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18th March 2016

Re: Setting the Direction for Wales and Borders Rail

Dear Sir,

Railfuture is a national independent voluntary organisation campaigning for a bigger, better railway in Wales, so we welcome the opportunity to provide an informed response to the questions in this consultation.

Railfuture recognises the importance of the provision of improved rail services offering more journey opportunities to a wider range of travellers in contributing to wider economic, employment and skills, social inclusion and environmental issues.

Our response is below. If you require any more detail or clarification please do not hesitate to get in touch. We also wish to refer you to our Development Plan 3rd Edition 'On Track for the 21st Century' 'A Development Plan for the Railways of Wales' a copy of which is attached.

Yours faithfully,

Rowland Pittard

Rowland Pittard
Secretary
Railfuture Cymru

Setting the direction for the Wales and Borders franchise

Introduction

We include in this section issues which affect what should be written into the franchise but are not included within your range of questions.

We consider that engagement and accountability are important between the public and the franchise operator and also where appropriate between the public and Welsh Government.

We support the franchise appointment of stake holder managers to engage with stakeholders and supporter groups including timetable consultations and also the appointment of customer panels to assist the franchise holder with its delivery of services.

Both of these requirements should be written into the franchise document. Railfuture has appreciated the engagement that it has had with Arriva Trains Wales.

There should also be engagement between Welsh Government, local government and rail users to ensure that the best possible service is provided for the Welsh public.

We wish to point out that a major factor in using public transport is the overall journey time together with perceived value for money fares. Transport integration requires considerable improvements in Wales and short but reliable connectional times are required. Some journeys in Wales are extended by 100% because of poor or nonexistent connections. Please see our answer to question 1.

The franchise operator or Welsh Government should produce train timetables for public use. These should also include the timetables of other operators in Wales.

There is a need for serious analysis of the options Heavy Rail or Light Rail for each of the Valley Lines. There is also the need to consider Light Rail for urban use. This is suggested for four locations in our Development Plan. We do not advocate an increase in heavy rail stations in cities. The city line in Cardiff has low usage and more stations in Cardiff would increase journey times and increase car usage.

We support the concept of the South East Wales Metro provided that this does not preclude investment in other parts of Wales. We wish to point out that locations at the periphery of the Metro region eg Ebbw Vale and Maesteg, must have frequent, at least every half hour, through services to Cardiff. We look forward to further detailed consultation on the Metro proposals and also informed discussion on the use of light and heavy rail.

Your questions do not include questions to the remapping of the franchise and the possible loss or gain of line operated by the franchise. We consider that the franchise should continue to operate cross-border services, but that if the franchise is let by the Welsh Government then measures will be required to ensure that the needs of English residents for those services are adequately represented. Welsh Government should have similar reciprocal measures where other English based operators provide services in Wales. We hope there will be a future Welsh Government/DfT consultation on this issue.

Your questions do not relate to rail infrastructure and station improvements to provide improved passenger services in Wales.

Your questions do not include station and line reopening and new station openings in the future although serving these stations and lines needs to be written into a new franchise. There should be a specific commitment that the franchisee should work positively with Welsh Government in developing business cases for network expansion.

The Railfuture Development Plan includes details of such improvements and reopening that would benefit travellers and the Welsh economy.

Question 20 refers to Sustainable Development but there is no reference to competition to rail. Transport improvements create more travel and this usually applies more to road improvements than rail improvements. A good rail transport system will reduce the need for road improvements. We are concerned that there are continued requests for the building the high cost, over one billion pounds, M4 relief road for Newport. The Newtown by pass is being built despite the recent introduction of more rail services between Aberystwyth and Shrewsbury.

We consider that there should be a standard concession for seniors of 50% for journeys within Wales which could replace some of the concessions made at present. A large number of older people in Wales prefer to travel by rail than use free bus transport especially where a change of vehicles is involved. We wish to point out that Northern Ireland and major conurbations in England give free travel to senior citizens.

There should also be a standard concession of 50% for children. Other railcard discounts should continue.

Question 1: Do you agree with the Welsh Government's high level outcomes for rail in the Wales and Borders area? Are there any others we should consider?

We agree in principle with the high level outcomes for rail subject to the following comments.

