

South Central Franchise Consultation



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Chapter One

Executive summary

The new South Central franchise is due to commence on 20 September 2009 and will combine the existing operations of Southern, Gatwick Express and services on the Tonbridge to Redhill route currently operated by Southeastern.

Expressions of interest are now being sought, and shortlisted applicants will receive the Invitation to Tender in November 2008. The winning bidder will be announced in early summer 2009.

In June 2008, the current operations of Gatwick Express will be merged with the existing Southern services, and a new Brighton Main Line timetable will be implemented in December 2008 that will provide peak time Gatwick Express services to and from Brighton, increasing capacity on already congested services from the south coast.

Other major infrastructure projects will also impact on the new franchise. The East London Line extension is expected to open in mid 2010 and impact on suburban services between Crystal Palace, West Croydon and London Bridge. A new timetable will be required to implement these services.

From late 2011, suburban routes to London via Norbury, Hackbridge, Gipsy Hill and Sydenham are expected to be capable of operating in 10 car formation (compared with today's 8) after Network Rail has completed its platform lengthening schemes. The First Capital Connect Thameslink services from Brighton will also be capable of 12 car operation from this date, and during 2011/2012 work to rebuild London Bridge as part of the Thameslink Programme is expected to start, reducing platform capacity at London Bridge (low level).

In the long term all of these projects are aimed at significantly increasing the carrying capacity of the network into central London, but in the short term they will all require some service changes with potential disruption on some routes at some times. As a result, a key objective of this franchise will be to effectively communicate to passengers the short and medium term changes required to deliver these long term enhancements.

Last year's rail White Paper, *Delivering a Sustainable Railway*, set out an ambitious programme of improvements aimed at improving the quality of service to passengers. It also gave Passenger Focus an enhanced role within the specification process,

emphasising the importance the Department places on passenger needs within the franchising process. Passenger Focus has provided the Secretary of State with advice on key issues that the new franchise should seek to address. We are grateful to Passenger Focus for their input and will continue discussions with them as the specification develops.

This consultation should be viewed against the background of the Government's Railways for All Strategy which explains how the rail industry will improve the accessibility of all aspects of rail travel for disabled people.

We have considered whether the potential changes are likely to have any impact (adverse or differential) on race, disability or gender equality. It is not anticipated that any such impacts will occur. However, the Department takes its responsibilities under the various equality duties extremely seriously and would welcome respondents' views on any issues that may affect equality of opportunity in these areas.

We have already met with a number of stakeholder groups during the formulation of the proposed base specification.

This consultation document sets out the minimum proposed specification that shortlisted bidders will be asked to price and seeks views from stakeholders on this proposed specification. It also seeks any proposed increments or decrements that stakeholders would like to see considered as priced options.

The closing date for consultation responses is **14 August 2008**.

Chapter Two

Introduction

The new South Central franchise is due to commence on 20 September 2009 and will operate services in south London and parts of Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire. It will operate services currently provided by Gatwick Express, Southern and services on the Tonbridge to Redhill route currently operated by Southeastern (although the merger of these operators will take place this year).

The Department will be looking for the appointed franchisee to manage the passenger service for five years and ten months (expiring in July 2015), with the final year dependent on achieving acceptable performance levels. The franchise will include an ability to extend by up to two years from July 2015 at the Department's discretion.

The aim of this document is to:

- inform stakeholders of the process for awarding the South Central franchise;
- give stakeholders background information on the relevant operations provided by Gatwick Express, Southern and Southeastern, and detail the strategic planning and transport context for the franchise;
- provide information on the impact of major infrastructure projects on the franchise;
- detail the role of Passenger Focus and Transport for London in developing this specification;
- advise stakeholders of the objectives and expectations for the franchise;
- inform stakeholders of the proposed DfT Base Service Specification; and
- give stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the proposed DfT base franchise specification and formally notify the Department of any specific increments or decrements to the base specification they may wish to purchase.

Stakeholders should also be aware of a number of other relevant studies and documents that are considering or have recently considered this area of the rail network and that have impacted upon the proposals set out within this consultation. These are:

- The Department for Transport's Brighton Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy, which will be implemented in December 2008;

- The Department for Transport's Regional Planning Assessment for Southern England;
- Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan;
- Network Rail's South London and Cross London Route Utilisation Strategies. Network Rail has recently started work on a Sussex Route Utilisation Strategy;
- Transport for London's Transport 2025 document and the Rail 2025 sister document.

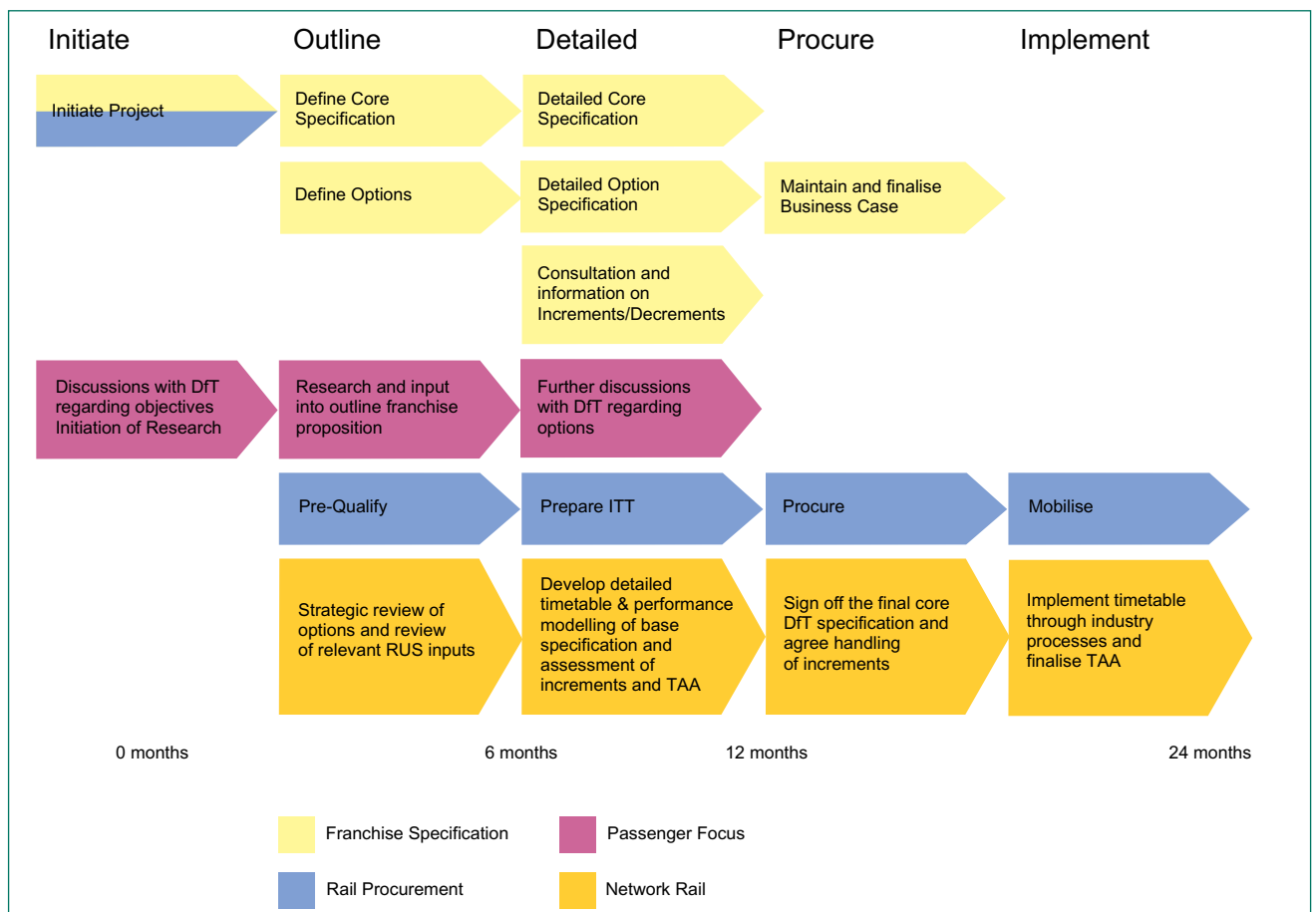
The Department's rail White Paper, *Delivering a Sustainable Railway*, published in July 2007, should also be considered, since it sets out the long term strategic context for the railway.

