



Passenger Focus's response to
Network Rail's West Coast Main Line
Route Utilisation Strategy
Draft for Consultation

March 2011

Passenger Focus is the official, independent consumer organisation representing the interests of rail users nationally and bus, coach and tram users across England outside London. Created by the Railways Act 2005, Passenger Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council. We are funded by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Our mission is to get the best deal for 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 passengers and we work with the industry, passenger groups and Government to secure journey improvements.

Our vision is to ensure that operators, funders and regulators of transport systems and Government are always

‘putting rail passengers first’

This will be achieved through our mission of

‘getting the best deal for passengers’

Contents

	Page
1. Executive summary	3
2. Recommendations	6
3. Introduction	7
4. General comments	
4.1 Scope and planning context	11
4.2 Capacity, demand and delivery	12
4.3 Emerging strategy	14
4.4 High Speed	14
5. Analysis of options	
5.1 General comments	16
5.2 Passenger research	17
5.3 On-train capacity	18
5.4 Freight capacity/capability	22
5.5 Journey time	22
5.6 Regional links	28
6. Summary table of Passenger Focus's responses to RUS options	33

Appendices

A. List of consultees	34
B. Bibliography	35
C. Sample questionnaire used for West Coast Mainline RUS passenger research	37

1. Executive summary

The numbers of people travelling by rail are increasing. Performance on the railways is steadily improving and passenger satisfaction rising. Passenger Focus expects the programme of Route Utilisation Strategies (RUSs) across the rail network to build on this; to allow for continued passenger growth, to further improve performance and to improve passenger satisfaction.

The RUS objective is defined as “*The effective and efficient use and development of the capacity available on the network, consistent with funding that is, or is reasonably likely to become, available during the period of the RUS and with the licence holder’s performance of the duty*”^[1].”

The West Coast Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy Draft for Consultation (Draft RUS) covers the period from 2012 to 2024 and it is difficult to accurately forecast passenger demand so far ahead. Passenger Focus recommends that there is continuous monitoring and flexibility within plans so that they can be tailored to suit the passengers’ needs. It must be remembered that the second interim submission of the Rail Value for Money Study is due in Spring 2011, and this will impact on the final RUS proposals.

Passenger Focus is an evidence-based organisation with a wealth of research material regarding what passengers want. The National Passenger Survey (NPS) is our twice-yearly study with passengers which provides a network-wide picture of passengers’ satisfaction with rail travel. In the last year we have surveyed over 60,000 passengers nationally.

In the last NPS survey¹ we found that passengers had the following levels of satisfaction with these aspects of their journeys with Virgin Trains:

- overall satisfaction – 90%
- satisfaction with punctuality and reliability – 89%
- satisfaction with frequency of train services – 90%.

However, passengers are less satisfied on the route between London Euston and the North West of England and Scotland, showing that the RUS is correct in studying ways to address gaps on the route:

- 84% overall satisfaction
- 82% satisfied with punctuality and reliability
- 82 % satisfied with frequency of train services

^[1] Extract from Office of Rail Regulation Guidelines on RUSs (Autumn 2009)

¹ NPS Autumn 2010

In addition, passengers on that route give space to sit/stand a much lower satisfaction rate:

- 67% satisfied with space to sit/stand.

Further bespoke research has been carried out with 4100 passengers travelling on the West Coast Main Line (WCML) across six routes. Additionally, we have consulted with stakeholder groups to learn of their aspirations. All this evidence informs our response to the Draft RUS, because passengers' needs and expectations should be at the centre of all future plans.

Our approach to this RUS has been to analyse the proposed gaps and options to see how these match up to what passengers are telling us; if not we have made recommendations for what needs to be done to ensure that the RUS provides improvements for passengers.

Passengers tell us that their key issues are:

- ability to get a seat
- connectivity – adequate links between towns and cities
- journey time
- frequency of trains
- stations.

Capacity – ability to get a seat on the train - is the key issue for the WCML as shown by the figures for current overcrowding levels, with further projected increases over the next few years. It is imperative that the options included in the final RUS are tailored to address these capacity constraints. The RUS development process has aimed to fill the gaps with options which are the most cost effective and viable. We urge Network Rail to continue working with industry partners to analyse and model different options so that the final RUS proposes the optimal strategy to fill the gaps identified and meet passengers' needs.

There is also suppressed demand on the WCML which needs to be catered for. Passengers tell us they are likely to use the railways more often if more spaces to park their cars were available and at appropriate prices^[2]. There are also station improvements that passengers want so that they are provided with up-to-date and accurate information in a timely manner, which is essential during times of disruption^[3].

A regular timetable is important to passengers, not only on weekdays but also at weekends. We support the recognition of this within the rail industry and urge that

^[2] Getting to the station, Passenger Focus (March 2007)

^[3] Delays and Disruption, Passenger Focus (December 2010)

passengers can enjoy the benefits of a good rail service each and every day (the 'seven day railway').

Wider projects that the RUS must consider include High Speed Two (HS2) and the franchise replacement process. The development of HS2 is important to this RUS and we expect the final RUS to provide more detail of the impact of this on the WCML routes. The re-franchising process for the WCML is currently in progress and Passenger Focus is conducting new passenger research to identify what passengers want from the new franchise; it will inform our response to the franchise specification in April 2011. We will also work closely with all three qualified bidders to ensure passengers' needs are included in the new franchise.

2. Recommendations

Our key recommendations for inclusion in the final RUS are:

- options that provide the maximum amount of capacity to address both current and future growth forecasts
- options that meet passengers' aspirations and requirements for more reliable evening and weekend services
- options that increase the current number of through services between towns and cities
- options that maintain existing connections
- options that will ensure the new High Speed line provides as many benefits for as many passengers as possible

Passengers also identified improvements such as better access to, and facilities at, stations; we will be making those points in our response to the Stations RUS when it is published.

3. Introduction

Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Draft RUS. Passenger Focus supports the broad objectives behind the RUS process and welcomes both the formal and informal consultative approach adopted by Network Rail.

Our response is based on extensive passenger research including the Autumn 2010 National Passenger Survey (NPS) the latest in our twice-yearly study of passengers' opinions, generic Passenger Focus research, and our bespoke quantitative research with 4100 passengers surveyed across a number of the West Coast Main Line (WCML) routes².

The Autumn 2010 NPS surveyed a total of 30,844 passengers across Great Britain and there was a good overall satisfaction figure of 84% but there were also some key areas that passengers expressed dissatisfaction with; 18% dissatisfied with the amount of space available to sit/stand, 14% dissatisfied with the frequency of trains and 11% with the punctuality and reliability of the train services. These results highlight areas for improvement which should be at the forefront of all future railway plans.

Data from the NPS has been broken down for passengers travelling on the WCML routes for a range of station and train factors. Table 1 shows passenger satisfaction with station facilities across the six Virgin Trains routes. These highlight that passengers on the London and Birmingham to Scotland routes are less satisfied. This also applies to train factors as shown in table 2 and therefore in section 5 (Analysis of options) we will be analysing the options against these passenger satisfaction figures.

Table 1: Passenger satisfaction with station factors³

	Birmingham - Scotland	London - Scotland	London - Liverpool	London - Manchester	London - North Wales	London - Wolverhampton
The facilities and services	58	56	76	67	64	66
Connections with other forms of public transport	67	71	91	85	75	84
Facilities for car parking	49	46	46	50	51	61

² What Passengers want from the WCML RUS, BDRG Continental for Passenger Focus, 2009

³ National Passenger Survey, Passenger Focus, Autumn 2010

Table 2: Passenger satisfaction with train factors

	Birmingham - Scotland	London - Scotland	London - Liverpool	London - Manchester	London - North Wales	London - Wolverhampton
frequency of the trains on that route	77	82	90	94	95	93
Punctuality/reliability	77	82	90	91	95	92
length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)	83	86	97	98	97	94
Connections with other train services	77	76	88	86	91	91
The value for money for the price of your ticket	59	59	63	64	63	70
The toilet facilities	58	51	54	56	61	57
Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand	64	67	84	79	75	73

Our bespoke research with passengers travelling on the WCML included surveying 4106 passengers using surveys across six routes, which are detailed in table 1. Surveys for each route were designed to enquire into passenger issues to those parts of the network. An example questionnaire can be found in the appendix C.

Overall, this research highlighted key passenger issues which the RUS must address:

- connectivity – adequate links between towns cities
- ability to get a seat
- journey time
- frequency of trains
- stations.