The first Bullet point includes *'better interchanges between modes'* and tacked onto the end of bullet point eight is *'better integration between services'*. We would suggest that it needs a separate entry for *'improved Rail to Rail connections'* in order to highlight the importance of improved connections both in Wales and to other parts of the United Kingdom. Timetable changes in the past affecting Wales have often not considered the effect on connections. This also applies to changes made in connection with engineering work. The timetabling computer should list connections so that when any timetable alterations are considered the impact can be seen immediately. A full list of all connections for each arriving train at each interchange station would also highlight the many services that do not connect.

Also associated with this item is the point made in Railfuture's Development Plan for the Railways of Wales about the need for *'altering the regulatory regime for train-to-connections'*. As a general rule Railfuture's Development Plan Section 5.2.9 proposes that: *"All trains will wait up to five minutes for late-running connecting services. They will not normally be held for longer than this because of inconvenience to passengers already on board or waiting at stations further along the route. Exceptions may be made where the connecting train is the last service of the day on a particular route. However, every effort will be made to avoid delaying the last train of the day by more than 20 minutes by providing alternative transport for passengers who need to connect into that service"*.

Again from our Development Plan *"clock face" timetabling should be adopted'* wherever this is practical. This was initially introduced by Arriva at the start of the franchise but at every timetable change there have been minor adjustments moving away from clock face timings for commercial advantages.

Bullet point 4. The franchise operator should make provision to cater for special events but we consider other rail operators in Wales should also provide sufficient capacity for special events along the routes which they serve. This includes provision for events at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff where there are large numbers of passengers from England.

Bullet point 7 While there is a bullet point regarding the financial benefits '*Direct services between main residential areas and economic centres*' the wider advantages as quoted in the Development Plan should be included "*Greater use of rail ... will improve accessibility to work, education, health and leisure facilities for those unable to use cars at all times. Thus as well as improving the environment it will also reduce social exclusion. The improvement of transport facilities – including for the disabled – is an essential component of sustainable development, which the National Assembly for Wales is statutorily required to promote.*"

In addition all residential areas should be served by public transport on seven days per week.

While bullet point 9 covers '*improved punctuality*' this should be widened to the aspect included in Railfuture's Development Plan of '*reliability*'. ATW has been one of the best performing operators regarding the minimal loss of rolling stock owing to failures and because of the unavailability of staff. However; this is not the case universally with other operators into Wales. So while it has not been a significant issue in the past, though there has been a noticeable decline recently, the wider requirement of '*reliability*' covering both availability and punctuality should be included.

The other items from the Development Plan that should be included are "*rail must offer an attractive service in terms of affordability,, security and comfort.*"

Question 2: Do you agree with the top 5 priorities improvements for rail passengers identified by Transport Focus? How would you rank these priorities? If you do not agree, are there others that should take precedence?

Railfuture considers that '*Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel*' should be ranked above '*Passengers always able to get a seat on the train*' as there many examples of services not being available at times which people wish to travel. This is especially important when people are travelling to work for example only one train from Maesteg reaches Cardiff before 08.30. Half hourly services from Ebbw Vale, Maesteg and the Vale of Glamorgan and hourly from Cheltenham are required to provide a sufficiently frequent service to Cardiff. Sunday services should be provided on all lines.

We also consider *that more trains arrive on time* should be replaced by item six is "*Accurate and timely information available at stations*". Arriva Trains Wales has a very good punctuality record and this should be further improved with new rolling stock.

Question 3: Are there changes to the range and frequency of services currently operated, as set out at Annex A that you would consider necessary?

We would firstly make the point that despite including Cross border services to the likes of Birmingham, Cheltenham, Chester, Manchester and Liverpool and the cross border Marches line serving Hereford, Shrewsbury etc Table 1 including forecast passenger demand in the Welsh government consultation document has failed to include the Chepstow /Cheltenham and Bristol lines from Cardiff. This is a significant omission especially as the Wales and Borders Chepstow line has outperformed the growth of all the other listed; Wales and Borders lines over the duration of the present franchise.

As detailed in our Development Plan section 4.1.4 '*All routes must be served 365 days a year. Even on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, when at present in Wales there are no rail services, there should be an appropriate level of service*'. At present there is no service on Valley lines on New Year's Day and this must not be carried forward into the new franchise.