Chapter Three

Process and timescales

Figure 3.1 illustrates the franchise replacement process that the Department for Transport undertakes when procuring an operator to run a franchise. The process takes around two years from project initiation to the start of the new franchise, and includes important inputs from Passenger Focus, Network Rail and other key stakeholders.

Figure 3.1 The franchise replacement process



The Department is now beginning the consultation phase of the specification process with the proposed base specification described in Chapter 10. As further and more detailed work is carried out and in response to stakeholder feedback, the specification will be refined and finalised.

A particular requirement prior to the release of an Invitation to Tender (ITT) in November 2008 is to determine whether there are any increments and/or decrements that stakeholders would like to be included. If any emerge that satisfy the criteria, these will be included as priced options within the ITT (see Chapter 11).

Over the coming months the ITT document will be compiled. This document will provide the basis upon which bidders must submit their bids and needs to reflect accurately what the Department wishes to procure from the market. Importantly, it will set out the basis upon which the bids will be judged.

It is expected that the bids will be returned in February 2009, with the successful bidder planned to be announced in early summer 2009. The new franchise will start on 20 September 2009.

Chapter Four

The South Central franchise

This chapter describes the current operations that will make up the new South Central franchise and covers the operations of Southern, Gatwick Express and the Tonbridge to Redhill element of the current Southeastern service.

Figure A1.1 in Appendix 1 provides a map of the current franchise area, whilst Figures A1.2 and A1.3 provide a simplified diagrammatic representation of the service pattern that will operate from later this year.¹

Current franchises

Govia have operated the current South Central franchise since 2001, having taken over from Connex South Central.

The current franchise agreement came into force in May 2003, and had the ability to continue to 31 December 2009. The termination date was brought forward to September 2009 to enable the incoming operator some months of operation before implementation of the major timetable change associated with the introduction of the new East London Line Phase One train service.

The Gatwick Express franchise began in April 1996, and is currently operated by National Express Group. The original franchise had a 15 year term and was due to end in 2011. However, as part of a wider agreement with National Express Group in 2005, the Department negotiated an amendment clause that allowed the franchise to be terminated with a 12 month notice period. This clause was exercised in 2007 and the current Gatwick Express franchise will end in June 2008, with services transferring into an enlarged and combined Southern operation. The Gatwick Express brand will be maintained as a dedicated airport service.

Govia took over management of the Southeastern franchise in April 2006, and services between Tonbridge and Redhill will be operated by Southern from December 2008.

¹ Subject to normal industry processes.

The new franchise

The new franchise will cover five basic service types, each of which has a different set of characteristics:

- Brighton Main Line and Airport services;
- London suburban;
- Horsham, Uckfield, Tonbridge, Redhill and East Grinstead;
- Coastway (East and West);
- West London Line.

The Brighton Main Line and Airport services involve the operation of trains from London Victoria and London Bridge to Brighton, Hove, Worthing, Eastbourne, Hastings, Southampton, Chichester, Bognor Regis, Littlehampton and Portsmouth.

Airport services are provided between London Victoria and Gatwick Airport, under the brand name 'Gatwick Express'. From December 2008, a number of morning and evening peak Gatwick Express services will be extended to Brighton. Other main line services provide links to Gatwick Airport from London Bridge and towns along the south coast.

Suburban operations are also focused on London Bridge and London Victoria, with some off-peak services operating to London Charing Cross. Services are focused on a number of key corridors and, although demand into central London dominates, there are also significant flows into East and West Croydon and Sutton. The railway also provides important transport links within south London, has interchanges with London Underground and Croydon Tramlink, and will have links to the new London Overground network.

Outer suburban services to Horsham, Uckfield, Tonbridge, Redhill and East Grinstead are an important and growing market. These services cater for longer distance commuters and also provide important local services for those living just outside the Greater London boundary.

Coastway services provide local and inter-regional links across the south coast, with limited-stop services between Brighton and Ashford (with links to high-speed domestic services from 2009) and between Brighton and Southampton, alongside more local services calling at intermediate stops. Frequencies on many sections of the Coastway route rival those seen in suburban London.

Significant growth has been experienced on West London line services in recent years, and from December this year services will be reinstated to destinations on the West Coast Main Line, as far as Milton Keynes, subject to agreement by Network Rail.

