railfuture

Passenger Group

Regional Urban Market Study
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Dear Sirs,

Long Term Planning Process – Regional Urban Market Study

Railfuture is pleased to submit this consolidated national response, which has been prepared jointly by the Passenger Group and with contributions from our regional and national branches.

Railfuture is a national voluntary organisation structured in England as twelve regional branches and two national branches for Scotland and Wales. We are Britain`s leading independent rail lobby organization with a large number of affiliated Rail User Groups. Being funded entirely from membership subscriptions and donations, Railfuture enjoys non-partisan status and has no connections with political parties or organisations, trade unions or commercial interests. Railfuture is pro-rail but not anti-car or aviation.

We are supportive of the core goals and conditional outputs, but would add some additional points and comments to these to provide some further emphasis and priority from our organisation.

We welcome the case studies in the document as a way to consider issues for those urban areas.

Our Scottish and Welsh National branches indicated that this market study was also applicable to their areas and they would have welcomed more involvement from other regional bodies in addition to the national consultations.

<u>Strategic Goals</u>

  • **Enabling economic growth**
     We appreciate that this is the key source for the additional funding required for the rail industry and accept the wider definition that includes leisure travel as well as travel for work and other business purposes. In the current economic climate there is likely to be an increase of holidays and leisure activities in this country.

  • **Reducing carbon and the transport sector's impact on the environment**
     Although electrification is seen as the main driver here, there are benefits to ensuring that improvements in diesel locomotion should be supported as well such as driver behaviour in all fuel modes.
     Efforts should also be made to reduce diesel powered 'running under the wires' – with Bi-modal trains and in-fill electrification.
     A number of termini and major stations suffer air quality issues or have significant operational constraints dealing with diesel exhaust.

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www.railwatch.org.uk**

- **Improving the quality of life for communities and individuals**
  It may prove difficult to quantify this in terms of financial benefit but is a key driver in many of the outputs. A number of cases can be made for enhancement to rail provision across the UK and there needs to be a clear template for urban areas and communities to make their case (with minimal cost in the initial stages) and the criteria that it will be judged on.

- **Improving affordability**
  We would be concerned that this is just used to limit or reduce the income from government sources and would want to see some clear benefit to passenger fares.

Conditional Outputs (Starting Point)

Regional Urban (starting point)

1. **connectivity between commuting areas and employment areas**
   Urban areas are able to develop 'metro networks' for their areas based on both the rail network and other light rail, bus, cycle, car parking (peak and off-peak provision) and pedestrian facilities. Smart ticketing in the urban multi-modal environment should be developed and barriers to this removed.

2. **connectivity between deprived areas and employment areas**
   Same as (1), with the possible additional of new/re-opened stations for urban rail, light rail, bus interchange.

3. **intra-regional connectivity**
   connectivity across the region should be a priority with a 'network model' of regional services. It will also be important to maintain and enhance inter-urban area connections, as specific urban networks will not be able to provide all the access required. It will be important to invest in the quality of these connections (timing and interoperability of smart ticketing etc.) Ideally interchange stations should be manned from start to end of service and priority given to the full range of accessibility issues.

4. **access to High Speed 2 stations, major airports and ports (for use of passengers and employees)**
   The access to the High Speed 2 and other mainline core services will remain an issue for regional urban areas. Access to airports has been mixed with some good and poor examples of rail connectivity. Noticeable benefits have been identified at stations with a good service coverage and frequency. Ports and Ferries also provide a vital connection for some communities and employment areas as should be incorporated clearly in any 'urban network' and regional service provision.

5. **connectivity to tourism centres**
   A number of major tourism centres are likely to be served well by rail, but consideration to part time opening of some stations may enhance this. Advertising multi-modal routes to tourism centres and smart ticketing options should be the norm.

6. **access to further and higher education establishments and other social infrastructure**
   Individual travel plans could be investigated for regular users of these establishments and well as smart ticketing options to reduce the costs. Ad-hoc users could benefit from travel plans from local stations to these establishments.