Table 3: WCML Routes on which passengers were surveyed

Route	Route description
Route 1	Passengers making journeys on TransPennine Express or Virgin Trains services between Lancaster and Carlisle, Edinburgh/Glasgow, on all days of the week and all times of day.
Route 2	Passengers making journeys on Virgin Trains services between London Euston and Manchester/Liverpool, on all days of the week and all times of day. Does not include passengers who only travel on the stretch between London and Tamworth (these passengers fall into routes 5 or 6).
Route 3	Passengers making journeys on Arriva Trains Wales or Virgin Trains services between Chester and Llandudno/Bangor, on all days of the week and all times of day.
Route 4	Passengers making journeys on Northern services between Crewe and Wilmslow, on weekdays at peak times.
Route 5	Passengers making journeys on Virgin Trains or London Midland services between Northampton and Tamworth, on all days of the week and at all times of day. Does not include passengers travelling to/from further south than Wolverton, or further north than Tamworth.
Route 6	Passengers making journeys on Virgin Trains or London Midland services between London Euston and Milton Keynes Central on weekdays at peak times. Does not include passengers travelling to/from north of Milton Keynes.

Only 69% of passengers surveyed across the routes use the station nearest to their home for most of their train journeys and their top three reasons for this are⁴:

- can get a direct train from another station (48%)
- better frequency of trains from another station (41%)
- easier to get to another station (26%).

This shows the importance that passengers place on using a direct train service that has a good frequent timetable. Linked to this, car parking is also an issue for many passengers as on routes 3 and 4 only 34% and 44% respectively, can always get a space in the station car park. Lack of parking spaces is a key issue which this RUS must consider as this not only leads to suppressed demand but also increased on street parking⁵. Furthermore, these figures are very high when compared to route 6, where car parking is not such an issue; 76% of passengers on that route always get a space. This inconsistency must be addressed.

⁴ Passengers could choose more than one option.

⁵ Passenger Focus response to Yorkshire and Humber RUS, December 2008

Passengers' were asked about how often they are able to get a seat and overall for all routes this is at 62% and falls to 38% for route 6 - Milton Keynes to London Euston. This current lack of capacity will increase (as identified in Draft RUS) and therefore this gap must be addressed. Similarly, passengers on other long distance routes (routes 1-3) want faster services so that their journey time is shorter, 71% of passengers stated a preference for a faster service.

Passengers have also told us they want an improved timetable at the weekend, in total 69% satisfied are satisfied with the weekday timetable but this falls to 41% for Saturdays and 27% for Sundays. Across all six routes the satisfaction with weekend frequency is lower than for weekdays, which clearly shows that passengers expect a regular timetable at weekends to cater for their travel needs. On routes 3-6 passengers were asked their preference for early and late trains which revealed that there is demand for train services from 05:30-06:29 on Saturday mornings (32%) and at the same times on Sunday (23%). We understand that access is required to the network in order to maintain it and therefore these need to be balanced against the passengers' expectations.

Our route research identified what passengers' top five priorities for improvement at stations are:

- accurate visual information about train arrival/departure times
- accurate announcements about train arrival/departure times
- more car parking spaces
- better toilet facilities
- visible station staff.

These factors are important to passengers and should be at the centre of all future plans for station improvement works such as the Stations RUS.

Passenger research along with our stakeholder feedback is used to inform our response. Prior to commenting on the gaps and options, section 4 comments on the wider context of the Draft RUS.

4. General comments

4.1 Scope and planning context

The WCML stretches for just over 400 miles and links London with five of Great Britain's largest conurbations. There are numerous main, secondary and branch lines from it serving other cities and towns. By considering the wider scope of the RUS area, the RUS will be able to develop the optimal strategy for the future of the WCML and its connecting conurbations.

The make-up of passengers travelling on the WCML reflects the scope of the geography; it is a varied and complex mix made up of commuters, long distance, leisure and business travellers. Passenger Focus's research asked different passengers what their priorities are for improvement⁶, the key findings are shown in table 4. Value for money, frequency of trains, services being punctual and reliable are the top three priorities for commuters, business and leisure passengers. Having enough seats on board the train is fourth and receiving up-to-date and accurate information about delays is the fifth most important attribute (for commuters and business). For leisure passengers the comfort of the seating is a higher priority.

Table 4: Passenger priorities for improvements, GB, rankings by passenger type

Attribute	Commuting	Business	Leisure
Price of ticket	1	1	1
Sufficient trains	2	3	3
Punctuality	3	2	2
Seating availability	4	4	4
Delay information	5	6	5
Train time information	6	5	6
Journey time	7	10	22
Train maintenance	8	9	9
Ticket queue time	9	8	8
Train internal cleanliness	10	17	17

The RUS must consider wider projects and their impact on the future of the WCML. For example, Network Rail has been working on numerous RUSs and it is vital that the strategies for each are linked together, for example, the Scotland Second Generation RUS which has been looking at the longer term plans for the network in

⁶ Passengers priorities for rail improvements, GB, August 2010

Scotland has a direct link to the WCML as well as the London and South East RUS which links into services at the London end of the WCML. We are concerned that due to the geographical nature of the RUSs cross-boundary issues are not being clearly identified or addressed. For example, the London to Glasgow service and stops at Motherwell.

Passenger Focus has submitted a response to each Draft RUS to ensure that passengers' needs are at the forefront of all future plans for the rail network. Links to these submissions can be found in the bibliography.

There are also a number of other projects currently being run, such as the Stations RUS and Northern Hub study which impact on the WCML RUS and therefore need to be considered when developing the final strategy. The NPS results for autumn 2010 show that overall passengers are relatively satisfied with stations (76%), however there is clearly room for improvement as 33% are dissatisfied with car parking facilities at stations and 29% dissatisfied with the facilities and services available at stations. These figures highlight the need for improvements at stations across the rail network and we recommend Network Rail look into these as part of the Stations RUS work.

4.2 Capacity, demand and delivery

We are pleased to see that the Draft RUS acknowledges the importance of having sufficient car parking spaces at stations as our research with passengers travelling on the WCML showed that the two most used methods of getting to the station are by foot/walking (29%) and car parked at or near to the station (21%)⁷. Passengers told us that top two changes that would encourage them to use the station car park more often are cheaper one day parking prices (for 47% of passengers) and more spaces for cars (for 33% of passengers). We recommend that more car parking spaces at stations for reasonable charges are provided to cater for suppressed demand. This is even more important for smaller stations where getting to the station by car may be the most convenient mode of travel.

The Draft RUS states that the demand for travelling on the WCML will grow in the future and these predicted figures reflect how the future economy will be more dependent on the railways. As petrol prices increase and people may have to travel further for work then passenger numbers on the railways will also increase, which is why the RUS must be prepared for this. This also applies to rail patronage; the railways must be a competitive alternative to air travel for journeys between Glasgow and London if the industry aspires to attract new passengers. BMI is suspending its flights between Glasgow and London Heathrow from April 2011 due to the increase in domestic passenger charges [2]. Rail travel should be an alternative for such long

⁷ WCML RUS research, BDRC for Passenger Focus,

[2] http://ask.flybmi.com/help/passenger_info/glasgow_suspended

distance passengers. In this example, the majority of passengers will be travelling long distances but it is also important to consider the needs of passengers travelling shorter distances on these long distance routes.

The Draft RUS uses a range of forecasting tools and data from the Network RUS: Scenarios and Long Distance Forecasts document, Network Rail's New Lines Programme and recent RUSs. There are also a number of projects, such as development of High-speed rail, whose final form we do not know. Therefore, it is recommended that throughout the life of this RUS the demand levels are continuously monitored, and the plans include scope for change as might become necessary. For example, our stakeholders have pointed out that the forecast figures for passenger flows between Glasgow and London Euston are low.

A "seven day" railway is imperative for passengers - they require a good service to run at weekends as well as weekdays. However, weekend travel continues to be blighted by engineering work and the use of bus replacement services. Maintenance is clearly essential, and some disruption is an inevitable consequence of upgrade or renewal work, but more needs to be done to minimise disruption to passengers. To permit the greater use of diversionary routes, improvements should be considered to ensure adequate capacity is available for diverted trains and that journey times are acceptable.