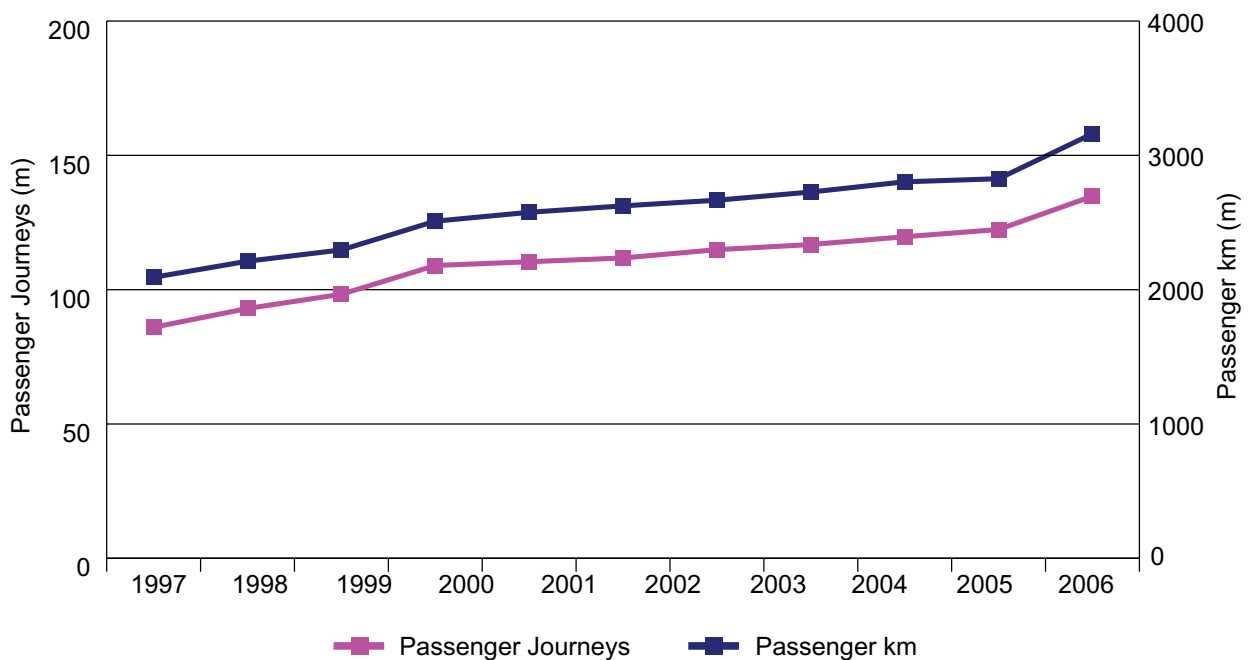
Demand, revenue and crowding

In 2006/07 Gatwick Express and Southern combined collected over £400 million in revenue and were responsible for over 140 million passenger journeys.

In recent years both businesses have grown significantly. Southern has seen a revenue compound annual growth rate of over 9 per cent per annum since 2003/04, helped by strong economic growth, improvements in performance and the introduction of a new fleet of rolling stock. Since 2003/04, Gatwick Express has also grown significantly. This growth follows the downturn in demand seen in the period after September 2001 (see Figure 4.2).

Despite strong growth, the current operator, Southern, has accommodated this demand without an increase in the overall PIXC (Passengers In Excess of Capacity) measure.² (Details of the 2007 PIXC results by route can be seen in Table 4.1). In 2007 the overall PIXC score for Southern was 2.3 per cent, compared to 3.1 per cent in 2003 and 4.9 per cent in 2002. This is even though the overall demand has increased by nearly 19 per cent. This has been achieved by matching available rolling stock to those routes that are most crowded. In spite of this, crowding remains a problem on many peak period services, especially those that arrive in central London between 0800 and 0900. Localised crowding also exists on other services across the franchise, especially on Coastway services approaching Brighton and other key towns. A key aim of the franchise will be to address these problems.

Figure 4.1 Passenger growth on Southern since 1997



² The annual survey of AM and PM peak train loads into and out of central London. This involves an allowance for standing for journeys under 20 minutes.

Fig 4.2 Passenger growth on Gatwick Express since 1997

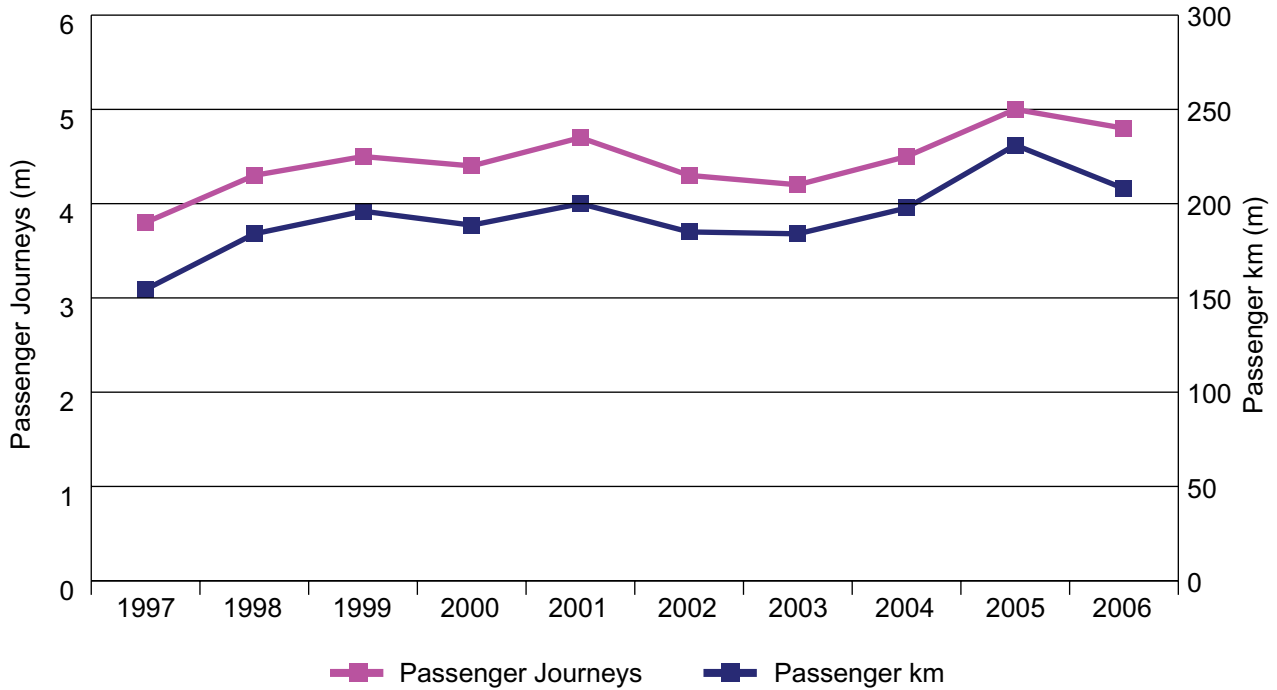


Table 4.1 Passengers in excess of capacity (PIXC) statistics for Southern, 2007

Journey	Time	PIXC (%)
London – East Grinstead (peak)	AM	4.6
	PM	0.0
	Overall	2.4
London – Hastings (peak)	AM	4.8
	PM	0.0
	Overall	2.4
London/Oxted – Uckfield	AM	5.0
	PM	0.0
	Overall	2.8
London – Caterham/Tattenham Corner (peak)	AM	6.0
	PM	0.1
	Overall	4.0
London – Brighton (peak fast)	AM	0.0
	PM	0.0
	Overall	0.0
London – Brighton (peak semi-fast)	AM	0.0
	PM	1.2
	Overall	0.7

