from informal feedback from passengers that toilets locked out of use and dirty are a perennial bugbear and, in some cases, e.g. older passengers or those with young children, may be a deterrent to travelling by train. Provision may not be an issue per se, but availability and cleanliness should be monitored much more rigorously, with stringent standards for cleanliness in particular. For new trains, toilet provision again needs to be taken into account at the design stage, as does the installation of power sockets.

Our route based research also indicates strong support for the provision of 'quiet carriages' where use of mobile phones or electronic equipment is discouraged.

The conclusion that does come out of the research, however, is that one size does not fit all. As with station facilities, different passengers will have different needs and expectations which will depend on how long their journey is, the balance between station and train facilities, the time of day they travel and whether they are a commuter, business or leisure user. Bidders' approach to on-train facilities therefore needs to differentiate between routes and between different types of passenger, and target effort and investment where it will make the most difference.

More generally, new trains will create less of a priority for improvement, but as the standards of other forms of transport continues to increase, passenger expectations will rise, and train standards will need to rise to keep pace, to maintain passenger satisfaction and to attract new passengers away from their cars.

### **Recommendations**

1. Bidders should demonstrate that they are taking a targeted approach to the on-train environment which takes into account different journey purposes and different lengths of journey.
2. Where new rolling stock is acquired bidders should give consideration to improvements to luggage space, reliability of toilets and inclusion of power points and Wi-Fi facilities. Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and other relevant groups should be consulted on design plans at an early enough stage for views to be taken fully into account.

### **Measuring, monitoring and reporting**

The proposed SQMS regime should cover both availability and cleanliness of train toilets. There should be a requirement to publish statistics about the frequency of train toilet 'failures' and the length of time taken to bring them back in to service.

## Accessibility

The NPS captures satisfaction levels on the ease of being able to get on and off the train. In the Autumn 2007 wave while satisfaction on Southern is on a par with its peers, a consistent picture is emerging of lower satisfaction on Metro/South London routes.

| <b>% satisfied – NPS<br/>Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Southern</b> | <b>Southeastern</b> | <b>SWT</b> | <b>London<br/>South<br/>East<br/>sector<br/>average</b> |
|--|-----------------|---------------------|------------|---|
| The ease of being able to get on and off | 78              | 77                  | 80         | 76  |
| Sample size                              | 1870            | 1756                | 2318       | 16655   |

| <b>Southern - % satisfied –<br/>NPS Autumn 2007</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Sussex<br/>Coast - Main<br/>Line</b> | <b>Sussex<br/>Coast -<br/>coast</b> | <b>Metro/<br/>South<br/>London</b> |
|---|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| The ease of being able to get on and off            | 78           | 86                                      | 81                                  | 73                                 |
| Sample size   | 1870         | 555                                     | 144                                 | 1171                               |

To obtain more specific information on the views of passengers with an illness or disability NPS also asks additional questions in the Spring wave in relation to both stations and trains.

| <b>Whether station met needs as a passenger with illness/disability</b> |                           |               |                      |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| <b>NPS Spring 2007</b>  | <b>National<br/>Total</b> | <b>London</b> | <b>South England</b> |
| Very or fairly satisfied  | 62                        | 62            | 68                   |
| Fairly or very dissatisfied   | 21                        | 22            | 17                   |
| Sample size   | 917                       | 328           | 65                   |

| <b>Whether trains met needs as a passenger with illness/disability</b> |                           |               |                      |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|----------------------|
| <b>%</b>   | <b>National<br/>Total</b> | <b>London</b> | <b>South England</b> |
| Very or fairly satisfied Very satisfied                                | 63                        | 61            | 69                   |
| Fairly or very dissatisfied fairly satisfied                           | 18                        | 19            | 19                   |
| Sample size  | 883                       | 315           | 57                   |

Our route based research specifically looked to capture the views of passengers with disabilities. Of the 6251 responses, 404 were from people who had indicated that they had a disability. As might be expected, respondents with a disability rated the importance of step free access more highly but the main priorities (information, toilets and staff) were the same as for all passengers.