We recommend that a review of the potential of the Bletchley-Bedford line should be considered, as it could provide train-to-train connectivity between the WCML and the Midland mainline (for London) during planned disruption. This would mitigate the impact to passengers and could significantly reduce the need for buses. We urge all industry partners to continue to reduce the disruption caused by engineering works. Best practice principles can be learnt from the Thameslink project and the diversions put in place during the works at Reading over Christmas/new year 2010/2011.

Our research clearly shows that passengers who have paid for a train service expect to travel by train rather than by a replacement bus⁸. Passengers would prefer a diverted train journey even if it took up to an hour longer than by the replacement bus service. This indicates a need for investment in such things as diversionary routes and bi-directional signalling. But this will also require a change in culture and work practices – the key aim being that when passengers buy a train ticket they do actually travel by train. We have called on the industry to sign-up to our 'bus replacement pledge' and only replace a train with a bus when it really is the last resort. We are pleased that Network Rail and the train operators have signed up to our pledge, making a clear commitment to keep passengers on trains wherever possible rather than use buses, and to ensure certain towns and cities are connected by train at almost all times. We have been asked by the government to monitor this.

⁸ Passengers' attitudes towards engineering works, RPC (August 2003)

In addition to how the industry manages disruption, there needs to be investment in information systems that are designed to provide passengers with real time information. At times, it is the sense of being kept in the dark about delays that is as frustrating as the delay itself for some passengers.

The Draft RUS illustrates that by 2024 12% of all long distance high-speed services in and out of London will carry passengers above capacity, therefore overcrowding on such services is a key issue which must be addressed. We welcome the additional 106 Class 390 vehicles for the long distance fleet. It is important that these are deployed on the correct parts of the route to help alleviate overcrowding.

Passenger demand is at a high. Not all the Pendolinos will be lengthened to 11 cars, so it will be more difficult to diagram them; thus it is probable that some trains booked for 11 cars will only get a nine-car train at short notice on the day. This will only lead to more overcrowding.

The Draft RUS proposes that consideration be given to acquiring new rolling stock for bi-mode operation. We support the enhancement of the operational capability and flexibility of existing Class 221 rolling stock by adding a sixth vehicle which would add capacity and enable the train to operate using the overhead electrification as its source of power. Capacity is the key issue for the RUS and we hope that the bidders for the intercity West Coast Franchise will recognise this and propose solutions to address this within their bids.

4.3 Emerging strategy

The Draft RUS looks at the strategy from 2014 to 2024 but it is also important to consider the longer term beyond 2024 and the impact of the first section of HS2. The economy is variable, and the current intercity West Coast franchise is up for replacement from April 2012. The final WCML RUS must cater for these changes by proposing the optimal strategy.

Passenger Focus is currently carrying out research with passengers to establish what they want from the new franchise and this will inform our response to the Department for Transport.

4.4 High speed

Developing a new high-speed line (HS2) is Government policy; for passengers the key driver behind the project is the additional capacity it brings – both in its own right and by virtue of reorganising services on existing lines.

We recognise that new high-speed lines are critical to relieving overcrowding in the future as putting longer distance journeys onto these new lines will allow more trains to serve commuters and middle-distance passengers on the current network.

One of our aims for high-speed is to ensure that it does not divert funds from the existing railway – both in terms of maintenance and of other enhancement schemes (e.g. addressing commuting bottlenecks identified in the original HLOS in London and other cities). It would not benefit passengers to have a new railway if it meant existing lines/services stagnated.

There are further issues which must be part of discussions, such as the issue of fares and ticketing on such services. Key questions that are important to passengers include:

- will premium fares apply?
- will reservations be compulsory?
- how would turn up and go passengers be catered for?
- will open access operators be able to bid for paths from the opening of HS2?

It is important that these issues are debated and understood by passengers.

5. Analysis of options

5.1 General comments

Passengers and stakeholders expect the options selected for analysis to be considered fully, in conjunction with all other proposals for the areas they serve – housing, employment, retail, leisure, and roads. They also expect “big questions” such as these to have been answered:

- have all the options been considered?
- have the options been thoroughly assessed, with comprehensive financial and economic analysis?
- when will the rolling stock strategy be agreed?

It is noted that the final version of the RUS will provide “more detailed” commentary on the impact of HS2 and the “significant” capacity it will release. We are surprised by the phrase “the remaining commuter and freight services”. It is far from accurate, as regional and some inter-city services will remain, as well as all commuter/suburban services and all freight trains. In our response to the West Midlands and Chilterns draft RUS we commented:

Although HS2 will not open until after the end of CP6, given the long lead times of some projects, analysis of its effects should start in CP5. The route chosen for HS2 means that Coventry and Milton Keynes will not be served by the high speed line, which will make it difficult to reduce the quantum of services using the line between New Street and Rugby.’

The number of inter-city services that will continue to use the WCML south of the HS2 junction near Lichfield will obviously reduce considerably after the first section of HS2 opens. The actual number of paths made available will depend on how many services have to continue to use the WCML to maintain services for flows that cannot be served by HS2. With 125 mph paths available for commuter services from Rugby, Northampton and Milton Keynes, forecasting and planning to consider the best use of those fast line paths should be complete before the end of this RUS.

Because of the overlap of many of the gaps - on-train crowding and regional connectivity are two - we have written our commentary where necessary as a combined response. Whilst we understand that the categories of gaps used in the Draft RUS make sense in themselves, the inter-relationships between them make it essential to respond in a holistic way - the railway is after all a network - to ensure that the links between options are assessed comprehensively. A matrix of the inter-relationships of the gaps and options should be included in the final RUS.

Figure 5.1 on page 100 of the Draft RUS attempts to show diagrammatically the options for Birmingham/(Euston)Stafford-Stoke/Crewe-Liverpool/Manchester, but suffers from poor design and does not clarify matters sufficiently. It also omits the

options to run certain services to Preston or via Warrington to Liverpool, and should be improved for the final version of the RUS. Another diagram should be included for the line north of Preston, showing the proposed services on that route and the links from Manchester and Liverpool.

Passenger Focus believes that the options selected for development in the final RUS should offer the best possible match with these passenger and stakeholder aspirations:

- More capacity on sections of route with consistent overcrowding, such as Birmingham to Preston
- More capacity at times of peak demand, such as Friday evenings from London
- The restoration of through journeys removed in the December 2008 timetable changes
- Improved frequency/more regular timetable for the smaller stations on the WCML, such as Nuneaton and Penrith⁹
- The development of new through services to link places with known demand, such as Stoke and Liverpool, or North Cheshire to Lancashire.

5.2 Does passenger research reflect the choice of gaps?

Wider passenger experience on the routes is shown in table 5¹⁰, Anglo-Scottish routes are shaded pink.

Table 5: Passenger satisfaction on WCML routes

	frequency	journey time	sit/stand	punctuality	connections	comfort	handling delays
Autumn NPS scores	satisfaction %						
TPE NW	80	91	52	89	74	80	38
VT B'ham - Scotland	77	83	64	77	77	70	60
VT Scotland	82	86	67	82	76	78	50
VT Liverpool	90	97	84	90	88	83	50
VT Manchester	94	98	79	91	86	82	65
VT N. Wales	95	97	75	95	91	76	67
London Midland	74	91	87	88	79	88	53

⁹ These are but two examples of the smaller stations, chosen to be representative, not exclusive.

¹⁰ National Passenger Survey, Passenger Focus (Autumn 2010)

[There are a few caveats to the data in the table above: TransPennine Express (TPE) North West includes their services to Blackpool North, Barrow and Windermere as well as Edinburgh and Glasgow, Virgin Trains' (VT) North Wales services include passengers who travelled west of Chester and London Midland includes all services on the route between Euston and Crewe.]

The scores for frequency reflect the actual timetable, with Anglo-Scottish routes an average of 13 points lower than Virgin's other routes (relevant gaps: OC3, OC5, JT1, RL8, RL10). Liverpool scores lowest of those routes (see gap RL8). London Midland received the lowest score – 74% satisfied with frequency – which informs gaps OC4 and RL1.

Journey time scores very highly on the Euston to Manchester route - 98%, suggesting that passengers do not regard it to be a gap (JT2). The scores for Liverpool and North Wales are also high - both 97% - which suggests that further analysis might show that, capacity permitting, it would be possible to add selected stops in trains on those routes, to help meet some of the gaps identified, particularly JT3 and JT5. In contrast, the scores for journey time for Virgin's services in the Anglo-Scottish group of services, an average of 12 points lower, supports the existence of gap JT1.