Journey	Time	PIXC (%)
London – Portsmouth (peak via Arundel)	AM	0.0
	PM	0.0
	Overall	0.0
London – Portsmouth/Southampton (peak via Hove)	AM	0.0
	PM	0.0
	Overall	0.0
London – Horsham (peak via Gatwick)	AM	4.7
	PM	0.0
	Overall	3.0
Victoria – London Bridge (peak via Denmark Hill)	AM	0.0
	PM	0.0
	Overall	0.0
Victoria – Beckenham Junction (peak)	AM	0.3
	PM	0.0
	Overall	0.2
Victoria – West Croydon (peak via Crystal Palace)	AM	4.1
	PM	0.3
	Overall	2.0
London – Croydon (peak)	AM	0.9
	PM	2.6
	Overall	1.4
London Bridge – Guildford (peak via Forest Hill)	AM	7.4
	PM	0.0
	Overall	4.5
London Bridge – Sutton (peak via Tulse Hill)	AM	5.2
	PM	0.2
	Overall	4.0
Victoria – Sutton (peak via Selhurst and W Croydon)	AM	3.1
	PM	2.8
	Overall	2.9
Victoria – Epsom – Horsham via Hackbridge (peak)	AM	2.2
	PM	0.0
	Overall	1.1
Total PIXC	AM	3.8
	PM	0.4
	Overall	2.3

Reliability and performance

Table 4.2 details performance by Southern and Gatwick Express since 1999. The impact of the accident at Hatfield can be seen clearly, together with the improvements in performance in recent years. In line with the experience seen in other areas, performance has recovered significantly with the Public Performance Measure (PPM) for both Southern and Gatwick Express now above pre-Hatfield levels. However, in recent months some deterioration in Southern’s performance has occurred. Whilst this is being addressed, it will be important that high levels of performance are maintained in the new franchise.

Table 4.2 Historic performance measures for Southern and Gatwick Express (MAA)

Rail year	Southern PPM (%)	Gatwick Express PPM (%)
1999	88.9	86.7
2000	87.4	85.5
2001	76.6	74.6
2002	77.6	81.1
2003	77.2	82.1
2004	80.1	82.3
2005	81.8	84.7
2006	88.1	91.0
2007	89.2	90.3

Rolling stock and depots

In the last decade, Southern and Gatwick Express have benefited from the delivery of over 800 new carriages. These new trains have transformed the quality of service offered to passengers, allowed new services to be operated and helped generate increased levels of demand. Alongside this the remaining older rolling stock operating predominantly on south London services has been refurbished to modern standards.

Table 4.3 details the rolling stock that the operator is likely to operate in late summer 2009.

Table 4.3 South Central franchise rolling stock

Unit class	Traction	Year built	Units and formation
171	Diesel	2003–2005	10 x 2 car 6 x 4 car
377	Third rail electric	2001–2005	154 x 4 car 28 x 3 car
442	Third rail electric	1987	17 x 5 car
455	Third rail electric	1982–84	46 x 4 car
456	Third rail electric	1990–91	24 x 2 car
460	Third rail electric	1998–99	8 x 8 car

The combined franchise will operate from three major depots, with other locations available for stabling.

The main depots are:

- Selhurst, near Croydon;
- Stewarts Lane, near Battersea;
- Lovers Walk, Brighton.

All current Southern rolling stock types are maintained at Selhurst, and the depot has seen major investment in recent years as the new fleet of trains has been introduced. Lover's Walk Depot in Brighton also received investment to accommodate the new trains.

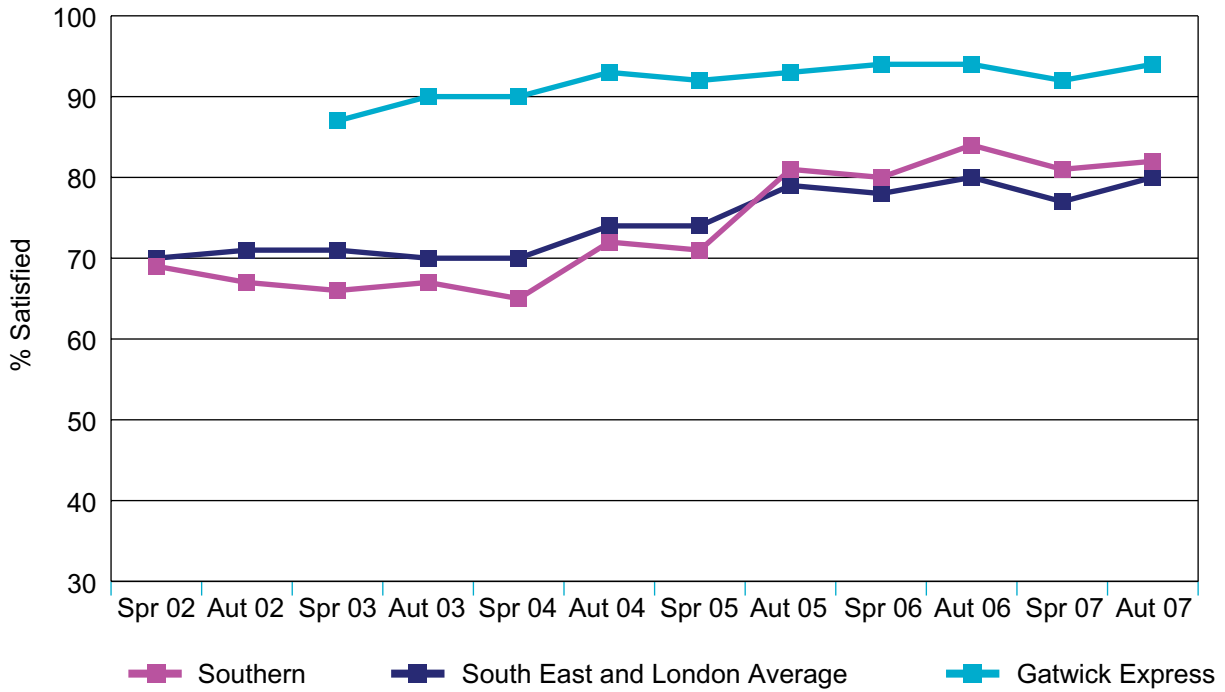
Stewarts Lane is currently operated by Gatwick Express, but will transfer to Southern as part of the merger of operations in June 2008. Currently only class 460 trains are maintained at Stewarts Lane.