Research on stations<sup>67</sup> in 2005 by our predecessor body, the Rail Passenger Council, specifically looked at the needs of passengers with disabilities. It found:

- A problem with the booking system for making sure staff are available at stations to help people on and off trains.
- Small changes to improve accessibility such as defining steps more clearly, introducing handrails on staircases, suitable flooring, ramps and automatic doors, could greatly improve the experience for passengers with visual impairments and non-wheelchair users.
- Information provision was also found to be fairly inadequate at smaller stations both for people with and without disabilities, making them all dependent on station staff to a certain extent. The introduction of real-time information would benefit all users. When real-time information is not provided, it was clear that visually impaired people rely heavily on platform announcements.
- All disabled respondents agreed that increasing the level of provision at larger stations (A-C) including extra vigilant staff, tactile maps and accessible toilets, would enable them to travel more widely, visiting unfamiliar stations with more confidence.

More recent work by Passenger Focus looked in more depth at the provision of assistance at stations and on trains. The report '*Mystery shop of the Assisted Passengers Reservation Service (APRS) offered to rail passengers with disabilities*<sup>68</sup> found that:

- Staff were found to be generally helpful and friendly.
- Despite booking assistance at least 24 hours in advance, staff at stations were prepared for the mystery shoppers for only half of all journeys when they arrived at the departure station.
- Fewer than two in five were actually met at the agreed place at the station.
- Mobility impaired mystery shoppers who did not use wheelchairs encountered more difficulty boarding the train compared to wheelchair users and visually impaired mystery shoppers, with two out of five stating that boarding was 'not very easy'. This was mainly due to lack of assistance by station staff.
- Mystery shoppers had to change trains in 38 cases. In seven out of these 38 instances assistance never arrived and in a further three cases it arrived late which led to the traveller missing their connection.
- Eight out of ten wheelchair users were satisfied with the assistance provided, compared with only a half of all mobility impaired mystery shoppers and less than four out of ten visually impaired mystery shoppers.
- Two areas of improvement required by mystery shoppers were staff being available to assist and better communication between the APRS and station staff.
- Mystery shoppers were offered the option to be called back by the APRS after the journey to gain their feedback on their experiences for only one in four journeys.

## Conclusions

Improving access and facilities for disabled people will benefit not only those with disabilities but also families with young children, elderly people and others with mobility problems. Much of the problem lies

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<sup>67</sup> What do Passengers Want from Stations – 2005 – Rail Passengers Council

<sup>68</sup> Mystery shop of the Assisted Passengers Reservation Service (APRS) offered to rail passengers with disabilities - October 2007 – Passenger Focus.

in stations that were simply not built with the needs of people with a disability in mind and the scale of the problem is such that it may take years to improve access radically and therefore requires long-term commitment. Where feasible, and in conjunction with station improvement and new rolling stock programmes, the opportunities to develop level transfer between platforms and trains should be taken.

There is now a public policy environment which promotes inclusiveness and train operators themselves have done much to raise their game in this area. However, improvements still need to be made so that services for passengers with a disability are delivered consistently and in a way which will inspire confidence.

### **Recommendations**

1. Bidders generally should be required to make a commitment to comply with industry codes of practice and best practice and to facilitate train travel by passengers with a disability or other access needs, including making information readily available in different formats.

2. Improvements need to be made to existing arrangements to ensure that assistance booked actually arrives. This includes putting robust measures in place to measure and monitor provision and potentially establishing a database of passenger details to reduce likelihood of errors made in booking and the need for frequent repetition of basic details, which is especially useful for regular journeys.

3. Bidders should also be required to commit to:

- A rigorous staff training programme to cover awareness across the whole range of disabilities, as well as safe and appropriate ways to help. In particular, staff should be trained to be alert to the needs of vulnerable passengers at times of disruption and the franchisee's service recovery plan should cover those issues specifically.
- Maintain an accurate and up-to-date database of station details to make it easier for passengers with a disability to plan their journeys.
- Ensure that priority seating areas are much more clearly labelled and that the purpose of such seats is much more clearly displayed, along with better policing of occupancy.
- Ensure that rail replacement bus services are capable of carrying wheelchair using and mobility impaired passengers or that special alternative arrangements are made for such passengers. This will be particularly important given the scale of infrastructure works planned for the franchise.

### **External engagement and identity**

Feedback and experience has identified a number of issues that should be considered and assessed as part of the franchise process.