Development Plan section 4.1.5 *'All routes must be served at least between 0600 and 2300, thereby catering, on the whole, for work, education and leisure travel requirements. Some routes, however, will need services earlier than 0600 and later than 2300'*.

Development Plan section 4.1.6 *'In view of the changes in Sunday travel patterns in recent years, all routes must follow the European norm of Sunday services being similar to those on weekdays, except where there is less or no demand for some commuter or school journeys.'*

All routes should have a Sunday service throughout the year.

It is hard to specify service levels without knowing what sort of vehicles will be used. A light rail provision in parts of the Cardiff Valleys would involve smaller capacity vehicles running at higher frequencies.

Our Development plan lists line by line what are Railfuture's suggestions for service levels which are currently achievable and the stations and destinations served by these services. Main line electrification and resignalling will provide opportunities for further enhancement.

Cardiff- Barry- Bridgend should be half hourly on weekdays.

Cardiff- Maesteg should be half hourly on weekdays and have a Sunday service.

Cardiff – Pontypridd six trains per hour with two per hour extended to Treherbert, Aberdare and Merthyr Tydfil.

Cardiff- Bargoed should be four trains per hour with two extended to Rhymney. Also two additional trains per hour to Caerphilly

Cardiff - Ebbw Vale Town should be half hourly on weekdays.

Cardiff – Gloucester – Cheltenham all stations should be hourly on weekdays.

Cardiff- Bridgend –Swansea should be 4 trains per hour (combined with the Maesteg service Bridgend – Cardiff should have six trains per hour) on weekdays and half hourly on Sundays.

West Wales- Manchester should be hourly with an improved service west of Cardiff on Sundays.

Swansea - Carmarthen should be half hourly. There should also be an additional service via the Swansea District line to Carmarthen .

Carmarthen – Milford Haven should be hourly

Carmarthen - Pembroke Dock should remain at two hourly until infrastructure improvements are made.

Swansea –Shrewsbury-Crewe Heart of Wales' line should have a two hourly service with an improved Sunday service.

Aberystwyth – Shrewsbury should be hourly and extended two hourly to Birmingham International.

Pwllheli – Machynlleth should be two hourly with through coaches to Birmingham International and an improved Sunday service.

Holyhead -Chester-Wrexham- Shrewsbury should be hourly with services extended alternately to Birmingham International and to Cardiff. There may be a need for an additional hourly service if new stations are opened.

Wrexham-Bidston should be half hourly.

Llandudno- Blaenau Ffestiniog should be two hourly.

Chester- Bangor-Holyhead should be half hourly to Bangor with hourly extensions to Holyhead. This includes Virgin West Coast trains .There should also be a half hourly service from Llandudno to Llandudno Junction extended hourly to Manchester. There should be an all year Sunday service to Llandudno.

We have not commented, except as below, on services within England but wish to support the retention of all the present cross border services.

As far as changed services we refer to what has been included Railfuture's Development Plan section 4.1.2.2 *"The existing Cardiff to Cheltenham service should operate each hour, without the current gaps. An additional hourly local service should operate between Cardiff, Gloucester, Cheltenham and Worcester, giving onward connections."*

"There should be an enhanced, limited-stop West Wales-Cardiff-Birmingham-Derby (and beyond) service at hourly intervals, with all trains calling at Severn Tunnel Junction and Chepstow". It has been suggested should be replaced every two hours by an International service from South Wales to Scotland

"This would result in Severn Tunnel Junction and Chepstow on the Gloucester line having three trains an hour, with Caldicot and Lydney being served half-hourly."

Question 4: Are there destinations outside of Wales that should be considered for inclusion in the next Wales and Borders franchise?

A recent report supported by the ORR has indicated that competition between rail operators on the same route leads to improved services, greater useage and lower fares. This is supported by the present services between Birmingham and London which are operated by four different operators. We therefore make the suggestion that competition may be appropriate on certain routes from Wales to English destinations especially between South Wales and London which has some of the highest walk on fares in the country

The flagship International service, which was previously withdrawn because of lack of rolling stock and not passengers, should be reinstated between Swansea/Cardiff and York/ Newcastle / Scotland.