Service quality

In recent years the current operators have improved the overall customer satisfaction, as measured by the National Passenger Survey (see Figure 4.3). Southern's overall NPS is now over 80 per cent and is above the London and South East average. However as evidenced by Passenger Focus, differences exist between the results for Metro and Sussex Coast services (78 per cent and 87 per cent respectively). Gatwick Express NPS score remain high at 92 per cent.

Whilst these scores are good, areas for improvement can be identified within the individual attributes measured by NPS.

Fig 4.3 National Passenger Survey statistics: overall satisfaction, Southern, Gatwick Express and London average



Chapter Five

Objectives for the franchise

A key starting point for the development of the franchise specification, and associated business case, is the establishment of clear objectives for each franchise. Initial feasibility work, combined with the outputs of last year's rail White Paper and subsequent review of the current franchise, identified nine key objectives that should be used to shape the franchise specification. These were subsequently endorsed by the Secretary of State.

The objectives are:

- To serve and develop suburban, main line and Coastway services and to accommodate current and anticipated future growth in passenger demand and potentially reduce crowding levels.
- To achieve sustainable value for money of the franchise for the taxpayer.
- To facilitate the implementation of and realise the benefits to passengers from the Brighton Main Line and South London Route Utilisation Strategies, Thameslink Programme, East London Line extension project and output metrics specified in the High Level Output Specification (HLOS), and to effectively manage the process of change that all these projects will involve, including communications to passengers.
- To maintain and improve the operational performance of the South Central franchise to contribute towards national performance targets (including the significant lateness targets).
- To seek to benchmark and improve the overall environmental performance of the franchise.
- To seek to improve alignment of services and service quality with aspirations of all stakeholders, to improve overall customer satisfaction, specifically in the areas of service quality (both on trains and at stations), ticketing purchasing and retailing (including smartcards) and information (before and during the journey).
- To seek to improve accessibility to South Central services and stations, including car parking and access to stations, as well as access for disabled passengers.
- To facilitate locally sponsored increments and decrements, and specifically implement the enhanced role of Transport for London (TfL) in the franchise specification process.
- To ensure alignment of the South Central service specification with the specification of other train operating companies across the network, especially First Capital Connect and the London Rail Concession (TfL).

Chapter Six

Franchise length

The Department has considered the appropriate length of the franchise in the context of the wider franchising programme and the impact on a number of major projects, most notably the Thameslink Programme. The Department also consulted with industry owning groups in late 2007.

The Department has concluded that the appropriate franchise length is 5 years and 10 months, with the franchise ending in July 2015. The final year of the franchise will be subject to various performance criteria and the franchise can be extended by up to two years, although this would be solely at the Department's discretion. The Department will seek a 'continuation price' from bidders for this two-year period, which will see the post-2012 train service specification continued by up to two years.

The franchise length is shorter than the Department would normally let. However, this gives maximum flexibility to redefine the South Central and Thameslink Great Northern (First Capital Connect) franchises in 2015, when the Thameslink Programme is complete. The current First Capital Connect franchise will end in March 2015, if continued to its maximum length.

Chapter Seven

Major schemes and other initiatives

A number of major schemes will be delivered during the life of the South Central franchise.

This chapter provides details of these major projects, and details how the franchise will be shaped to reflect their implementation.

Thameslink Programme

The Thameslink Programme was authorised in July 2007. When complete, it will provide significant additional capacity through central London and deliver enhanced journey opportunities across the South East of England.

The full project is expected to be completed in late 2015 after the end of the forthcoming South Central franchise.

The Thameslink Programme will be delivered in a number of phases, and Network Rail continues to develop the detailed delivery plan for the project. As currently envisaged, the key phases of the Thameslink Programme are:

- **Key Output Zero** December 2008 Closure of Blackfriars terminating platforms and other timetable changes
- **Key Output One** December 2011 12 car services on Thameslink route through central London to Brighton
- 2011/2012 Work starts at London Bridge with eventual reduction in platform availability at London Bridge Low Level
- **Key Output Two** December 2015 24 trains per hour through central London, with 12 car trains on the majority peak services

The main impact of the Thameslink Programme on the South Central service pattern will be the reduction in the available platforms at London Bridge (Low Level) from the current 9 to 6. This will limit the number of trains that can terminate at London Bridge. In the long term, capacity will increase when more Thameslink services can operate through London Bridge station to destinations further north.

The Department continues to work with Network Rail to fully understand how many trains can be accommodated in the revised station layout at London Bridge in the peak hour. Currently some 30 trains terminate at London Bridge in the peak hour and this is expected to reduce to between 20 and 24. However, the Department wishes to ensure that capacity into London (as measured by train carriages) is at least maintained throughout this period by operating trains of maximum length, and making full use of the platform lengthening schemes that are envisaged to be in place by 2011.

Service changes required are likely to include the withdrawal of the London Bridge to Victoria (via Denmark Hill) service and changes to Uckfield/East Grinstead services to ensure that trains of maximum length can be operated.

These changes are further discussed in Chapter 10.

High Level Output Specification – longer trains

The High Level Output Specification (HLOS) requires enhancements to the capacity of suburban services in South London. Network Rail has published its proposals to provide this additional capacity as part of the South London Route Utilisation Strategy, and this envisages 10 car services being provided on the following corridors from 2011:

- Victoria via Norbury;
- Victoria via Gipsy Hill;
- Victoria via Hackbridge.

Ten-car operations are envisaged on the Sydenham corridor from 2012 in order to maintain capacity into London Bridge during the period of works. Whilst routes will be capable of operating these services, full-length trains are not envisaged to operate at all times of day.

Network Rail also envisages 12 car operation on the East Grinstead corridor from 2011.

Bidders will be required to detail how they would utilise the additional capacity provided by these platform lengthening schemes and how they would provide rolling stock for these services.

Lengthening a large number of platforms across the franchise area will inevitably lead to some disruption whilst work is carried out. As with the Thameslink Programme, bidders

will be asked to clearly define how they will manage this disruption, how they plan to provide detailed and up to date information to passengers and how they will ensure that replacement bus services, where required, are of a high quality, accessible, easy to understand and well managed.