7. **services to abstract trips from congested roads**
   Congested roads with the associated cost and provision of car parking and fuel costs has led to many people no longer feeling it necessary to own a car. In many other areas car ownership is still seen as the only way to get to and from destinations (sometimes part of the journey – usually bus service finishes before return time or does not start early enough). Once a part of a journey is taken by car, there is a greater temptation to complete the whole journey by the same method. Car parking facilities (both peak and off-peak only) are required in these areas.

8. **energy efficient rail services**
   Although there are moves to extend electrification, use of diesel will remain important. For both modes, driver behaviour and driver advice systems will help make more efficient fuel use.
   Use of diesel 'underneath the wires' should be prevented where possible and not reducing the service. Use of lighter vehicles on branches and less intensive metro routes should be considered.

9. **access to the rail network**
   Access from the metro/urban networks will remain vital and will not always be via city centre termini or major stations. Interchange stations should have staff cover where practical and a good source if train running information.

   Individual accessibility has improved but there is still a lot to be done in providing adequate ticketing, signing and step-free or similar access to platform and trains. Trained staff at interchange stations can help.

10. passenger satisfaction, particularly in relation to rolling stock and station environment
Passenger satisfaction is going to be driven by the cost, reliability of the service, quality and presentation of rolling stock and how the disruption is handled.
Station environments need to support the needs of a wide range of customers (disability comes in many forms) as well and cyclist and passengers with push chairs and mobility aids. Graffiti needs to be controlled and stations maintained to a good quality. This is best handled by on-station staff or regular visits if this is not practical.
We would ask for consideration within this output or as additional outputs:

- Reduction in journey time (including the congestion at termini/major stations that often add significant time, and significantly reduce the overall perceived journey quality)
- Resilience of services (existing and new diversionary routes identified and used in place of bus replacement)
- Better disruption information on train, station and social media/Internet (Network Rail & TOC)

11. competitive prices compared to other modes and improved pricing and ticketing
Passengers still feel that fares are high, although the intervention of regional bodies has helped, in many cases, to contain this. However passengers are going to want to see rail industry cost reductions reflected in their travel costs.

IN ADDITION

12. Sufficient capacity to accommodate demand
The distance/time expectation for having to stand is increasing and some metro trains are now designed to accommodate a large number of standing passengers. Accepting that standing is required to cope with demand, a design limit does need to be agreed for both Metro and longer distance services. It would be useful to trial methods for directing passengers to lighter loaded carriages during CP5 or early in CP6.

Over-crowded trains limit the opportunity for people to work on the trains. Access to wireless internet and power points is not going to be much use to standing passengers on overcrowded services.

A general rule of thumb is that service frequencies on Metro services need to be maximised (within the constraints of other services where tracks are shared) with a minimum of 4 per hour. Longer distance services still require at least 2 per hour.

13. Major station/termini Capacity
A major concern will remain with the capacity of major station/Termini and some key interchange stations to cope with normal rail services, let alone further growth and disruption. There is nothing more frustrating for a passenger than being stuck outside a destination station waiting for a platform to become available (and often within sight of the station itself). Operation efficiencies will be required to reduce dwell times (including termini stations), seeking to turn terminating services into through services.

14. Make better use of off-peak/lightly loaded services (TOC Driven)
Provide lower book ahead fares (but without reservations); improve effectiveness and scope of railcards and off-peak fares. Smart ticketing should help here - use of Oyster has demonstrated the popularity and effectiveness of this.

15. Other aspects of connectivity
Multi-Modal (Bus, Tram, Taxi, Car, Cycle, Pedestrian) at station
Pedestrian (and accessibility) within station and between connecting services
Access to other rail services (built in flexibility for branch connections where possible in the event of trunk delays) Minimise and retime connections that are timed to depart a very short time before or at the same time – where possible (limit scope or remove perverse financial penalties). This adds to the effectiveness and total journey experience for passengers.

Yours faithfully,

CFribbins

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