The new franchise should include new services to the West of England from South Wales starting at Swansea. 25% of the outward travel from South Wales is to the South West. There should also be an hourly service to Bath and beyond which should start from Swansea and call at principal stations to Cardiff Central en route to Bristol. These services combined with the existing services could provide a fifteen minute service linking the Great Western Cities of which two services could be worked by electric traction and operated by the new franchise.

The new franchise services should include a morning peak hour service from the existing Wales & Borders stations of Lydney, Chepstow, Caldicot and Severn Tunnel Junction to Bristol Temple Meads with an equivalent return in the evening peak. This should consist of one or possibly two trains rather than an all day service.

As detailed in the Development Plan section 4.1.2.2 and included in the answer to Question 3 above the hourly additional stopping service to Cheltenham should be extended through to Worcester.

There should be improved connections at Hereford to the hourly service to Ledbury and stations to Birmingham.

The hourly West Wales/Cardiff to Manchester service via Shrewsbury should remain in the franchise

The service from Aberystwyth and Pwllheli to Birmingham International service should remain in the franchise as should the service from Holyhead to Birmingham International

The Holyhead / Llandudno to Manchester Piccadilly service should remain in the franchise with all services extended to Manchester Airport. North Wales must be linked to the Northern power house and the major airport serving the region.

New services are required from North Wales and Wrexham (possibly Cardiff) to Liverpool via the Halton Curve. This will provide a half hourly service from Wrexham to Chester.

The hourly Wrexham to Bidston service should remain in the franchise and when this line is electrified the service should be extended to Liverpool and become half hourly.

Question 5: Can better use be made of existing train capacity? What is an acceptable limit for standing times on rail journeys?

Improved frequency and improved connections will attract more passengers and make better use of services running below capacity.

There is anecdotal evidence of considerable suppressed demand for Off Peak services that are today running below capacity. This is because of the lack of car parking spaces at the stations that all become filled before the end of the morning peak. Additional car parking facilities and provision and better local transport (bus) feeder services would attract additional passengers onto the present services running under capacity. The existing Wales and Borders franchise included the Operator to fund approaching half a million pounds for improved car parking. In fact Arriva in the early part of the franchise have exceeded this and actually spent more than this on improving car parking at stations. The car parks provided by local authorities should also be expanded where demand exceeds capacity.

The replacement 'franchise' should include an annual requirement (as distinct from the existing single sum over the whole fifteen year franchise period) to improve and extend car park provision. This should be flexible to allow some carry forward or pull back between years to facilitate planning and implementation.

As far as an acceptable limit for standing times on rail journeys we think the basic existing Passenger Charters provide a reasonable standard:- "*You should not have to stand on our trains during off peak times, and during peak times you should not normally have to stand for more than 20 minutes (or more than one station stop if this is longer).*" It is essential that sufficient stock is available to meet this standard and that it is enforced for all operators in Wales. There has not been a single complete week since the start of the FGW Franchise in 2006 that they have not been in breach of this Charter standard as far as their services from South Wales to Bristol are concerned.

Question 6: What standards for performance should the Welsh Government consider setting when awarding a franchise for rail services?

The present standards are acceptable and achievable by the existing franchise operator and should be maintained. Performance can be improved in the future when improved rolling stock and electrically operated trains become available. There must be suitable stock provided for services to reduce dwell times. Slam door stock requires additional dwell times as does stock where the doors are opened by the conductor rather than the driver. In all cases for safety doors should be closed by the conductor/train manager.

Question 7: How could arrangements for dealing with disruption be improved and how should these be prioritised?

There are two types of disruption Planned Disruption for engineering works and unplanned disruptions caused by infrastructure failures and blockages, train failures and staff shortages. These need to be dealt with in different ways.

Railfuture nationally has prepared a detailed paper on disruption a copy of which is attached.

Question 8: How should the cost improvements in service provision be met? Will the Welsh Government's approach provide the best value for money for passengers?

