



## Rail North Strategy Consultation

There are nine sections to complete. Eight are about the strategy; the final section is about you.

### Vision

Q1A. The five priorities of the Long Term Rail Strategy are:

- Better connectivity
- Better customer experience
- Efficiency
- Being locally responsive
- Deriving full value from planned investments

Do you agree that these are the correct priorities? (please delete as appropriate) **Yes**

Q1B. Are there any other priorities that are important?

***Perhaps the overriding concern in the North is about quality of the rail journey. Northern Rail has to run its services with a fleet of some of the oldest and timeworn trains running on Britain's railway network and it has had to deal with an unpredicted growth of 40% in passenger numbers. Paragraphs 4.31, 5.21 spell this out well***

Q2. Recognising that it has to be achievable, is the Vision for rail in the North sufficiently ambitious?

***There is an urgent need for rolling stock improvements. Para 7.45 appears to suggest that modernising the North's fleet will take many years. Passengers in this region and other parts of the North deserve better than that. The devolved authority must strive to quicken the pace of improvement and replacement.***

### Economic & social context

Q3. Do you agree that the relationship between economic growth and rail is correct? (please delete as appropriate) **Yes largely**

Q4. Are there any other factors that need to be considered?

#### 4. Rail in the North

Q5. Do you agree with the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the North's rail provision? (please delete as appropriate) **Yes largely**

Q6. Are there any other issues that are important?

***Revenue protection is a serious issue in our region. It is not just a question of barriers at stations – this would be impractical at many stations. There needs to be a management focus to improve the quality of on train ticket sales and revenue protection especially given the large number of unstaffed stations in the region and in the North.***

Q7. Is the balance between passenger and freight appropriate?

***This seems to be OK.***

#### 5. Gap analysis

Q8. Are the strategic gaps identified the right ones? (please delete as appropriate) **Yes but see comments below**

Q9. Are there any strategic gaps missing?

***Capacity and age/quality of rolling stock are absolutely key considerations as mentioned elsewhere in this response.***

***In the main the provision and level of Sunday services is extremely poor given that this is a busy day for leisure and retail activity.***

***The need for better inter modal integration cannot be emphasised too much. All journeys start and end from a location that is not a railway station. This is a significant weakness, particularly if comparison is to be made with other regions and countries where control of all modes is complementary.***

***Information provision is a key factor in our region. There have been allusions that the rail network is well covered by electronic information at stations. This is not the case in large parts of the North West. For example on the lines around the Cumbrian coast 29 of the 34 stations do not have electronic information displays, and a number are out of range of mobile phone signals. At Cark station for example a member of the public who lives in a***

*property adjacent to the station takes it upon himself to check train services so that he can inform waiting passengers of cancellations and advise them about alternatives. He is kept fairly busy with this voluntary task.*

*Note comments on revenue protection above.*

*We can see value in reopening some closed lines or making better use of existing unused links. In some cases this should be seen as a network benefit for the rail system as a whole. Examples are the Burscough curves, the Halton Curve and Skipton – Colne. The Todmorden curve is already being reinstated as an expression of vision and faith. The ability to have more journey opportunities with through train journeys or changing from one train to another rather than changing mode will surely attract a wide range of passengers.*

Q10. Are there any specific geographic issues which should be highlighted for the longer term?

## **6. Outputs & benefits assessment**

Q11. Has the right set of outputs been identified to deliver the Strategy objectives? (please delete as appropriate) **Yes by and large**

*Whereas economic growth is important our simple view is that the outputs should offer a far better service for passengers and attract travel by train from less carbon/ energy friendly modes.*

Q12. Are there any other outputs that need to be considered?

**See below**

Q13. Is the focus on connectivity to and between key centres, to London and to international gateways right? (please delete as appropriate) **No**

*There is a need to spell out more clearly the betterment of existing very poor links with other major centres than London outside the North - e.g. Liverpool – Glasgow/Birmingham; Sheffield - Leeds – Glasgow (via Settle - Carlisle); Leeds – Nottingham. Also where links exist now the quality of rolling stock does not merit the inter city status that these links should aspire to.*

Q14. Are there other priorities?