### **Passenger and stakeholder engagement**

**Bidders for the South Central franchise should be required to make a commitment to genuine and meaningful engagement with passengers and stakeholders. The specification should require details of what elements of the business and services any successful bidder would consult upon and/or provide information about and the range of mechanisms that they would use for these purposes.**

The way in which a future franchisee would work with Passenger Focus, London TravelWatch and other representative agencies and organisations should be addressed. Details of how passenger and stakeholder feedback would be taken into account and the assessment and decision making processes that would be employed as a consequence of received input should also be clearly set out. Response procedures should also be identified.

Needless to say, Passenger Focus places a high importance on the significance that TOCs place on engagement with external audiences and feedback from passengers and stakeholders indicates that this an issue which strongly influences perceptions and satisfaction ratings.

### **Complaints handling and 'carry-over' complaints and appeals**

**The franchise specification should seek details of the bidders proposed mechanisms for dealing with passenger complaints and concerns and bidders should be appraised upon their committed intentions to honour the spirit of any obligations or requirements, not just meet the minimal requirements.**

**A clear mechanism – with ring-fenced funds attached – should be established for the handling of any complaints or appeals that have not been resolved by the time the new franchise commences.**

Previous changes to franchise operators have resulted in difficulties for passengers and the Passenger Focus Passenger Action Team in resolving genuine issues in a satisfactory manner along with appropriate levels of compensation.

### **Branding and identity**

Passenger Focus has received feedback from a number of passengers and stakeholders to the effect that repeated re-branding exercises when franchises change hands are a wasteful misuse of resources and money. Passengers also argue that name changes and new livery also create confusion.

Whilst we appreciate that there are complex issues of trademarks, operating names and corporate identity that influence branding decisions, we suggest that **the ways in which franchise names are owned and utilised in the future should be reviewed and, where possible, ongoing consistency should be maintained.**

## 7. Adding value to the franchising process and beyond

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Looking ahead to the stages beyond franchise specification we believe that there are other elements of the process where the involvement of Passenger Focus would bring further merit.

For passengers, as well as purchasers and managers, the specification of the franchise is only the first step. It is crucial that the responsiveness of bids to the challenges set out in the specification is assessed from passengers' as well as financial and management perspectives. Also, once the franchise is awarded and delivery commences, the requirements of service users need to be kept at the forefront of the operator's approach, particularly the way in which passenger satisfaction is incorporated into and informs any service quality regime.

It is for these reasons that we believe that Passenger Focus should play a role in the next stages of the franchising process, effectively those of 'buy' and 'do.' Our track record of using evidence-based information to highlight issues of significance to passengers, and our experience of applying policy to practice to effect improvements that benefit the customer, make us well placed to make a useful contribution.

We would like to explore with DfT ways in which Passenger Focus' role could be expanded during the next stages of the franchising process.

# Appendix A

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## Methodology

As an evidence-based organisation, Passenger Focus has based this report on research with passengers, including findings obtained from new and extensive passenger research conducted on current Southern routes. This evidence is supported by a variety of additional sources. The types of evidence used are summarised below:

### New passenger research

Passenger Focus commissioned a large-scale project of new passenger research in November 2007, in order to provide reliable, robust, comprehensive and up-to-date evidence on the perceptions, views and issues of concern for passengers travelling on the South Central network.

This research was carried out by Continental Research, the organisation which also conducts the National Passenger Survey on behalf of Passenger Focus. The fieldwork was carried out in shifts covering 07.00 – 10.00 between 27 November and 10 December 2007 on the following routes:

- London Victoria - East Croydon 'Metro' services
- London Bridge – East Croydon 'Metro' services
- London Victoria – Brighton Main Line services
- Coastway West (Brighton-Portsmouth local coastal services)
- Coastway East (Brighton-Eastbourne-Hastings local coastal services)
- London Victoria-Redhill (outer-suburban services, including some Arun Valley services)
- London Bridge-Uckfield (outer-suburban services)
- London Victoria – Horsham (outer suburban services mainly via Sutton).

Passengers travelling on South Central routes were asked to complete a questionnaire comparing their expectations and the subsequent experience of their train journey. This data was weighted against how important passengers viewed the same aspects to provide a 'gap analysis'. Passengers were also asked specific questions on frequency of services, flexibility of travel, ticket purchase and station facilities.