It should be appreciated that providing services for the economic benefit of the rural areas of Wales will require continued subsidy. Rail provides the opportunity for commuters to travel to work and this increases economic and social benefits. Fare levels should not be raised in excess of inflation. Centrally funded grant aid should continue and not at a reduced level. The need for more and new rolling stock should be recognised as there has been no investment in new stock during the period of the current no growth fifteen year franchise where passenger levels have increased by 78%. Better coordinated services between rail and road transport will increase passenger levels.

Question 9: Would you prefer to not use a paper-based ticket and, if so, what ticket type would you like to have available?

We support the development of e and m based tickets. However it must be recognised that some public transport users especially the young, some senior citizens and disadvantaged will not have access or the facilities to use non paper tickets and consequently paper tickets will have to be retained. The alternative tickets developed by the present franchise operator have advantages for some travellers and disadvantages for others. Speed of exit and entry where there are gates is important and some forms of tickets cause delays at these gates. The Oyster Card in London is being replaced by the use of a credit card but there is usually only one fare for each journey at the time it is made and no senior discounts and this could be difficult to use in Wales.

There must be the opportunity to buy tickets on trains and the provision of ticket issuing machines on trains should be considered.

Question 10: How important to you is the availability of a combined ticket for public transport in Wales? Do you have examples of good practice?

The availability of rover and ranger tickets for use on trains and buses should be continued. Regular travellers should be encouraged to use public transport throughout their journey for which combined tickets should be available. Combined bus and rail tickets enable a quicker interchange between road and rail and the provision of such tickets should be expanded. The tickets however must be compatible with the gates at railway stations.

The nature and form of the tickets should be such to encourage tourism. Examples of good practice are the all Wales flexipass for bus and rail travel, the red rovers introduced by the present franchise operator as part of the franchise commitment in North Wales and the zonal tickets in the Cardiff area which include feeder bus services

Question 11: Are there other quality characteristics you would wish to see? How would you prioritise the quality characteristics for the Wales and Borders franchise?

What additional quality improvements to rolling stock should the Welsh Government prioritise for:

- **Commuter routes?**
- **Rural routes?**
- **Long distance routes?**

At present the franchise restricts Pacer units to services in South Wales some of which are of over two hours duration. The Cambrian lines have to be worked by class 158 units with appropriate signalling equipment. There are restrictions on the Heart of Wales line that should be removed. Otherwise all units, other than class 142/143 can be interchanged, on most services. It is important that the design of units can make them interchangeable between services. There could be a standard design for the new electric units.

We wish to make the following comments on the list of rolling stock quality characteristics.

Toilets - With regards to the provision of toilets the provision should meet the minimum and wherever possible should be better than the minimum recommended by ATOC in their "Key Technical Requirements for Rolling stock" – *'Given the critical importance of toilets to passenger comfort, particularly on longer journeys, toilet provision, in terms of the ratio of seats to toilets, requires careful consideration. It is suggested that the minimum acceptable level of provision should be:*

- *For intercity or inter-urban services, 85 seats per toilet*
- *For short distance / commuter services, 125 seats per toilet '*

As proposed in Railfuture's Development Plan Section 7.3 the toilet facilities should include *'washing facilities, baby changing shelves and razor sockets'*.

This is important as most Welsh railway stations and all connecting bus services do not have toilets.

All trains and stations should have free internet facilities and all trains should have power points.

All trains should have adequate provision for luggage, including rucksacks, cases, cycles, push chairs and wheel chairs

All seats should have adequate visibility and should not be positioned so that they are obstructed by the bodywork of the coach. They should not be too high to restrict visibility.

There should be adequate distances between seats so that passengers can sit forward in comfort. The use of 2+ 3 seating should be resisted. 2+3 seating has been removed from all coaches used by the present franchise.

External and internal doors should be of adequate proportion. Exterior doors should be plug doors which increases safety and reduces corrosion.

All trains should have retention toilets.