East London Line extensions

The East London Line (ELL) scheme is being promoted by Transport for London.

Phase one of the scheme will connect the former London Underground operated East London Line with the National Rail network at New Cross Gate and Dalston Junction. It will provide direct links to the Jubilee line at Canada Water and to District and Hammersmith & City lines at Whitechapel and will enhance access to the City via a new station at Shoreditch High Street.

The new service is due to open in 2010 and will provide services from Crystal Palace, West Croydon and New Cross to Dalston Junction, with a further extension to Highbury and Islington due to open in 2011. New high-density rolling stock will be provided for these services, with a new depot at New Cross Gate. In total, four 4-car trains per hour will be provided from each of West Croydon and Crystal Palace onto the East London line, with additional services provided in the peak. In order to accommodate these additional services, changes to existing services to London Bridge will be required. These changes are described in Chapter 10.

The Department has agreed in principle that the management of stations on the East London line phase one route will transfer to TfL's London Overground concession in September 2009. This will mean that the stations will be managed by the TfL concession operator, although South Central services will continue to call. The stations will remain as part of the national rail network, and the existing range of tickets will be available from each station. TfL is also proposing a package of improvements at these stations.

The stations that are expected to transfer are:

- New Cross Gate, Brockley, Honor Oak Park, Forest Hill, Sydenham, Penge West, Anerley, Crystal Palace, Norwood Junction and West Croydon.

The exact opening date(s) of the East London line is not yet known, but the South Central Franchise Agreement will be drafted in such a way to allow the commencement of services at an appropriate time.

Phase two of the East London line would extend the East London line via Peckham Rye to Clapham Junction. At the time of writing, the project is not funded, but the South Central Franchise Agreement will be drafted to facilitate delivery of the project as required should this change.

If phase two proceeds, the existing London Bridge to London Victoria (via Denmark Hill) service would need to be withdrawn. It is proposed that an enhanced Southeastern service would provide links between London Victoria, Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street, with the service extended to destinations on the Catford loop. The feasibility of this enhanced service is under consideration by Network Rail.

In line with the approach taken for phase one of the project, a number of stations would be transferred to TfL's London Overground concession. These would be:

- Queens Road Peckham, Peckham Rye, Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street

Other schemes

The Department is aware of a number of other schemes that are currently included in the Network Rail Strategic Business Plan which will impact on the South Central franchise. These projects include:

- Gatwick Airport station redevelopment and track layout modifications
- Clapham Junction station redevelopment
- East Croydon station redevelopment
- Victoria Station Masterplan (combined with London Underground planned works)

Bidders will need to include these committed schemes (when confirmed by the Office of Rail Regulation) within their plans for the franchise area.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

The franchise will provide important transport facilities during the period of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The franchisee will be expected to work closely with the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), Transport for London and relevant local authorities to both determine and deliver the public transport requirements for the period of both events.

Between now and the publication of the ITT the Department will be consulting with the ODA to develop a detailed specification for the Olympic period for inclusion within the ITT, and subsequent bids.

Access for All (A4A) and National Stations Investment Programme (NSIP)

A number of stations within the franchise area will see improvements under the schemes highlighted above.

Access for All, which aims to improve access to national rail stations, is planned to deliver improvements to the following stations served by the franchise (although not necessarily operated by the franchisee):

2006–2009

Balham
Clapham Junction
Denmark Hill
Oxted
Purley
Streatham Hill
Three Bridges

2009–2011

Dorking
Fareham
Forest Hill
New Cross Gate
Norwood Junction
Streatham Common
Thornton Heath
Tulse Hill
Horley

2012–2015

Berkhamsted
Brockley
Hassocks
Hemel Hempstead
Honor Oak Park
Leighton Buzzard

The winning bidder will be expected to co-operate with and reasonably assist implementation of the Programme. Further information can be found at the Department's website, www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/rail/railstations.

A number of stations have also been identified as candidates for funding from the National Stations Improvement Programme, the £150 million fund to improve

approximately 150 medium-sized stations, which was announced last July. Decisions to confirm some of the stations in the programme are expected to be made later in 2008. Bidders will be required to co-operate in the implementation of works at stations designated for improvement under these funds.

The Department would also expect bidders to give consideration to opportunities that may exist to benefit passengers by using the Small Schemes Programme, a £7 million per year fund available on a match funded basis.

Community Rail Partnerships

Within the South Central area there are a number of community rail initiatives that are designed to support and develop the local rail network.

The Sussex Community Rail Partnership has promoted various lines, created links between the community, businesses and the railway and sought ways to improve facilities on stations.

The Department expects the bidders for the new South Central franchise to demonstrate a commitment to work with this partnership (and any others developed over time) and to indicate how they propose to work with communities over the life of the franchise.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Minor Works Fund

The Department will expect bidders to detail their proposals to ensure compliance with their duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Bidders will be requested to describe in detail their compliance strategy applicable to both stations and trains. They will also need to detail how they will consult with disabled people to ensure the reasonable needs of disabled passengers are identified and addressed, both within existing facilities and where enhancements are planned. Bidders will also need to outline their plans for staff training in disability awareness and detail their procedures for the sale of tickets to disabled passengers. It is expected that the assisted persons' helpline will be provided free of charge.

Previous franchises have contained a requirement for bidders to have a minor works fund to carry out minor works at stations, including accessibility and mobility improvements. The Department will continue to expect such a fund to be provided, but the level of that fund is being reviewed.

Chapter Eight

Passenger Focus submission to the Secretary of State

The White Paper *Delivering a Sustainable Railway* proposed that Passenger Focus should be given a new role within the franchise specification process. This new role would involve Passenger Focus providing independent advice to the Secretary of State, based on research and consultation with wider stakeholders on the key issues that the new franchise should consider.

Since late 2007, the Department has met regularly with Passenger Focus to discuss how this role will evolve and these discussions will continue. Passenger Focus has also conducted specific research about customer expectations for the franchise, generating responses from over 6000 passengers on eight different routes. These findings, together with information from the regular National Passenger Survey (NPS) and other research into passenger views and priorities, have been used as the framework for a detailed submission on what passengers want from the new franchise.