The scores for room to sit or stand on Anglo-Scottish routes are at least eight percentage points below the next lowest, that for North Wales. It should be noted that nearly all Euston trains on that route are formed of Voyager Class 221 trains, with only four standard class cars, as are trains on the Birmingham - Scotland route. It is probable that the scores for capacity are linked with those for comfort, where again Birmingham-Scotland has a low score, and the score for TPE is eight percentage points lower than London Midland's. The two types of trains used by those TOCs are basically the same internally, apart from the fact that some of London Midland's have some standard class seats arranged three aside on one side of the gangway, two on the other, whereas TPE's are all two and two. The significant difference in scores is presumably linked to the 35 point difference in their scores for capacity.

Gaps RL8 and RL11 are also given weight by the scores for connections with other train services given to services in the Anglo-Scottish group, as are gaps RL4-8 by the score of 79% given to London Midland's services.

5.3 Generic gap OC: on-train capacity

5.3.1 Option OC1.1: lengthening of suburban services

The Draft RUS shows us that by 2024/5, even if growth follows the “global responsibility scenario”, of the 32 (unspecified) trains in figure 4.11 (page 76 in the Draft RUS), more than half will have a load factor over 120% on arrival at Euston. Of the 35 trains from Euston selected, 21 will have load factors over 120%; of those two will remain at that level until Wolverton, and another six until Bletchley. Two of the 13

trains forecast to load to between 100 and 120% will remain at that level to Wolverton. Table 4 shows that only 74% of passengers on London Midland’s suburban services are currently satisfied with the capacity of the trains.

Table 6: London Midland satisfaction (Autumn 2010 NPS)

%	room to sit/stand	ease of on/off	punctuality	VFM
London commuter	74	89	87	45

Our research¹¹ showed how passengers between Milton Keynes Central and Euston fared in getting a seat.

Table 7: London commuter seat availability

(base 706)	London Midland	Virgin West Coast	all commuters
always	35	45	35
usually	39	42	41
about ½ the time	14	8	13
sometimes	9	4	8
never	2	1	2

Passengers on the route will be pleased by the Draft RUS’s recommendation to implement the option to lengthen trains, using an additional 40 vehicles. However the “as soon as” is unfortunately imprecise, and an all-too frequent expression in recent RUSs. Figure 4.11 does not identify trains or give any details of their lengths so it is impossible to judge which are 12-car and which are 8-car formations. The Draft RUS states that crowding on those trains on which it will still occur will be for less than 20 minutes (“approximately”). We suggest that the final RUS should be clear as to which trains are included in figure 4.11.

5.3.2 OC2 Peak on-train crowding on Watford Junction to West London Line services

The Draft RUS states that overcrowding will be at what passengers will describe as completely unacceptable levels by 2024. The latest NPS scores for services on the West London Line show how poorly passengers rate the room available on its trains.

¹¹ WCML RUS research, BDRC for Passenger Focus (December 2009)

Table 8: Passenger satisfaction with train factors (%)

	room to sit/stand	ease of on/off	connection with other rail	frequency	punctuality	VFM
Southern Metro ¹²	70	77	73	68	78	45
London Overground ¹³	56	74	71	64	64	58

We note the comments in the assessment of this option in the London and South East draft RUS. In that RUS we are told that the best that can be hoped for is that the existing gap of 72 minutes (departures from Milton Keynes Central at 7.01, then 8.13, Mondays to Fridays) will be reduced to 60 minutes. However, we are pleased to read in the WCML draft RUS that further work is recommended to identify an operationally viable solution for two trains an hour, which “will be presented in the final RUS publication.” We hope this will mean the solution is presented in the final RUS.

Passengers will not understand why the timetable cannot provide trains at regular intervals, or why trains cannot be longer and provide more seats. The Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PiXC) measure means that, for example, a passenger should expect to be seated for the journey from Wembley Central to West Brompton. Table 3.19 in the WCML draft RUS shows that in 2009/10, southbound, all three peak hours trains had crowding over 100%, with one loaded to over 140% of capacity from Watford Junction to West Brompton. It is clear that additional capacity is required now.

The assessment in the London and South East Draft RUS of the option to lengthen Southern West London Line services to eight cars shows a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)¹⁴ of 4.2, described as very good value for money, even though platform extensions are required at four stations. Passengers will agree, and expect Southern’s services between Milton Keynes and East Croydon (including the various “short” workings) to be lengthened as soon as rolling stock becomes available. However, there is severe overcrowding already, and the comment that additional stock is likely to be linked with new Thameslink rolling stock is unacceptable. Orders have not yet been placed for any, therefore the timescale for the provision of additional rolling stock is years in the future; passengers will expect real plans to be developed to overcome the shortage much sooner than that.

¹² Includes all Southern services within London

¹³ Includes North London Line as well as West London Line

¹⁴ The draft RUS uses a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) method when appraising each option by comparing the finance with the economic benefits.

Passengers will also expect another option that offers an alternative turnback location to platform 2A at Milton Keynes Central, because it is long enough only for four-car trains. The implication is clear – the trains would not operate to Milton Keynes Central. If alternative platforms at Milton Keynes Central cannot be used, the trains' length could be reduced by detaching/attaching a unit at a station such as Tring, which has turnback facilities.

5.3.3 OC3 long-distance on-train crowding to/from Euston

We comment on this gap in 5.5.1 below, options JT1.1 and 1.2.

5.3.4 OC4 on-train crowding on Sundays between Rugby and Crewe

We will include comments on option RL1.1, to extend two evening peak Euston to Northampton trains to Stafford, in this section. The best option for resolving crowding issues and improving connectivity on London Midland's Trent Valley service is to operate, as far as possible, the same timetable on all seven days of the week. As noted in Gap RL1, the Monday to Friday service on the route has an "irregular service" in the peak. Passengers questioned in our survey had these opinions regarding service frequency on the route:

Table 9: Passenger satisfaction with train frequency¹⁵

	Sunday passengers	commuter passengers	business passengers	leisure passengers
% very satisfied	33	13	19	33
% quite satisfied	27	44	34	36

The results suggest that the Sunday frequency should be increased if passengers' expectations are to be met, with peak services frequencies also below expectations. Improved frequencies every day of the week would improve satisfaction levels.

These are passengers' opinions regarding suggested frequencies and first/last trains on the route:

Table 10: Passenger requirements for train frequency

¹⁵ Data is based on relatively small sample sizes so results are for indicative purposes only

%	Mon -Thu	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Base	369		280	272
required frequency ½ hourly ¹⁶	83		41	46
first train before 7.00	78		61	46
last train after 24.00	39	51	56	39

We agree that the development of the train service is a matter for the train operator and the DfT; though we suggest that consultation with passengers and stakeholders should be part of their decision-making.

5.3.5 OC5 on-train crowding between Birmingham, the North West and Scotland

The complex issues that affect designing an attractive, effective and value for money timetable for the WCML north of Preston play a large part in the resolution of this problem. We comment on this gap in 5.5.1 below; options JT1.1 and 1.2. Options RL2.1, RL 8.1 and 8.2 also form part of this particular issue and are also included in our commentary there. We note the suggestion that certain services could be worked by Class 390 trains, with Class 221s released for lightly loaded trains elsewhere on the WCML, and agree that is an option for consideration as part of the replacement West Coast franchise. However, the difficulties of achieving the necessary synergies will be considerable, and need very careful assessment.

5.4 Generic gap FC: Freight capacity/capability

Passenger Focus is aware of the need for adequate space to be available on the WCML for freight trains and can see the validity of asking the question: four-car passenger train or 775 metre intermodal train? We agree that there are measures that could be adopted to reduce the demand for paths by passenger trains, including portioned working from “regional centres” – Manchester and Liverpool are obvious places, but so could a revival of trains which combine or divide at Carstairs, for Glasgow and Edinburgh.

We support, on behalf of passengers, all options that aid the operation of freight in a more expeditious way – longer loops or higher entry/exit speeds to them, for example – that also improve the operation of passenger trains.

5.5 Generic gap JT: Journey time

¹⁶ Monday – Friday at peak times, and includes all passengers requiring a service at 30 minute *or more frequent* intervals. Off-peak the score is 70%.

