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Dear Andrew

## **ORR's sustainable development and environmental duties**

Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to comment on this consultation.

### **Passenger Focus overview**

The consultation offers positive solutions to an area which has not yet been thoroughly explored by the industry. As outlined in the consultation, data suggest that rail is the most sustainable form of transport in comparison to shipping, road and air. However, other modes are focussing on ways of making themselves more sustainable and environmentally aware and therefore the rail industry cannot be complacent and fall behind.

The consultation poses a large number of very detailed questions as to how ORR can undertake its sustainable development and environmental duties. Many of the questions are wholly specific to Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies, as a result of which Passenger Focus is not best placed to offer solutions (i.e. how to measure KPIs).

### **Consultation questions**

**(a)** *Consultees are invited to comment on our proposed objectives and to say whether we should adopt any additional objectives in developing our role (paragraph 2.12)*

Passenger Focus is content with the four broad overarching objectives.

**(b)** *Consultees are also asked for their views on our prioritisation of the three pillars, and to provide their thoughts on the specific issues that they consider need to be addressed (paragraph 2.13).*

The consultation states that the main focus of ORR's proposals should be the environmental and economical aspects of sustainable development. Although the document acknowledges the importance of the social impacts, ORR is of the view that DfT and Transport Scotland have a major role to play in terms of developing policies in this area. Passenger Focus agrees with ORR that DfT and Transport Scotland should



contribute to the social impacts through areas such as the franchising process, the regulation of fares, levels of subsidy, provision for accessibility for passengers with reduced mobility, encouragement of modal shift and promotion of integration.

Passenger Focus agrees with the prioritisation of the three pillars. However, it is important that information and best practice continues to be shared across the entire industry. The three pillars all interlink and therefore it is essential that ORR, DfT and Transport Scotland continue to work together to achieve progress.

- (c)** *Consultees are asked to comment on the proposals outlined in chapter 3, and also on whether there are any others that we could add in order that ORR as an organisation can contribute as fully as possible to the achievement of the key sustainable development principles (paragraph 3.12);*

Passenger Focus is pleased that even though the consultation document is aimed at tackling short- and medium-term issues, it recognises the need for longer-term investment decisions. Passenger Focus would like to be included in future discussions surrounding how best to tackle long-term issues, such as those detailed in the consultation.

- (d)** *We fully support the Rail Standards Safety Board (RSSB) workstream to develop a specific set of railway related metrics, but would be interested in the views of consultees as to whether the publication of KPIs would be beneficial in both encouraging environmental improvements across the industry and promoting the benefits of rail travel to the general public.*

Passenger Focus believes that publishing such information is helpful. Organisations should be accountable for their actions. Putting targets and measures into the public domain provides a means by which passengers and stakeholder bodies can hold the industry to account.

- (e)** *Noise and social impact (paragraph 3.43)*  
One of the particular issues to be addressed is that concerning the removal of litter on railway land. At best this is unsightly (a form of visual pollution) but at worst it can represent a health risk for passengers and residents, or more sinisterly certain items can represent potential ammunition for vandals.
- (f)** *Do consultees agree with our proposals to ensure that Network Rail's Business Plan and the Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) process takes appropriate account of sustainable development issues (paragraph 3.35)?*



RUSs form the fundamental basis for the development and delivery of the network over five to ten years. They also underpin the development of the franchise specifications and will input into the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) and the Statement of Funds Available (SOFA) process. To not include sustainability of the railways as part of the RUS process would leave the industry open to criticism.

Passenger Focus is of the view that RUS documents should set out the sustainable development impacts of proposed strategies. This needs to be reflected in the RUS guidelines and therefore we support the proposal to change the guidelines to formalise this approach. Therefore, we strongly agree with the proposals set out in *Para 3.34* of the ORR consultation.

If you would like to discuss this response in more detail please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink, which appears to read "Mike Hewitson".

**Mike Hewitson**  
Senior Policy Advisor