In total 6251 passenger questionnaires<sup>69</sup> were returned, giving Passenger Focus a significant amount of data on which to base the findings and recommendations included within our submission.

### Desktop research

Our desktop research comprised a review of research and publications produced by Passenger Focus as well as other available research from a wide variety of sources, including:

- The National Passenger Survey – Passenger Focus
- Complaints data from both Southern and Passenger Focus' passenger advice team
- Passengers' Priorities for improvements in rail – June 2007 – Passenger Focus
- Passenger Information: what, when, where and how? – September 2004 – Passenger Focus
- Passenger requirements of rail fares – July 2006 – Passenger Focus
- Fare Structure? - May 2007 – Passenger Focus
- Encouraging edge of morning peak travel – October 2006 – Passenger Focus
- Getting to the station – March 2007 – Passenger Focus.
- Southern Railway mystery shopping study – Passenger Focus – September 2007

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<sup>69</sup> A copy of the questionnaire template used in our research can be found in Appendix C.

- Strategy to reality: Using Local Transport Plans to deliver in rail – February 2005 - Rail Passengers Council
- What do passengers want from stations? – 2005 – Rail Passengers Council
- Mystery Shop of the Assisted Passengers Reservation Service (APRS) offered to passengers with disabilities – October 2007 – Passenger Focus.

Data and information from the desktop research is included in the report where it is relevant to or provides supporting evidence for issues raised within the submission. A full bibliography is provided at Appendix E.

### **Stakeholder engagement**

Passenger Focus has gathered information from passengers and other stakeholders in order to inform our pre-specification input to Ministers and the DfT on the new South Central franchise. We already held information gathered as part of our ongoing work on the existing franchise but we specifically canvassed views about issues and expectations for the re-franchise.

Passenger Focus asked how the franchise should be designed to meet future needs and expectations and welcomed views on what it should offer passengers. A total of 49 responses were collated between January and March 2008 from stakeholders and stakeholder groups representing passengers<sup>70</sup>.

All stakeholder communications were centred on the following questions:

- What are the top 3 issues to address at individual stations? (Please comment on as many stations as you are familiar with).
- What are the top 3 priorities for rail services on the specific routes in your area?
- What are the top 3 priorities for the on- train environment on local trains?
- What 1 other issue do you wish to highlight?

Selected examples from stakeholder and passenger feedback are used within the report to amplify and contextualise the findings from the evidence base. Further detail about specific local issues can be made available as required. A number of local contacts have also signalled a desire to engage with bidders and the DfT during the formal consultation process.

Appendix B lists all stakeholders Passenger Focus engaged with, and those who forwarded their response to us.

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<sup>70</sup> A full list of stakeholders surveyed is available in Appendix B

## Appendix B

This list contains the names of all organisations Passenger Focus has directly contacted as part of the South Central franchise pre-specification phase, and which ones submitted their views to us between January and March 2008.

We also received contributions from a number of individuals, whose details are not captured here.