Passenger Focus identifies a number of priorities for the franchise:

- The key priority over the life of the franchise must be significant and sustained investment, creating increased capacity by providing more trains and more services to respond to demand from passengers;
- The specification should ensure sufficient and suitable rolling stock (above and beyond the 106 new carriages included in the DfT's Rolling Stock Plan) to operate all peak services at maximum possible length throughout the entire peak and, where there are specific needs, in the off-peak;
- Performance should be one of the main priorities for improvement. The franchise specification should include a target to achieve a Public Performance Measure (PPM) of 93 per cent by 2014, with a minimum of 90 per cent for each individual route;
- The franchisee must have the ability and capacity to effectively plan and manage the change and disruption from major projects, consulting and communicating clearly with passengers;
- Bidders should set out how they would aim to deliver the frequency of service sought by passengers, with particular reference to the demands for more weekend and later-evening services;

- Fare structures should be transparent, simple to understand and include proposals to promote value for money and social inclusion. There should be no increases significantly above inflation for off-peak fares, and the ability to flex individual regulated fares should be conditional on the quality of service delivered to passengers;
- Passenger demands for quality information, primarily at stations, about train times and platforms should be addressed. The franchise specification should seek improvements in information provision, particularly in terms of consistently reliable technology, backed up by well-informed staff;
- The needs of passengers who value staff at ticket offices must be a consideration in bidders' retailing proposals. Alternative forms of ticketing must not be used as an excuse to eliminate staffing from stations;
- The Invitation to Tender (ITT) should require bidders to demonstrate their commitment to continuous improvement in every area of activity and to be able to show how their organisational structure and practices will drive and support such improvement through the life of the franchise;
- Whatever the length of the awarded contract, there should be a series of defined, passenger-focused targets and objectives that have to be met in order for the franchisee to remain in place.

A range of further recommendations for the franchise and the analysis underpinning them is set out within the Passenger Focus submission to the Secretary of State. This document and summary reports of the route based research are available on the Passenger Focus website, www.passengerfocus.org.uk.

The Department will continue to work with Passenger Focus in considering how best to reflect these recommendations in a cost-effective, affordable and practical manner, as the detailed franchise specification is developed. In general, the Department is supportive of the main elements of the report, especially those elements that seek to improve service quality, passenger information and reliability.

Chapter Nine

The role of Transport for London within the new franchise

Transport for London (TfL) has a statutory role in the planning of public transport in London, and it is essential that, as far as practical, all public transport operators work together to provide a seamless travel experience to the passenger. In recent years TfL has funded a number of heavy rail improvements in the London area.

The Department has worked closely with TfL in developing this outline specification and will continue to do so as the Invitation to Tender is developed.

TfL is also able to specify a number of increments or decrements over and above the Department's base specification. Where these require additional funding, TfL will be required to provide this, but where savings are made TfL will keep these savings. Over the coming months the Department will continue to work with TfL as we consider these issues further.

The new franchise contract will be let by the Department for Transport, and the Department will be ultimately responsible for managing the entire franchise. To enable any particular London issues to be discussed and addressed, and to ensure delivery of key elements of the franchise specified by them, TfL will participate in monthly meetings between the Department and the successful bidder.

Chapter Ten

The proposed DfT base specification

This chapter sets out the proposed DfT base specification. It contains details of how the franchise objectives are addressed through the specification, and how a number of the issues proposed by Passenger Focus are to be tackled.

This specification has been developed after detailed discussions with Network Rail, Transport for London and Passenger Focus as well as considering the responses made to the Department after the initial local authority briefing event earlier this year.

Importantly, whilst the Department does not propose to make wholesale changes to the existing timetable, this chapter details the changes that will be required to accommodate the major projects that will come to fruition during the life of the franchise.

This chapter looks at the main train service issues that the franchise seeks to address, and then details the service quality and environmental proposals the Department is intending to include within the specification.

A summary of the main changes is contained in Table 10.1.

Train services

Service level commitments

The train service that the successful bidder will be required to deliver will be contractualised in the Franchise Agreement through a series of Service Level Commitments (SLCs).

The timetable that is in force when the franchise commences will be described in SLC1, and will continue unaltered until the opening of the East London Line Extension (ELLX). At the time of writing, it is expected that this will be on the timetable change date in mid-2010.

SLC2 will detail some substantial changes required to accommodate the new ELLX services. Although at first sight it would appear that the only South Central services that should be affected are local services between Croydon and London Bridge on the Sydenham corridor, the degree of retiming necessary at the complex junctions to the

north of Croydon, and at East and West Croydon stations themselves, requires a substantial timetable revision, leaving few service groups unaffected.

SLC2 will run from the date of ELLX opening (probably mid-2010) until platforms at London Bridge are taken out of use as work on the remodelling at that station begins. Network Rail has compiled a draft timetable that will ensure that the peak capacity loss is minimised, but, as with ELLX, the ‘ripple effect’ of the changes will be noticeable across much of the franchise area. This timetable will comprise SLC3, which will run until the end of the franchise.

Table 10.1 Service level commitment dates

Service level commitment	Duration
SLC 1	September 2009 to mid-2010
SLC 2	Mid-2010 to 2011/2012*
SLC 3	2011/2012* to franchise end (July 2015)

* Exact date subject to further detailed work by Network Rail.

Brighton Main Line and Airport services

This group of services comprises the long-distance trains that run from London Victoria to serve Gatwick Airport and the Sussex coast. The majority of these trains serve Clapham Junction, East Croydon and Gatwick Airport on their way to/from coastal cities and towns. There are weekday peak additional services to and from London Bridge.

The Gatwick Express service runs every 15 minutes throughout the day, non-stop between Gatwick and Victoria. From December 2008, with the inception of the BML Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) timetable, six trains in each of the morning and evening peaks will be extended to and from Brighton, lifting the number of peak trains between Brighton and Victoria from five to eight. These changes also introduce more and longer peak trains between Redhill and London. The BML RUS improvements will be retained in SLC1, which will require the operation, unaltered, of the timetable inherited at the beginning of the franchise.

Neither SLC2 nor SLC3 will see any fundamental changes, but there will be some retimings, especially at the commencement of SLC2. In SLC3, despite the loss of platform capacity at London Bridge, initial work carried out by Network Rail indicates that it will be possible to run the same number of London Bridge peak trains, although those trains are likely to be spread over a slightly longer peak period. A small number of stations may lose direct trains to London Bridge for a short period. Further peak capacity is expected to be provided at this time by the extension to 12 cars of First Capital Connect Thameslink services.

It is intended to retain the pattern of service that was introduced on the Arun Valley route by Southern in December 2007, including the splitting of trains at Horsham into ‘fast’ and

'slow' portions. Similarly, the long-standing practice of splitting trains at Haywards Heath into portions for the east and west Coastways is expected to continue, because it is the most efficient way to provide two trains per hour to each of these routes.