In addition to the list of rolling stock quality characteristics the following characteristics as listed in the Railfuture's Development Plan Section 7 need to be included:-

- *'Seats which are not so high as to restrict the average passenger's vision to the front and rear'*
- *'Adequate distances between seats, so that passengers of greater than average height and/or girth can sit facing forwards in comfort'*. The average or at least the recommended standard by ATOC is only intended to accommodate a 95th percentile male (based on the latest anthropometric data available for the GB population). This results in a dimension between seat back squab and the rear face of the seat in front of 688mm for airline seating. So this minimum distance must be exceeded if the train is to be able to accommodate a passenger of greater than the 95th percentile. (ATOC "Key Technical Requirements for Rolling stock").
- *'Dot matrix screens giving "next stop" and other relevant information'*
- *'Air conditioning should be standard'* It should be noted that GWR are modifying to air conditioning all the Thames Turbo inner suburban class 165s that are to be cascaded for the suburban services around Bristol.
- *'External doors which, as on some London Transport trains, close automatically after a set time'* It should be noted that the Arriva Cross Country class 170s that operate to Cardiff are fitted with this feature to minimise discomfort in the passenger saloon during cold and windy conditions and extended terminal times whereas the class 175 units used in Wales only have interior doors.
- *'In some cases, particularly on busy commuter routes, facilities for purchasing tickets from on-train machines should be provided, with the full range of railcard discounted fares available'*.
- *'Rolling stock should have standardised couplings so that different types of trains can work together in multiple.'* Ideally all stock should have end corridor facilities so when coupled in multiple there is the ability for free movement through the whole of the train for both passengers and train crew. This will also make evacuations easier in tunnel sections of the line.

There must be included in the rolling stock provided for the franchise high quality stock to encourage tourists to use trains in Wales especially along scenic routes such as the Heart of Wales line and the Cambrian Coast. These must have seats aligned with windows and the provision of tour guides and refreshments.

Question 12: Do you think the catering provision available in the current franchise is adequate for longer journeys? If not, how should the Welsh Government consider influencing changes to catering services available at stations and on trains?

We agree that the present catering provision, when present, is adequate. The provision of catering facilities should be mandated on the operator based on the requirements stated in Railfuture's Development Plan – *'Refreshment facilities, including snacks/drinks machines in place of (or in addition to) staffed facilities, should be available on any service where the end-to-end journey time is more than two hours.'*

Question 13: Which station facilities do you consider to be most in need of improvement and where?

In addition to the items proposed in Railfuture's Development Plan Section 6.3 such as '*An appropriate size of covered waiting accommodation which precludes wind and rail penetration*', there needs to be a rolling programme to provide adequate Awning Cover on platforms. This should start where the stopping position of the trains at the station is not directly opposite existing awnings or waiting shelters. This will reduce dwell times at stations especially in wet weather.

It is noted that the £20m+ rebuilding of Newport Station has resulted in passengers now being exposed to the elements while boarding trains especially on platform 3 and getting to the new footbridge and lifts when changing trains or leaving the station. The awnings were not extended at Bridgend when a new foot bridge with lifts was built. At Wolverhampton where an additional Access for All footbridge was provided this was followed by a NSIP proposal to provide extended awnings to provide weather protection.

At interchange stations such as Newport, Cardiff Queen Street and Severn Tunnel Junction there is a prioritised need for digital time table screens showing the full service for next two hours on each platform and at the entrances to the station. This will enable passengers to see the correct platform for their next service to Cardiff.

There should be notice boards for timetables and service alteration details at each station. As detailed in Railfuture's Development Plan Section 6.2 there should be '*A means by which a waiting passenger can speak directly to a member of staff when problems arise*'.

All interchange stations should have a member of staff available, adequate warm dry sheltered waiting accommodation, toilets and basic refreshment facilities.

Question 14: Where would you like to see investment in station buildings and how might the Welsh Government encourage this?

Investment in station buildings should be encouraged both from private and public sources. Additional staff presence providing such facilities as a cafe, shop, and or information centre at a station encourages better behaviour and safety.

The facilities provided at stations by private companies such as Llandoverly, Bargoed, Swansea, Llanelli and Cardiff Central provide an indication of what can be achieved.

At Chepstow the redundant part of the original Brunel Chalet Station Building should be renovated to provide a proper Booking Office to replace the present ticket office shed on the platform. The rest of the building has already been leased out as a cafe with a toilet for patrons which are a perfect use of the old building.

Railfuture is concerned that some Network Rail schemes at stations have been over engineered and are not appropriate for their future use. Consideration should be given to the franchise operator and /or local authority to make improvements with the adequate transfer of funding.

The Access for All program should continue with DfT funding to ensure that the required facilities are eventually available at all stations.