| Organisation                                      | Responded?       |
|---|------------------|
| Adur District Council                             | yes              |
| Arun District Council                             |                  |
| Arun Valley Community Rail Partnership            | yes              |
| Arun Valley Rail Users Association                | yes              |
| Ashford Borough Council                           |                  |
| Ashted Residents Association                      |                  |
| BAA Gatwick                                       | yes              |
| Bexhill Rail Action Group                         | yes              |
| Bricycles   | yes              |
| Brighton and Hove City Council                    | yes              |
| Brighton Line Commuters                           | yes              |
| Chichester District Council                       |                  |
| Corporation of London                             |                  |
| Crawley Borough Council                           |                  |
| CTC   | yes              |
| Cycle Lewes!                                      | yes              |
| East Surrey Transport Committee                   | yes              |
| East Sussex County Council                        | officer response |
| Eastbourne Borough Council                        |                  |
| Eastleigh Borough Council                         |                  |
| Edenbridge & District Rail Travellers Association | yes              |
| Epsom and Ewell Borough Council                   |                  |
| Fareham Borough Council                           | officer response |
| Forest Hill Society                               | yes              |
| Gosport Borough Council                           |                  |
| Greater London Authority                          |                  |
| Guildford Borough Council                         |                  |
| Hampshire County Council                          | yes              |
| Hassocks Amenity Association Rail Users group     | yes              |
| Hastings Borough Council                          |                  |
| Hastings College                                  | yes              |
| Hastings Urban Bikes                              | yes              |
| Havant Borough Council                            | yes              |
| Horsham District Council                          | Yes              |
| Kent County Council                               |                  |
| Lewes District Council                            |                  |
| Littlehampton Cycle Action Group                  | yes              |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| London Borough of Brent                  |     |
| London Borough of Bromley                | yes |
| London Borough of Croydon                | yes |
| London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham |     |
| London Borough of Harrow                 |     |
| London Borough of Lambeth                | yes |
| London Borough of Lewisham               | yes |
| London Borough of Merton                 | yes |
| London Borough of Southwark              |     |
| London Borough of Sutton                 | yes |
| London Development Agency                |     |
| London TravelWatch                       | yes |
| Marshlink Action Group                   | yes |
| Mid Sussex District Council              |     |
| Mole Valley District Council             |     |
| MP for Arundel and South Downs           |     |
| MP for Bexhill and Battle                |     |
| MP for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton    |     |
| MP for Brighton Kemptown                 |     |
| MP for Brighton Pavillion                |     |
| MP for Chichester                        |     |
| MP for Crawley                           |     |
| MP for East Surrey                       |     |
| MP for East Worthing & Shoreham          |     |
| MP for Eastbourne                        |     |
| MP for Epsom and Ewell                   |     |
| MP for Esher and Walton                  |     |
| MP for Hastings and Rye                  | yes |
| MP for Horsham                           |     |
| MP for Hove                              |     |
| MP for Lewes                             |     |
| MP for Mid Sussex                        |     |
| MP for Mole Valley                       |     |
| MP for Reigate                           |     |
| MP for Runnymede and Weybridge           |     |
| MP for South West Surrey                 |     |
| MP for Spelthorne                        |     |
| MP for Surrey Heath                      |     |
| MP for Wealden                           |     |
| MP for Worthing West                     | yes |
| Network Rail                             |     |
| Norwood Rail User Group                  |     |
| Portsmouth City Council                  |     |
| Railfuture Coastway Division             | yes |
| Reigate and Banstead Borough Council     |     |
| Reigate, Redhill and District RUG        |     |

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Rother District Council   |                     |
| Sea Space   | yes                 |
| Seaford Resident's Association  |                     |
| Sevenoaks District Council  | yes                 |
| Shepway District Council  |                     |
| South East England Development Agency   |                     |
| South East England Regional Assembly  | officer group paper |
| South Hampshire Rail Users' Group (SHRUG)                                       | yes                 |
| Southampton City Council  |                     |
| Southwark RUG   | yes                 |
| Southwark Cyclists  | yes                 |
| Surrey County Council   | yes                 |
| Sussex Community Rail Partnership<br>Uckfield Line/ Marshlink Line/ Arun Valley | yes                 |
| Sustrans  | yes                 |
| Sutton Rail Users Forum   | yes                 |
| Sydenham Society  | yes                 |
| Tandridge District Council  | yes                 |
| THWART –Three Oaks, Winchelsea and Doleham Action for Rail transport            | yes                 |
| Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council   |                     |
| Transport for London  | yes                 |
| Tunbridge Wells Borough Council   |                     |
| Uckfield Railway Line Parishes Committee  |                     |
| Vale Residents Association  | yes                 |
| Watford Borough Council   |                     |
| Watford RUG   |                     |
| Wealden District Council  |                     |
| West London Line Group  | yes                 |
| West Sussex County Council  |                     |
| Westminster City Council  |                     |
| Worthing Borough Council  |                     |

## Appendix C

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Passenger Priorities questionnaire – see overleaf.

# Passenger Priorities IV

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in this short survey being conducted by Continental Research on behalf of Passenger Focus. Passenger Focus is the official independent consumer organisation representing the interests of rail users nationally. We would like to hear your views on the service provided on this route. It should take no more than five minutes to complete. Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society.

The interviewer will collect this questionnaire from you when you have completed it or please use the post paid envelope provided to send it back to us. If you have any queries the interviewer will be pleased to help. As a thank you for your help we are offering you the opportunity of taking part in a prize draw with a prize of £500. If you wish to take part please tell us your name and contact details where we can contact you in the space provided on the last page.

- TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONS PLEASE TICK THE BOX NEXT TO THE ANSWER(S) THAT APPLY OR WRITE IN YOUR ANSWER IN THE SPACE PROVIDED. UNLESS THE QUESTION ALLOWS YOU TO TICK SEVERAL ANSWERS PLEASE JUST TICK ONE BOX PER QUESTION.

## Your Journey Today

Q1 Please fill in the scheduled departure time of the train from the station where you boarded.

Use the 24 hr clock e.g. 17 : 25

Time input boxes: [ ][ ] : [ ][ ]

Q2 Please write in the name of the station where you boarded **this** train :

Text input box for station name

Q3 Please write in the name of the station where you are travelling to on **this** train :

Text input box for destination station name

Q4 How did you travel to the station where you boarded this train? (Tick all that apply)

- On foot / walking.....  Tram / Light Rail (inc. Metrolink)..... 
Bicycle (parked at or near station).....  Taxi..... 
Bicycle (taken onto train).....  Car parked at or near station..... 
Motorbike.....  Car - dropped off..... 
Bus / Coach.....  Car share/ car pool..... 
National Rail train.....  Air / Sea.....

If National Rail train: please specify station you travelled from

Text input box for National Rail station

**Q5** How will you travel to your final destination after leaving this train? (Tick all that apply)

- |  |                          |   |                          |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| On foot / walking.....                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tram / Light Rail (inc. Metrolink)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle (parked at or near station)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Taxi.....                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle (taken onto train).....          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car parked at or near station.....      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motorbike.....                           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car - dropped off.....                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bus / Coach.....                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car share/ car pool.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| National Rail train.....                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Air / Sea.....                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If National Rail train: please specify station you will travel onto

**Q6** What is the **main** purpose of your rail journey?

- Daily commuting to / from work .....
- Less regular commuting to / from work .....
- Daily commuting for education (to/from college/school/university) .....
- Less regular commuting for education (to/from college/school/university) .....
- On company business (or own if self employed) .....
- Shopping trip .....
- Visiting friends or relatives .....
- Sport / entertainment .....
- A day out .....
- Travel to / from holiday .....
- On personal business (job interview, dentist etc) .....
- Other .....

**Q7** If you had not made this journey by train today, what other modes could you have used? (Tick all that apply)

- |   |                          |                         |                          |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| On foot / walking.....                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Taxi.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle.....                            | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car as a driver.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Motorbike.....                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Car as a passenger..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bus / Coach.....                        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Air / Sea.....          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tram / Light Rail (inc. Metrolink)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | No alternative.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other.....                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |                         |                          |

Other : please specify

**Q8** Why did you choose to travel by train for this journey? (Tick all that apply)

- |  |                          |   |                          |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Train is more reliable.....                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Speed / faster than alternatives.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Train is the most direct / sensible route..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | No reasonable route by other public       |                          |
| Comfort.....                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | transport.....                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Availability / cost of parking.....            | <input type="checkbox"/> | No access to car.....                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cost.....                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rail station near home / destination..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other : please specify

**Q9** How many times have you made this journey in the last two weeks?  
(Please note that if you make a return journey that would count as two journeys)

- This is my first journey.....
- 2-5.....
- 6-10.....
- 11-20.....
- 21+.....

**Q10** What is the rail station nearest to your home? (Please write in name)

**Q11a** Thinking about rail stations, which of the following are the most important facilities to have?

(Please tick up to four)

**Q11b** And if you could choose one new facility not currently available at the station you boarded at, what would it be? (Please tick one)

|   | <b>Q11a</b><br>Tick up to four | <b>Q11b</b><br>Tick one  |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Car parking.....  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bicycle parking.....  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Convenient connecting buses.....  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Step free access from the station entrance to the train.....            | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Waiting shelter.....  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Waiting room.....   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toilets.....  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff at the station.....   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Information board showing printed timetable.....                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accurate visual information as to when trains will actually arrive..... | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accurate announcements on arrival and departure times.....              | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accurate announcements about delays.....                                | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| An interactive help point.....  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Security cameras (CCTV).....  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Other : please specify