***We would emphasise the importance of Leisure and Tourism based travel in our region, which makes a significant contribution to the economy. There is evidence that this sector dominates the rail passenger business in the NW and it is by no means only active at weekends. The definition of peak/off peak can also be atypical where leisure and tourism is concerned.***

***We can't emphasise enough the urgent need for a north-focussed rolling stock strategy***

***Inter modal integration has been mentioned. On a specific point much more should be done to integrate rail with Manchester Metrolink especially with regard to ticketing.***

Q15. How important is electrification? (please delete as appropriate)

***Very important***

Q16. Should the focus be on better quality of service, irrespective of how trains are powered? (please delete as appropriate)

***Broadly yes but electrification is a much better passenger experience and has been shown to attract more people to travel by rail.***

Q17. Is there sufficient consideration of freight?

## **Implementation**

Q18. Is the focus on service categories right?

***Firstly on the question of devolution we want to emphasise that the authorities outside the major conurbations e.g. Cumbria, Lancashire & Cheshire should not lose out. We have some concerns that the overall management of the devolved body will be of concern as it will be dominated by PTE's and with the current level of personnel devoted to transport in other authorities being so limited, their voice could be drowned out.***

***There is also a vital point about financial resources available to implement the programme. It should not be an excuse for government to reduce its subsidies to the regions.***

***We have no fixed views on combining the Northern and TPE franchises. Clearly the TPE brand and service identity has been a success and should be retained whether or not as part of a bigger operation.***

***As far as the service categories are concerned there are obviously different levels of service. It must be remembered though that a particular service can perform different functions at different times or locations. For example Regional Express TPE services are used intensively by daily commuters in a number of places.***

Q19. What needs to happen to make this a reality?

Q20. Is the strategic programme the right one? (please delete as appropriate) **Yes mainly**

***With regard to electrification we note that figure 7.1 includes both Windermere and even Barrow in the list of strategic candidates for future electrification but not Morecambe/Heysham.***

***Yet this would be advantageous for the following reasons - In the short term an ability to turn an electric unit off the main line near to Lancaster would facilitate Manchester - Lancaster/Morecambe services by either route and take the pressure of Lancaster traffic (which is likely to grow with the castle tourism development) off the Scottish services. To run such a service to Lancaster, even with the new crossover, would involve standing on the main line to cross into platform 5. A short run to Morecambe would exclude this and on the return the train can wait on the branch until the main line is clear. It is also a short route which would be relatively cheap to electrify - indeed it is illogical to exclude it in view of the reports concern re the creation of a new set of boundaries between electrified and non-electrified routes. It would help the regeneration of the area, help relieve local traffic congestion, and in the long run the decommissioning of the current nuclear power station and possible development of a replacement could justify and extension to Heysham.***

***Ideally this short run should be included in the current programme prior to 2019 as part of the governments expanded capital programme.***

***There should be a rolling programme of electrification.***

Q21. Are the right issues allocated to the right time periods?

***In general with the proviso that rolling stock quality issues need urgent attention.***

Q22. Is the balance between passenger and freight in the strategic programme right?

***It seems to be***

Q23. Are the right delivery agencies and potential funders identified? (please delete as appropriate)

***See our comments in Q18.***

Q24. Are there others which should be referenced?

### **Appendix: Proposed fares regime**

Q25. Is the current fares regime fit for purpose? (please delete as appropriate)

***See below.***

Q26. What changes could be made to the current fares regime?

***A zonal fares structure has some advantages. Certainly there is a need to address the disparity between ITA/PTE fares and those outside and crossing their boundaries. However fares set by PTEs have offered good value for money and encouraged rail travel. This attractiveness should not be lost.***

### **Any other comments?**

Q27. If there are any other comments you wish to make about the Strategy, please enter them below.

***We would emphasise the need to consult passenger groups at appropriate stages in implementing the strategy.***

About you

Finally, we'd like to know a bit more about you.

P1. ***OL14 6HX***

P2. If you are completing this questionnaire on behalf of an organisation, please tell us who.

***TravelWatch NorthWest***



P3. If you would like us to contact you after this consultation ends, please give us your email address or postal address. Please note that we will only use this information in relation to the Long-Term Rail Strategy - it will not be used for any other purpose by Rail North partners, nor will your email address be passed on to third parties.

***admin@travelwatch-northwest.org.uk***

P4. Rail North would like to publish consultation responses alongside the revised strategy document.

Do you agree to let us include your responses? (please delete as appropriate) **Yes**

**Thank you for completing our questionnaire.**

**The consultation is open until Monday 21 October 2013, with the results published later in the year.**