5.5.1 JT1 Faster journey times between London and Scotland

As we noted above in our introduction to this section, there are a number of related gaps and options which should be considered in conjunction with options JT1.1 and 1.2. They are:

- JT3.1 divert Euston-Crewe inter-urban service to run direct between Stafford and Crewe
- OC3 long-distance on-train crowding to/from Euston
- OC5 on-train crowding between Birmingham, the North West and Scotland
- RL2.1 divert one Birmingham–Liverpool train each hour to Preston
- RL8.1 additional services between Manchester Airport and Scotland
- RL8.2 new direct service between Liverpool and Scotland

In addition, gaps RL4-7 are part of this matrix of gaps and options and need to be considered here. The mix of flows is extremely complex and they cannot all be served by fast, direct services. Passengers understand that compromises are inevitable, particularly because the amount of rolling stock available and track capacity. However, they will expect the best use to be made of the railway, and the best efforts to have been made to analyse demand and flows and devise a timetable that is the best fit to passengers' needs. The number of long-distance trains operated each hour on the WCML between London and places north of the West Midlands is already six an hour in the off-peak and the DfT in its recent track access application has suggested that a seventh train should be added, to provide additional capacity and faster journey times to Lancashire and Glasgow.

The options assessed here must offer worthwhile improvements, not worsen existing connectivity – a lesson that should have been learnt from the reaction to the December 2008 timetable – and make the most effective use of the assets that the taxpayers have bought for the WCML. As passengers are being asked to take a greater share of the costs of the railway, they might reasonably expect to have a greater say in the timetables offered to them.

Passenger Focus's Autumn 2010 NPS results show that it is the Lancashire, Cumbria and Scotland section of the WCML that scores worst for frequency, journey time and capacity. The dichotomy is clear in table 11; passengers will expect options that improve those scores to be developed.

Table 11: Passenger overall satisfaction

	frequency	journey time	capacity	punctuality	connections	comfort	handling delays
Autumn NPS scores	overall satisfaction %						
TPE NW	80	91	52	89	74	80	38
VT B'ham - Scotland	77	83	64	77	77	70	60
VT Scotland	82	86	67	82	76	78	50
average score	80	87	61	83	76	76	49
VT other routes average	93	97	79	92	88	80	61
difference	-13	-10	-18	-9	-12	-4	-12

5.5.1.1 Option JT1.1 improved journey times between London Euston and Glasgow Central (4 h 8 m)

It is clear that passengers and stakeholders require faster journeys between London and Scotland. This option is dependent on potential benefits from modal shift to improve a BCR of 1.1, but offers only a two-hourly “fast” service between Euston, Preston and Glasgow Central. We question whether a two-hourly fast service would be attractive enough to generate sufficient additional demand. We note that the BCR increase to 2.3 requires 48,000 additional journeys, each generating about £79.20.

The additional hourly service between Euston and a “northern destination” would maintain an hourly service for Warrington and Wigan, provide additional capacity for Preston, but unspecified levels of service for Lancaster and stations to Carlisle. We would be concerned by any reduction in the number of through services between Euston and Lancaster, Oxenholme, Penrith and Carlisle. Passengers rate frequency for those services 13 percentage points lower than other West Coast inter-city services.

5.5.1.2 Option JT1.2 improved journey times between London Euston and Glasgow Central (4 h 14 m)

The timetable offered by this option again reduces frequencies for stations Lancaster to Carlisle inclusive, and suggests alternating the destination of the additional hourly service between Lancaster and Blackpool North. Our response¹⁷ to the Office of Rail Regulation’s consultation on track access rights on the WCML noted the strong case for operating through Euston – Blackpool North trains.

¹⁷ Track access rights on the West Coast main line, January 2011

Although the Euston – Glasgow standard journey time is four hours 14 minutes, 6 minutes slower than option JT1.1's, it would be offered every hour. However, the reduction in frequency at Carlisle and the irregular timetable for Lancaster offer no improvement on the current situation, already scored poorly by passengers. The draft timetables (options A and B) included in the DfT's application for track access rights on behalf of the new franchisee of the West Coast inter-city services offer variations of the timetables outlined in options JT1.1 and 1.2 of the Draft RUS.

DfT option A goes some way to restoring connectivity to pre-December 2008 levels between Watford Junction, Milton Keynes, Rugby and stations Crewe to Preston inclusive, but with only a two-hourly service for Warrington and Wigan. The options included in the Draft RUS and the DfT's track access application increase the number of stations on the WCML north of Crewe that have an irregular service pattern. Stakeholders have expressed their dissatisfaction with that since the proposals for the December 2008 timetable were first announced.

The Draft RUS has proposals to increase the number of services operated in two of the three service groups operated over the north end of the WCML that is Euston to Glasgow and Manchester to Scotland. Passenger Focus believes that the additional services, together with the Birmingham to Scotland services, offer planners the chance to devise a timetable that better matches passenger needs and stakeholder aspirations.

We believe passenger needs are:

- Adequate capacity for current demand and for future growth;
- Through services for main flows;
- Regular timetable pattern;
- Improvement of existing frequencies.

Together with the proposals developed for the final version of this RUS, the re-franchising of West Coast services and those operated by TransPennine Express offers the opportunity to build on the evidence provided by our research and thoroughly research passengers' needs. The two new franchises will have 10 years or so in which to develop the markets and accumulate knowledge and experience to inform the pattern of services that should be operated from the opening of the first section of HS2.

5.5.2 Option JT2.1 improved journey times between London Euston and Manchester Piccadilly

The Autumn 2010 NPS scores (see table 5.1) show that passengers are very satisfied with the journey time on the Euston to Manchester route, with a score of 98%, the highest of any inter-city service. The score for frequency is 94%, within one

percentage point of the highest, and on a par with Merseyrail, Gatwick Express and Heathrow Express, all of which operate four trains per hour. The Draft RUS proposes adding a fourth train each hour to the service on this route, citing as a benefit the fact that doing so would reduce the number of 11-car Pendolinos required to increase capacity. We are not convinced. A simple calculation, comparing four nine-car Pendolinos with three formed with 11 cars, shows that there would be 20 standard class cars each hour, but 21 if the service remained at three an hour, formed of 11 cars.

Journey time scores very highly on the Euston to Manchester route - 98%, suggesting that passengers do not regard it to be a gap (JT2). The scores for Liverpool and North Wales are also high - both 97% - which suggests that further analysis might show that, capacity permitting, it would be possible to add selected stops in trains on those routes, to help meet some of the gaps identified, particularly JT3 and JT5. In contrast, the scores for journey time for Virgin's services in the Anglo-Scottish group of services, an average of 12 points lower, supports the existence of gap JT1.

Stakeholders in the Greater Manchester area have reiterated their concerns that the local services¹⁸, already considerably altered from the December 2008 timetable to create paths for the three an hour service to London, and requiring more rolling stock to operate, could be adversely affected if an additional train to London were introduced.

Please note the comment in the assessment of this option that it does not have the same connectivity benefits of options JT1.1 and 1.2. The bidders for the West Coast franchise should include details of how they intend to match passengers' needs and stakeholders' aspirations (not always the same) with the most effective use of the fleet of trains allocated to the franchise.

5.5.3 JT3 Faster journey times between London/the North West and Nuneaton/Lichfield/Tamworth

Options to improve the journey times of flows that were, prior to the December 2008 timetable change, provided with through inter-city trains are discussed in section 5 5.1, page 20. The list of stations affected should include Rugby, which lost an almost hourly call in the Scotland/NW England to Euston services.

5.5.4 Option JT3.1 divert the existing London Euston to Crewe interurban service to operate via the WCML between Stafford and Crewe

We agree with the conclusion that this option should be considered together with the other options that have been selected for services that serve stations in the

¹⁸ See, for example, the comments in paragraph 2.3 of the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority report, December 2010

Stafford/Stoke/Crewe area. Re-routing the Euston to Crewe service direct between Stafford and Crewe is attractive from the point of view of speeding journey times from some stations to Crewe, and Liverpool if the service were to be extended thence. However, London Midland have recently applied to extend the existing Euston to Crewe service to Liverpool, which would provide the benefit of linking Stoke with Runcorn, Liverpool South Parkway and Liverpool. Retaining its current routing would also maintain the two trains an hour frequency between Stoke and Crewe, which is obviously more attractive, and provide better connectivity with Crewe's interchange opportunities.