**Q12** How satisfied are you with the current frequency of service?

|               | Very<br>satisfied        | Fairly<br>satisfied      | Neither<br>satisfied<br>nor<br>dissatisfied | Fairly<br>dissatisfied   | Very<br>dissatisfied     | Don't<br>know/No<br>opinion |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Weekdays..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |
| Weekends..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>    |

**Q13** How often do you think trains should run on this route?

|                                    | Every<br>10 mins         | Every<br>15 mins         | Every<br>20 mins         | Every<br>30 mins         | Every<br>hour            | Less<br>often            |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| On Monday to Friday peak*.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| On Monday to Friday off peak*..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| On Saturdays.....                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| On Sundays.....                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |

\* Peak means Monday to Friday 0700-1000 and 1600-1900

**Q14** Do you need trains to run earlier in the morning than at present on this route?

|                     |                          |           |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Yes - weekdays..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Go to Q15 |
| Yes - weekends..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Go to Q15 |
| No.....             | <input type="checkbox"/> | Go to Q16 |
| No opinion.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Go to Q16 |

**Q15** What time should trains start?

|               | 4:30 -<br>4:59am         | 5:00 -<br>5:29am         | 5:30 -<br>5:59am         | 6:00 -<br>6:29am         | 6:30 -<br>6:59am         | 7:00 -<br>7:29am         | 7:30 -<br>7:59am         | 8:00 -<br>8:29am         | 8:30 -<br>8:59am         |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Weekdays..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Weekends..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q16** Do you need trains to run later in the evening than at present on this route?

- Yes - weekdays.....  Go to Q17  
 Yes - weekends.....  Go to Q17  
 No.....  Go to Q18  
 No opinion.....  Go to Q18

**Q17** What time should the last train be?

- |               | 10:30 -<br>10:59pm       | 11:00 -<br>11:29am       | 11:30 -<br>11:59pm       | 12:00 -<br>12:29am       | 12:30 -<br>12:59pm       | 1:00 -<br>1:29am         | 1:30 -<br>1:59am         |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Weekdays..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Weekends..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q18** Do you normally travel in peak hours between 0700-1000 and 1600-1900 on weekdays?

- Yes.....  Go to Q19  
 No.....  Go to Q20

**Q19** How likely is it that you could...

- |  | Very<br>likely           | Fairly<br>likely         | Neither<br>likely nor<br>unlikely | Not very<br>likely       | not at<br>all likely     | Don't<br>know/<br>No opinion |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| travel earlier or later to avoid the busiest trains..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| travel earlier or later if the price fell by 10%.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| travel earlier or later if the price fell by 20%.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |

**Q20** How likely are you to use the following methods of ticket purchase?

- |                                   | Very<br>likely           | Fairly<br>likely         | Neither<br>likely nor<br>unlikely | Not very<br>likely       | not at<br>all likely     | Don't<br>know/<br>No opinion |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ticket Office.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Ticket Machine.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Internet.....                     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Telephone.....                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Smartcard like an Oystercard..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |

**Q21** How interested are you in the following ways of receiving your ticket?

- |                             | Very<br>interested       | Fairly<br>interested     | Neither                  | Not very<br>interested   | not at all<br>interested | Don't<br>know/<br>No opinion |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| By post.....                | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Printing out from a PC..... | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Sent to your mobile.....    | <input type="checkbox"/>     |

**Q22** If the following facilities were available on your train, how likely would you be to use them?

- |   | Very<br>likely           | Fairly<br>likely         | Neither<br>likely nor<br>unlikely | Not very<br>likely       | not at<br>all likely     | Don't<br>know/<br>No opinion |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| A trolley service offering refreshments.....                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| WIFI.....   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Power points for laptops, mobiles etc.....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Quiet carriages with no phones or music players<br>allowed..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| Racks to store bicycles for the journey.....                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>     |

## Your Expectations

**Q23** Before you started your journey today, what level of service did you **EXPECT TO GET?** Please rate your **expectation** for each of the following aspects of the station and train given what you know about this line and train travel on similar routes.

|   | Very good                | Fairly good              | Neither good nor poor    | Fairly poor              | Very poor                | Did not use/no opinion   |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ticket buying facilities.....                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal security at the station.....                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Provision of information about train times / platforms....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Connections with other forms of transport.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ease of getting to/ from the station.....                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Frequency of the trains on the route.....                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Punctuality / reliability of the train.....                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Value for money for price of ticket.....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Being able to get a seat on the train.....                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal security while on board the train.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not having to change trains on your journey.....              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The ease of being able to get on and off the train.....       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|   | Very good                | Fairly good              | Neither good nor poor    | Fairly poor              | Very poor                | No opinion               |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>OVERALL EXPECTATION OF SERVICE ON ROUTE.....</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Your Experience

