

The Public Transport Consortium (PTC) is a special interest group of the Local Government Association, representing the interests of shire counties and unitary authorities in England and Wales.

The Consortium aims to:

- ▶ act as a forum for discussion and promotion of public transport issues affecting local authorities outside metropolitan areas;
- ▶ promote the exchange of experience and good practice between member authorities and in liaison with other bodies;
- ▶ advise appropriate committees or other executive bodies of the LGA on public transport issues; and
- ▶ represent interests of member authorities to Government, the Local Government Association, operators and other organisations involved in public transport

Membership includes approximately 30 Local Authorities

The Consortium is pleased to note the level of proposed spend in Control Period 5 from 2014-19 as it contains some welcome and significant plans for rail infrastructure.

As demand for rail services is anticipated to double over the next 25 years, providing increased capacity, improving punctuality and driving down costs must be the key theme of Control Period 5.

The proposal to increase peak period capacity into London and nine regional cities will encourage the use of rail services for commuting and provide economic growth, and the use of the rail network to carry 30% more freight is welcomed.

The Consortium supports the major enhancement projects, particularly electrification, and welcomes the proposed delivery of efficiency savings of 18%. Also, it fully supports measures to deliver Public Performance Measures at 92.5% and higher, as users of the rail network expect on time arrivals, particularly as above inflation fare increases have been imposed.

Whilst the Consortium welcomes the major projects included in the Business Plan, the focus should be to devote expenditure where tangible improvement can be identified for the customer. A higher level of punctuality must be achievable – delivery by small scale improvements on local services, identifying small scale capacity increase opportunities with line speed increases where no action has already been taken. In any programme of works, liaison with stakeholders should identify additional improvements that can be delivered whilst the work is being undertaken. Eliminating cancellations and significantly late trains should be a priority. In view of the importance of freight movement by rail to local authorities, a high level of freight train performance must be delivered which also reduces delays to passenger trains. Customers seek a commitment to a 7 day per week railway.

In view of the importance of the rail network to local authorities, increased collaborative working with Network Rail and train operating companies during CP5 is vital. There are many areas of common intent, such as reduction in level crossings and delivery of an integrated transport network. Local authorities are keen to ensure the right balance is delivered between performance, capacity and cost, and the rail network is essential to attract inward investment and deliver economic growth, employment and competitiveness. Customer satisfaction, currently at 83%, should increase during Control Period 5. Most rail franchises will

be renewed during this Strategic Business Plan period, which provides an opportunity to redefine priorities and outcomes, and the Plan must provide a degree of flexibility to meet the needs of new franchise operators.

The LGA Public Transport Consortium trust that these comments are helpful in informing the ORR's response to Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan for Control Period 5.

kind regards,

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