5.5.5 JT4 Faster journey times between Birmingham and Manchester

5.5.5.1 Option JT4.1 reroute existing long-distance high speed service between Birmingham and Manchester to operate via Crewe

The end to end journey times between Birmingham and Manchester are slow; northbound the two trains each hour typically average 54 and 58 mph, southbound the averages are 56 and 48½ mph¹⁹. They are barely competitive with the 46 mph achievable by road²⁰. One reason is the nature of the route, with maximum speeds that are often low by inter-city standards, as between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, and between Stafford and Stoke-on-Trent. Another is the poor paths that the trains use, for example the southbound path with five stops is 11 minutes slower than the northbound equivalent.

We are therefore disappointed by the assessment of this option in the draft RUS, because it offers journey time reductions of only two to eight minutes southbound. We also note the dependency of its BCR on the journey time savings actually achievable.

5.5.5.2 Option JT4.2 service alterations to the London Euston to Crewe interurban service and the Birmingham to Manchester service to improve journey times and connectivity (options JT3.1 and JT4.1)

It is not easy to assess the complicated mix of service changes included in this option, which attempts to overcome the loss in connectivity between Stoke and the West Midlands. A few of the issues:

1. We believe that the re-routing via Madeley of the Euston to Crewe regional service reduces connectivity (see our comments in section 5.5.4), and we question its value as an additional Euston to Liverpool service. Its journey time would be approximately one hour longer than the current inter-city service, with at least ten more station stops. We do not consider it likely to be very attractive to passengers.

¹⁹ Calculated from the GB Rail Timetable Winter Edition 11, TSO.

²⁰ Calculated by: www.theaa.com/route-planner

2. Re-routing the Bournemouth–Manchester service via Crewe would reduce connectivity for those travelling to and from Stoke and Macclesfield.

3. Congleton and Stone would gain through services to Wolverhampton and Birmingham, meeting passenger aspirations.

Further development of this package is required to confirm which benefits are worth including in the final RUS.

5.5.6 JT5 Additional faster services between London and Rugby

We note the disbenefits to existing passengers if additional stops are added to their journeys to provide a higher frequency of services for stations already served. However the addition of a stop at Rugby, where the off-peak fast service is provided by a train on the Euston to Birmingham route, would also restore connectivity lost in the December 2008 timetable changes.

The Draft RUS’s promise of “significant amounts of extra capacity on the fast lines” when HS2 is open is too far in the future to satisfy demands that exist now. Passenger Focus suggests that further development work on the timetable, given the planned increase in the quantum of services proposed by the Draft RUS, should be done to find ways to meet demands for improvements at Rugby. We recognise that any interventions can only be part of a much wider package of changes to the WCML long-distance and regional timetables. In section 5.5.1 we mention the various timetable options that offer additional stops at Rugby, and remind readers of the very high scores for journey time, which we suggest might allow selected additional station stops without a significant impact on existing satisfaction.

5.6 Generic gap RL: Regional links

5.6.1 RL1 Irregular service from London Euston to Crewe via the Trent Valley during the peak

5.6.1.1 Option RL1.1 extend two evening peak London Euston - Northampton services to Stafford

Our comments on this option are included in those we made about OC4, on page 19. Stakeholders have pointed out that the speeds on the Northampton Loop are low, and hinder the operation of inter-city services diverted from the main line via Weedon. The journey times of the regional services on the route would also be reduced, helping to meet aspirations for faster journeys to the Trent Valley stations and Birmingham.

5.6.2 Option RL2.1 divert one of the two Birmingham New Street to Liverpool Lime Street trains per hour to Preston

We have received details of London Midland's Supplemental Agreement (SA) for this change. Obviously there are issues involved in reducing the frequency of the service between Birmingham and Liverpool, but they have to be assessed in the light of how it could improve connectivity and the capacity for the flows between stations along the route between Birmingham and Preston (inclusive), and also provide regular services from Hartford to Warrington, Wigan and Preston, all natural flows for the railway to serve, and new markets to develop.

5.6.3 RL3 Lack of direct services between Manchester Airport and towns in the Potteries

5.6.3.1 Option RL3.1 extend the existing Derby to Crewe service to Manchester Airport

The then Skegness to Crewe service was extended to Manchester Airport soon after the south curve at Heald Green Junction was opened but suffered from unreliability and low usage. The assessment of this option shows a BCR of 1, and we note that airport services rely on frequency to appeal to air travellers, who also expect reliability. The conclusion to study the proposal further, as part of the other interventions included in option JT4.2, is noted.

5.6.4 Gaps RL4-7 Lack of direct services between Watford Junction, Milton Keynes Central, Northampton, Rugby and the North West

We have considered these flows in the discussion of options JT1.1 and 1.2 on pages 90-93. Any interventions can only be part of a much wider package of changes to the WCML long-distance and regional timetables. We believe that East West Rail will require improved connectivity at Milton Keynes to match the links it will provide, particularly from Aylesbury, Bicester and Bedford.

5.6.5 Gap RL8 irregular or no service between the North West (Manchester/Liverpool respectively) and Scotland

Passengers have responded to the development of the Manchester Airport to Edinburgh and Glasgow Central services. Frequencies have been significantly improved, although Glasgow is served less frequently than Edinburgh. There is, of course, a greater number of trains on the WCML route to Glasgow, easily accessible at Preston. Crowding problems on the trains have been partly addressed by running longer trains, but the amount of rolling stock constrains the number of trains and/or the dates trains can be strengthened. We comment specifically on the two options proposed for consideration to fill this gap, but also include them in our commentary on the journey time options on pages 20-25.

5.6.5.1 Option RL8.1 additional services between Manchester Airport and Scotland

As noted above, the frequency of the Manchester Airport to Scotland service has been gradually increased over recent years. The growth in passenger numbers has shown that it is providing a popular service. The present gaps in the service undoubtedly reduce its attractiveness to the market; filling them would add capacity and generate more demand. Running Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) on this service would provide a “greener” service and reduce the use of diesel trains on electrified routes.

They would also improve running time sufficiently to allow more stops. Stakeholders tell us that the stopping pattern of some services reduces the connectivity between places on the line such as Oxenholme, Penrith and Lockerbie. Motherwell is particularly poorly served with one train a day. The best and most effective use of passenger train slots on a busy two-track railway is essential. The fact that three overlapping flows – between London, Birmingham, Lancashire and Edinburgh, Glasgow – use the WCML between Preston and Carstairs provides the means to devise services that satisfy the different markets.

We note that the Draft RUS recommends implementation as soon as rolling stock becomes available. A programme of the development of these interventions should be announced, setting out the timescales of the introduction of the new rolling stock and the additional services.

5.6.5.2 Option RL8.2 introduction of a new direct service between Liverpool and Scotland

We note the fact that operating this service as a portion added at Preston to Manchester Airport to Edinburgh trains would reduce operating costs considerably. The use of EMU trains would enable attaching/detaching at other junction stations, such as Carstairs, which makes origin and destination pairs much more flexible. We believe that a bold approach would be the best way to develop this market; the two-hourly service proposed is more likely to attract business than only one or two trains.

5.6.6 RL9 poor frequency of services between Liverpool and London

We note the apparent difficulty in finding a business case for increasing the frequency of services between Liverpool and Euston. In our bespoke research into the needs and aspirations of passengers on the route we asked the question “*Which one of the following would encourage you to make more journeys on this route you are taking today?*”. Only 4% stated that more frequent trains would do that, as opposed to 40% stating that they already use the service as often as they need to. Frequency on the route was accorded a 90% satisfaction rating in the Autumn 2010 NPS. We make further comments in section 5.5.1.

5.6.7 RL10 poor frequency of direct services between Lockerbie and Glasgow/Edinburgh

Lockerbie acts as a railhead for the surrounding area, and for Dumfries as well for journeys to the Scottish capital. Day trips for business and leisure and even commuting should be easily possible. The train offers a very competitive journey time of just over an hour to Glasgow and Edinburgh; Passenger Focus and stakeholders have campaigned for years for improvements to the stopping pattern to match the journey time. The current timetable²¹ shows that the first arrivals at Glasgow and Edinburgh are after 9am - not before – with the next arrival at Glasgow Central not until 12.28. Late afternoon trains from Glasgow Central to Lockerbie leave at 17.06 and 17.40, but from Edinburgh they are 16.12 and 18.12. Sunday services are seriously affected by the various periods of engineering work.