**Q24** Thinking now about the level of service you **actually experienced** on your journey on this route **today**, please rate what you experienced at the station and on the train?

|   | Very good                | Fairly good              | Neither good nor poor    | Fairly poor              | Very poor                | Did not use/no opinion   |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ticket buying facilities.....                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal security at the station.....                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Provision of information about train times / platforms....    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Connections with other forms of transport.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ease of getting to/ from the station.....                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Frequency of the trains on the route.....                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Punctuality / reliability of the train.....                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Value for money for price of ticket.....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Being able to get a seat on the train.....                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal security while on board the train.....               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not having to change trains on your journey.....              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The ease of being able to get on and off the train.....       | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  | Very good                | Fairly good              | Neither good nor poor    | Fairly poor              | Very poor                | No opinion               |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>OVERALL EXPERIENCE OF SERVICE ON ROUTE.....</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## Importance of Aspects of Rail Travel

**Q25** Thinking now about each of the different aspects of your journey, please rate how **important** each of the following is to you.

|  | Very<br>Important        | Important                | Neither                  | Not very<br>important    | Not at all<br>important  | No<br>opinion            |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Ticket buying facilities.....                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal security at the station.....                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Provision of information about train times / platforms....       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Connections with other forms of transport.....                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ease of getting to/ from the station.....                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Frequency of the trains on the route.....                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Punctuality / reliability of the train.....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Length of time the journey was scheduled to<br>take (speed)..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Value for money for price of ticket.....                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Being able to get a seat on the train.....                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal security while on board the train.....                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not having to change trains on your journey.....                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The ease of being able to get on and off the train.....          | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## About You

**Q26** What is your employment status?

|                                      |                          |              |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Work full time (30+ hours).....      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Retired..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work part time (9-29 hours).....     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Student..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not employed - seeking work.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other.....   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not employed - not seeking work..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |              |                          |

**Q27** Which age group do you fall into?

|               |                          |            |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| Under 16..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | 45-54..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16-24.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | 55-59..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25-34.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | 60-64..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35-44.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | 65+.....   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q28** Are you.....

|           |                          |             |                          |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Male..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Female..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|-----------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|

**Q29** Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

|                             |                          |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| White.....                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chinese.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Black or Black British..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Asian or Asian British..... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mixed.....                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other ethnic group.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> |



## Appendix D

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### Gap analysis – an explanation of the techniques used in passenger priority research

Respondents were asked to rate a series of attributes of the service provided on the station and on the train for the route they were travelling on. They were asked to rate their expectation (i.e. what they reasonably expected to get) for each element of the service on the route before they started their journey. They then rated their actual experience on the day of travel (i.e. what they actually got) and also the level of importance to them of each attribute. The rating used a five-point scale from very poor to very good and mean scores were calculated (with a range from 5 = very good to 1 = very poor).

The priorities for service change are identified using gap analysis of the difference between customer expectations and experience weighted by the importance of each attribute. To achieve this, the scores for experience were subtracted from the expectation scores to give a numerical value to the 'gap'. By then using the importance score to weight the gap it is possible to identify clear priorities for improvement and change. The greater the negative expectation/performance gap the greater the need for action, particularly where importance scores are high.

For example, there may be a large gap between the expectation and actual experience of the cleanliness and upkeep of the station but if this attribute is not particularly important to the respondent another attribute may take priority in terms of the need to make improvements and investment.

This approach highlights priorities for improvement, which also helps to target where changes can be most effective. However, it is possible that any gap can be influenced by low expectations in the first place – e.g. the Southern route reports indicate that there was a positive gap when it comes to getting a seat (i.e. level of service provided exceeded expectations). This could to some extent reflect low expectations in the first place – i.e. "I didn't expect to get a seat in the first place" - rather than indicate an overall sense of satisfaction.

In this respect gap analysis should be seen as a tool to aid decision making rather than something that 'makes' the decision itself.

# Appendix E

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