Question 15: What information should the Welsh Government consider requiring an operator to publish as a priority, and in what format(s)?

The operator should undertake a public consultation before each six monthly timetable alteration and any significant intervening changes. To this end the Operator should provide

on its website and where specifically requested a hard copy for those without access to a computer; a consultation copy of the proposed timetable alteration and associated change to connections (as per the response to question 1). Notification of the availability of this information shall be posted on Notice Boards at all stations served by Wales and Borders trains. Electronic notification shall be sent to all those who have registered with the Operator to receive advice of when and where the consultation information is held.

We support the continued publication of the information booklets that have been developed by the present operator.

The franchise operator's web site has developed over the duration of the franchise and now includes a range of information that should be retained for the future. The travelling public of Wales and the Borders has become familiar with the content of the site which should be retained. The site should continue to include the facility to book tickets.

The franchise operator should continue to publish its performance figures for each group of lines. At present there is one publication for North Wales and one for South Wales. Consideration should be given to amalgamate these two publications. The results of the biannual surveys by Passenger Focus should also be published.

On station information should be continued including timetables and also departure sheets at the larger stations. A simplified timetable could also be displayed at stations where there is a fixed interval service.

Question 16: Are there any additional requirements in respect of the Welsh language that the Welsh Government should consider in relation to train operating companies and the services they provide?

Railfuture is satisfied with the present level of provision. Consideration should be given to a greater use of the Welsh language to provide a uniqueness which encourages tourism.

Question 17: What should the Welsh Government consider doing to strengthen community rail activity?

There are advantages in making railway stations a focal point for communities. The use of redundant station buildings should be encouraged. There are a number of good examples in Wales. Some lines have successful community partnerships which could be expanded. There should be joint working arrangements between local authorities, the rail operator and local partnerships. The present franchise has officers responsible for community relations but funding for this work has decreased in recent years. Railfuture considers that Arriva Trains Wales has been pro active in this respect.

The rail network is policed by British Transport police and community officers with additional funding from Welsh Government. There is no discrete Welsh Division. Welsh Government will have to decide how the Welsh railways are policed in future bearing in mind that officers from England are present at major sporting events in Cardiff.

Question 18: Which organisations should the Welsh Government consider requiring the Wales and Borders franchise operator to co-operate with, and in what ways?

The most important organisations with which the franchise operator should cooperate are Network Rail, other rail operators in Wales, the suppliers of coaches for replacement transport and the providers and maintainers of rolling stock of rolling stock.

There are also Transport Focus, Office of the Rail and Road and ATOC.

There should be cooperation with local authorities and rail user groups.

Railfuture Cymru would appreciate continued cooperation with the new franchise operator. We have appreciated the cooperation we have had from the present operator.

We have stated in our introduction our thoughts on engagement and accountability.

Question 19: What can the operator of the Wales and Borders franchise do to order improve safety and security, and the perception of safety and security?

We are satisfied with the provision by the operator especially on train where the conductor/train manager is usually visible. Station Car parks in Wales are often the safest in the towns and cities. Lighting levels are usually more than adequate. We support the safe station initiative and would like to see this expanded

Question 20: Are there other matters in respect of sustainable development which it will be important for the Wales and Borders franchise operator to be required or encouraged to focus on?

The large extent of the rail estate gives opportunities for generating electrical power from solar panels and windmills. Some stations already benefit from using solar panels.

Arriva Trains Wales has developed water capture and storage at Cardiff Canton where considerable quantities of water are used for washing coaches.

It is impractical to segregate waste on trains but attempts to do so at larger stations have been more successful. The franchise operator and its contractors should be monitored in the methods they use to recycle and dispose waste.

Arriva Trains Wales has developed methods to reduce fuel consumption by trains including better driving techniques and improved energy efficiency. With the older rolling stock it must be difficult to make further process but if more energy efficient new rolling stock is introduced there will be further reductions in energy use.

Question 21: What steps should the Welsh Government consider taking as part of the next rail franchise to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation on our railways?

This can be achieved by staff training especially for casual and agency staff but the franchise operator but the ultimate responsibility should remain with the Welsh Government.

Your name/organisation and postal/email address

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