Despite the irregular timetable, use of Lockerbie station has grown considerably over the past decade, with an increase of 186% in passenger numbers²² between 2002/3 and 2008/9, with an average of over 400 passengers per day. It is clear why passengers and stakeholders are asking for improvements. The timescale of the Draft RUS stretches for more than a decade into the future. It comments that additional stops at Lockerbie would require retiming of services, particularly through the approaches to Glasgow Central and Haymarket/Edinburgh, and require an “extensive timetable assessment”. We believe that is exactly what a RUS should undertake when a gap has been identified, and look forward to its results at an early date. The introduction of electric trains on the services from Manchester, and possibly Liverpool offers hope that the additional stops required to give Lockerbie a regular timetable can be provided with little, if any, additional journey time.

5.6.8 RL11 sub-optimal connectivity at Carlisle between WCML, the Cumbrian Coast, Newcastle, Leeds and the G&SW route to Dumfries, Kilmarnock and Glasgow,

Connections with other rail services was scored 76% satisfied by passengers using the train services on the northern section of the WCML; that is 12 percentage points lower than the rest of the WCML. We believe the commentary on this gap in the Draft RUS merely states the obvious, and offers no real assurance that the work on the service patterns to meet the various journey time and regional links gaps on the WCML will ensure only options that facilitate interchange at Carlisle are assessed.

There is a balance to be struck between best-possible connections for interchanging passengers and the needs of passengers using the connecting routes for travel to/from Carlisle, and not interchanging there. Flows from Carlisle to Whitehaven and Dumfries are both more than twice as large as the flows from Carlisle to Glasgow

²¹ GB Rail Timetable Winter Edition 11, TSO.

²² Figures from the ORR's station footfall data.

and Edinburgh combined. Interchange at Carlisle to/from those stations adds at least 103,000 passengers²³ to those flows, showing the need for best possible connections.

5.6.9 RL14 gap in morning peak fast services between Birmingham New Street and Milton Keynes Central

We note the difficulty in filling this gap, because it comes at a time of day when the long-distance services are already heavily loaded and more passengers are likely to join trains at Milton Keynes Central than leave them. However, the gap in the Birmingham to Milton Keynes service in the morning is currently from 6.50 until 8.30, which is clearly too long at a peak time. If growth from Birmingham to London should be sufficient to justify an additional train – and resources and track capacity are available – then the gap could be closed. Until such might come about, further evaluation of options involving London Midland's services appears to be the only way to resolve this issue quickly. Journey time would be approximately 30 minutes longer, but such an option would help fill the 100 minute gap.

²³ Estimate from 2009/10 passenger data.

6. Summary table of Passenger Focus's responses to RUS options

Gap	Option	RUS conclusion	Passenger Focus opinion
OC1	OC1.1	implement as soon as rolling stock is available	agree
OC2	-	further work	develop urgently
OC3	-	in JT1.1, etc.	-
OC4	-	TOC to develop	agree
OC5	-	new franchise to determine	agree
JT1	JT1.1	not recommended	agree
	JT1.2	recommended for further development	agree, but best fit for passengers
JT2	JT2.1	further work	disagree
JT3	JT3.1	further development with JT4.2	disagree with re-routing via Madeley
JT4	JT4.1	further development with JT4.2	agree, but average speeds still too low
	JT4.2	further development	agree
JT5	-	no option identified	do as part of JT1
RL1	RL1.1	not recommended	include in OC4
RL2	RL2.1	further development with JT4.2	introduce
RL3	RL3.1	further development with JT4.2	noted
RL4-7	-	in JT1.1, etc; lost inter-city links	in JT1.1, etc.
RL8	RL8.1	implement as soon as rolling stock is available	agree, need timescale for additional rolling stock
	RL8.2	more analysis	introduce
RL9	-	further development with JT3.1	not yet a gap?
RL10	-	consider during timetable development process	needed at an early date
RL11	-	consider during timetable development process	should be essential part of planning
RL14	-	priority to consider during timetable development process	agree, possibly London Midland could be quick first option

Appendix A: List of consultees

We invited comment on the draft for consultation, reminding that comments should be sent directly to Network Rail and or copied into Passenger Focus.

Railway and other user groups

Organisation
Atherstone & District Rail Users Group
Bedford-Bletchley Rail Users' Association
Cannock Chase Rail Promotions Group
Clydesdale Rail Action Group
East Cheshire Lines Rail Users Group
Furness & Lakes Line
Lakes Line Rail Users Group
Lancaster, Morecambe & District Rail Users Group
Leeds & Skipton Rail Users Group
Lichfield Rail Promotion Group
Milton Keynes Rail Users Group
Northampton Rail Users Group
North Staffs Rail Promotion Group
Nuneaton, Bedworth & Hinckley Rail Users Group
NW Transport Roundtable
Railfuture
Railfuture East Midlands
Railfuture Scotland
Railfuture West Midlands
Ribble Valley Rail
Rugby Rail Users Group
Scottish Association for Public Transport
Transform Scotland
TravelWatch East Midlands
TravelWatch North West
Watford Rail Users Group
West London Line Group
West Midlands Regional Sustainability Forum

Community Rail Partnerships

Organisation
Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership
Leeds-Morecambe Community Rail Partnership
Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership

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<p>Passenger Focus's response to Network Rail's West Midlands & Chiltern Route Utilisation Strategy, February 2011 http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=4971</p>
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<p>Strategic Transport Projects Review, 2008 http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/strategic-transport-projects-review</p>
<p>Track access rights on the West Coast main line, January 2011 http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=4857</p>
<p>Transport Series Statistical Bulletin, August 2010 http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/08/23082229</p>
<p>What passengers want from the WCML RUS, BDRC Continental for Passenger Focus, 2009 (available from Passenger Focus on request)</p>

Appendix C: Sample questionnaire

West Coast Passenger Priorities

Thank you for your agreeing to take part in this short survey which is being carried out 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. The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Any answer you give will be treated in confidence in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society (MRS).

You have been handed this questionnaire either on a train, or at a railway station. When answering the questions, we would like you to think about the train journey you were making when you were handed the questionnaire.

The interviewer will collect this questionnaire from you when you have completed it or please use the free post paid envelope provided to send it back to us. If you have any queries the interviewer will be pleased to help.

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

		:		
--	--	---	--	--

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

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

Q3b Which of these companies is running **this** train service? (*Please tick only one*)

TransPennine Express.....

Virgin Trains.....

Other: Please write in

Don't know.....

Q4 Please write in the name of the station nearest to your home :

Q5 Do you use the station nearest to your home?

Yes, for most train journeys..... **Go to Q7**

Yes, only for some train journeys..... **Go to Q6**

No, never use it..... **Go to Q6**

Not sure..... **Go to Q6**

ANSWER Q6 IF YOU DO NOT USE YOUR NEAREST STATION FOR MOST TRAIN JOURNEYS

Q6 Why is this? (*Please tick all that apply*)

- Easy to get to alternative station(s).....
- Car parking problems at my nearest station.....
- Better frequency of trains at other stations.....
- Trains too overcrowded from my nearest station.....
- Personal security at my nearest station.....
- Cheaper fares available from other stations.....
- Length of journey too long from my nearest station.....
- I get a direct train to my destination from the alternative station.....
- No booking office at my nearest station.....
- Provision of up to date announcements about the train service at the alternative station.....

Other reason: please write in

GETTING TO THE STATION

Q7 How did you travel to the station where you boarded this train? (*Tick all that apply*)

- On foot/walking.....
- Bicycle (parked at or near station).....
- Bicycle (taken on train).....
- Motorbike.....
- Bus.....
- Coach.....
- National Rail train.....

If National Rail train: please specify station you are travelling from

- Car parked at or near station.....
- Car - dropped off.....
- Car share/car pool.....
- Underground.....
- Taxi.....
- Tram/Light Rail (inc. Metrolink/DLR).....
- Air/Sea.....

Other method: please write in

Q8 How will you travel to your final destination after leaving this train? (*Please tick all that apply*)

- On foot/walking.....
- Bicycle (parked at or near station).....
- Bicycle (taken on train).....
- Motorbike.....
- Bus.....
- Coach.....
- National Rail train.....

If National Rail train: please specify station you are travelling on to:

- Car parked at or near station.....
- Car - picked up.....
- Car share/car pool.....
- Underground.....
- Taxi.....
- Tram/Light Rail (inc. Metrolink/DLR).....
- Air/Sea.....

Other method: please write in

Q9 What is the main purpose of your rail journey today?

- 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 or 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.....

MAKING THIS TRAIN JOURNEY

Q10a 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..... **Go to Q11**
- 2-5..... **Go to Q10b**
- 6-10..... **Go to Q10b**
- 11-20..... **Go to Q10b**
- 21+..... **Go to Q10b**

Q10b Out of these journeys, how often were you able to get a seat on the train?

- | | |
|---|---|
| Always..... <input type="checkbox"/> | Sometimes..... <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Usually..... <input type="checkbox"/> | Never..... <input type="checkbox"/> |
| About half the time..... <input type="checkbox"/> | Not relevant/don't know..... <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q11 Which one of the following would encourage you to make more journeys on this route you are taking today? *(Please tick only one)*

- More frequent trains.....
- More reliable train service.....
- More parking spaces at the station.....
- More secure parking at the station.....
- More staff at stations.....
- Less crowded trains.....
- Better personal security at stations.....
- A direct service (no need to change trains).....
- Cheaper fares.....
- I already use the train for all the journeys I need to make.....

Other reason: please write in

FREQUENCY AND TIMES OF TRAINS

Q12 How satisfied are you with the frequency of trains between the station at which you boarded this train and the station at which you will get off this train.

	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Quite dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know/ no opinion
On Weekdays.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On Saturdays.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On Sundays.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

CONNECTIONS AND TIMETABLES

Q13 Does any part of the journey you are making today require a change or changes of train?

Please write in:

The number of changes you are making (*if no changes please write in zero*)

--	--

The name of the station where you will end your train journey:

PLEASE ANSWER Q14 IF YOU DO NOT NEED TO MAKE A CHANGE ON TODAY'S JOURNEY

Q14 If on this journey there were no direct trains and you had to change trains, how likely would you be to still travel by train on this route?

- Very likely.....
- Quite likely.....
- Not very likely.....
- Not at all likely.....
- Not sure.....

ALL TO ANSWER

Q15 In the future if you had to change trains during this journey, how concerned would you be with each of the following issues?

	Very concerned	Fairly con- cerned	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	Not very con- cerned	Not at all concerned	No opinion
Being able to make a connection on time.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having to wait and adding too much time to the journey.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of station facilities at the interchange i.e. refreshments/waiting areas etc.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Journey information at the station i.e. screens/notice boards.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobility assistance/moving luggage.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q16 Thinking about your journey today which **one** of these options do you most prefer?

A faster service between cities, with the increased likelihood that you may need to change trains if you need to go to/from a smaller intermediate station.....

Or a slower service which stops at more intermediate stations, reducing the likelihood of needing to change trains if you are not going to a city destination.....

Q17 If the journey times were longer, how many additional minutes would be acceptable?

- None - longer journey times would not be acceptable.....
- 5 minutes.....
- 10 minutes.....
- 15 minutes.....
- 20 minutes.....
- Don't know/no opinion.....

Q18 How important is a regular timetable for you on this route, e.g. knowing your train always departs 10 minutes past the hour (for example, 09:10, 10:10...15:10 etc, as opposed to different times past each hour)?

- Very important.....
- Fairly important.....
- Neither important nor unimportant.....
- Not very important.....
- Not at all important.....
- Not sure.....

RAILWAY STATIONS

Q19a Thinking about the station where you boarded this train, which of the following are the most important facilities to have?

Q19b And if you could choose **only** one new or improved facility at the station where you boarded, what would it be?

	Q19a Important (Tick Up to Four)	Q19b Most important (Tick only 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 on the platform.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Station canopy.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waiting room.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Visible 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 the trains will actually arrive.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accurate announcements about 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.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refreshment room/kiosk.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other reason: please write in

BUS REPLACEMENT

Q20 In the last 12 months have you ever had to travel on a bus service running in place of a train on this route?

- Yes.....
- No.....

IF USED BUS REPLACEMENT ANSWER Q21 TO Q26, OTHERWISE GO TO Q27

Q21 When did you first learn that there was a replacement bus service?

- Prior to arriving at departure station.....
- When I arrived at departure station.....
- An announcement on board the train during the journey.....
- An announcement only when leaving the train.....
- I only found out when I enquired at the station.....
- Other.....

Q22 If there were announcements made at the **station** about the replacement bus service, please rate the following:

	Good	Average	Poor	No opinion/ not applicable
Overall usefulness of the announcements.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How audible and clear the announcements were.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information about how much longer the journey time would be.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q23 If there were any announcements made on the **train** about the replacement bus service, please rate the following:

	Good	Average	Poor	No opinion/ not applicable
Overall usefulness of the announcements.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How audible and clear the announcements were.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information about how much longer the journey time would be.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q24 Thinking about when you changed to and from the bus, how satisfied were you with the following:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly dissat- isified	Very dissat- isified	Not sure/no opinion
Time provided for the transfer.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assistance provided generally.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help provided for climbing steps onto the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help provided with luggage.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directions given to and from the bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q25 Would you prefer an allocated seat on the bus?

Yes.....

No, I don't mind.....

Q26 How did the bus standards compare with the train on the following:

	Better	Same	Worse	Not sure
Size of seats.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legroom.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-board toilet facilities.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Luggage space.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

STAFF AND SERVICE DISRUPTION

Q27 When there are delays or disruptions to train services, how do you usually find out about them BEFORE you get to the station? (**Please tick as many as apply**)

Website.....

Email.....

Text alert.....

Telephone call.....

Radio.....

TV.....

Ceefax/Teletext.....

Other.....

Do not usually know about delays until arrive at station.....

Q28 What would be the best method to let you know there are delays or disruption BEFORE you set off for the station? *(Please tick one only)*

- Website.....
- Email.....
- Text alert.....
- Telephone call.....
- Radio.....
- TV.....
- Ceefax / Teletext.....
- Other.....

Q29 If you arrive at a STATION and there are delays or disruption, what are the TWO most important ways you find out how it affects you? *(Please tick two)*

- Information screens.....
- Announcements.....
- Posters/notices.....
- Ask a member of staff.....
- Telephone help point at station.....
- Phone information line.....
- Phone other person/source.....
- Get information by text.....
- Website.....
- Email.....
- Ask fellow passengers.....
- Other.....

Q30 If you are already on a TRAIN and it becomes delayed, what are the TWO most important ways you find out information? *(Please tick two)*

- Information screens.....
- Announcements.....
- Posters/notices.....
- Ask a member of staff.....
- Phone information line.....
- Phone other person/source.....
- Get information by text.....
- Website.....
- Email.....
- Ask fellow passengers.....
- Other.....

About You

In order to ensure that the responses of all groups of passengers are included please could you provide the following details about yourself.

Q31 Are you?

- Working full time (30+ hours).....
- Working part time (9-29 hours).....
- Not working - seeking work.....
- Not working and not seeking work.....
- Retired.....
- Full time student.....
- Other.....

Q32 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"/> |

Q33 Are you.....

- Male.....
Female.....
-

Q34 Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

- White..... Chinese.....
Mixed..... Asian or Asian British.....
Black or Black British..... Other ethnic group.....
-

Q35 Do you have a disability or long term illness related to the following: **(Tick all that apply)**

- Mobility..... Speech impairment.....
Wheelchair user..... Learning difficulties.....
Hearing..... No: None.....
Eyesight.....
-

Q36 What type of ticket did you use for your journey today?

(Please note: type of ticket is often shown at the top left of your ticket)

- Anytime Single/Return.....
Anytime Day Single/Return.....
Off-Peak/Super Off-Peak Single/Return.....
Off-Peak Day/Super Off-Peak Day Single/Return.....
Advance.....
Day Travelcard.....
Weekly/Monthly Season Ticket (including Travelcard).....
Annual season ticket (including Travelcard).....
Special promotion ticket.....
Holiday package/tour ticket.....
Rail Staff Pass/Privilege ticket/Police concession.....

Other: Please write in

Q37 Did you use a railcard to buy your ticket?

- Yes.....
No.....
-

Thank you for your help in completing this research.

Please hand it back to the interviewer or use the post paid envelope to return the questionnaire to us.

This survey was conducted under the terms of the MRS Code of Conduct by Continental Research on behalf of Passenger Focus. All answers you provide are entirely confidential and will be combined with those of all other passengers who take part in the research. If you would like to confirm Continental Research's credentials, please call the MRS freephone on 0500 396999.

The information collected will be used to represent the best interests of passengers along this route.



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