In line with last year's rail White Paper, and in recognition of the increasing importance of weekend travel, the Department has begun discussions with Network Rail regarding the feasibility of providing improved frequencies and journey times on the Brighton Main Line on Sundays. These discussions have not concluded, and issues regarding engineering access need to be resolved.

South London Metro

This group comprises the network of services that emanates from Victoria (Central Side) and London Bridge (Low Level), running out to destinations as far afield as Tattenham Corner (via Purley) and Horsham (via Dorking). The service specification fulfils the Transport for London (TfL) requirement to serve all routes with a four trains per hour (tph) off-peak service, although three of the branch lines – those to Epsom Downs, Beckenham Junction and Tattenham Corner – are served by only two or three trains an hour. The busiest route is via Norbury into Victoria, where 6 tph are provided, both peak and off-peak.

In common with the rest of the franchise, SLC1 will comprise a continuation of the timetable inherited by the incoming franchisee in September 2009, and will run until the opening of the East London Line extension. In total there will be 4 tph, every day from each of West Croydon and Crystal Palace onto the East London Line, with additional services provided in the peak.

In order to accommodate these additional trains, SLC2 will see considerable changes to existing services to London Bridge. It will no longer be feasible for South Central to operate limited-stop services on the slow lines in between all-stations ELL services, so all slow-line South Central trains will also call at all stations. The South Central slow line service will consist of 6 tph in the high peak hour (4 off-peak), and will be purely local in nature, starting train journeys no further afield than Victoria (running via Crystal Palace and Sydenham) or Croydon.

Whilst this means a reduction in the number of London Bridge trains from Sydenham and Forest Hill to London Bridge in the peak hour, the overall service frequency north of Sydenham, including ELL trains, will increase to 16 trains per hour in the peak (about one every four minutes). From 2012, when Network Rail has completed enhancement work, the South Central services on this route are expected to be of 10 car length (compared with 8 today).

One option that is under consideration is the provision of the entire off-peak stopping service on this route by means of the Victoria to London Bridge via Crystal Palace service, operating at 4 tph frequency in each direction. This would provide Streatham Hill, West Norwood, Gipsy Hill and Crystal Palace with 4 tph all day to each of Victoria and

London Bridge, but, if this option were to be adopted, Anerley and Penge West would be served only by East London Line trains off-peak, although there would still be a 2 tph peak service from these stations to London Bridge.

In order not to mix stopping trains with limited-stop services on the approach to London Bridge, the Tattenham Corner and Epsom services will run on the fast lines, non-stop from Norwood Junction to London Bridge. Because of the limitations on the number of available paths between South Croydon Junction and London Bridge, the peak Tattenham Corner services will also convey a portion to/from Caterham, with trains splitting and joining at Purley.

The SLC2 pattern of service on the Victoria routes will be very similar to SLC1, featuring 6 tph on the Norbury corridor, and 4 tph each via Hackbridge and Streatham Hill. Timings will change, however, as a consequence of the alterations required to accommodate ELL trains in the Croydon and Crystal Palace areas. There will also be consequential re-timings as a result of the London Bridge changes in SLC3, but, again, the service levels will remain largely unaltered. By SLC 3, peak period trains via Norbury, Hackbridge and Gipsy Hil will be made up of a large proportion of 10 car trains, increasing capacity of some trains by 25 per cent on that seen today.

As a result of the planned works at London Bridge, it is likely that the London Bridge to London Victoria service via Peckham Rye will be withdrawn. This service has the lowest levels of demand when compared to other services, and the journey opportunities it creates are generally replicated by other services. If this withdrawal occurs, it is proposed that an enhanced Southeastern service would provide links between London Victoria, Wandsworth Road and Clapham High Street, with the service extended to destinations on the Catford loop.

South London Metro services at evenings and weekends

In response to increasing demand, it is proposed to extend the off-peak service pattern later in the evening to provide a minimum 4 tph on most routes until around 2300 on Monday to Saturday. The Department has also started discussions with Network Rail about whether it is possible to provide additional services later in the evening, with last services operating around 0030 or later where practical.

A key consideration is Network Rail requirements for engineering access to maintain a safe and reliable railway. Whilst late services may be desirable all week, the Department continues to discuss options that may only see additional late trains operate on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, where demand levels are higher.

Sunday is now a major day for working, shopping and other leisure activities, and as a result there is a widespread aspiration to enhance service frequencies on Sundays.

The Department continues to assess the case for improvements to frequencies on Sundays, and whether any Boxing Day services should be included within the specification.

Horsham, Redhill, Uckfield and East Grinstead

This 'middle-distance' group of services has seen strong growth in recent years.

The East Grinstead line is electrified and provides a 2 tph service to Victoria, enhanced by additional London Bridge trains in the commuting peak. It is not anticipated that this level of service will be altered, except perhaps in SLC3, when it may be necessary to spread the London Bridge trains over a longer period. Timings, however, are likely to be altered in SLC2, as previously discussed. During the course of the franchise, Network Rail will be strengthening the power supply, and lengthening some platforms, to enable the operation of 12-car trains in the peaks.

The Uckfield line is not electrified beyond Hurst Green – one of two non-electrified lines in the area served by the South Central franchise. A new fleet of diesel trains was introduced in 2004, which enabled the restoration of an off-peak direct service to London Bridge (at hourly frequency) to add to the 2 tph peak service. The new trains and the direct London services have brought a significant increase in patronage, and bidders for the franchise will be required to assess whether there is a positive business case to increase the size of the diesel fleet in order to provide longer trains and increase capacity. It is not possible to run more trains on this line because of the lengthy sections of single-line that constrain the timetabling options. Indeed, the peak service of 2 tph can only be accommodated by omitting some stops from one of the trains.

In SLC3 it is likely to be necessary to reduce the peak service to hourly because of the reduction in capacity at London Bridge, but in this eventuality it would be the intention to provide some connections with East Grinstead trains at Oxted.

In response to initial feedback, the Department is discussing with Network Rail the feasibility of operating an additional late train to Uckfield, departing from London Bridge around 2300. The Department is also considering further the case for through services from Uckfield on a Sunday, replacing the shuttle service to Oxted that currently operates.

Horsham, Crawley, Three Bridges and Redhill are all served by the half-hourly Sussex Coast train that runs from the Arun Valley route through East Croydon and Clapham Junction to Victoria. This service is expected to be continued throughout the new franchise, albeit with some retimings. These stations are also served by an hourly train from London Bridge to Horsham, which links Norwood Junction, Purley, Coulsdon South and Merstham with Gatwick Airport.

In recognition of the strong flows between these stations, especially to Gatwick, Southern will double this latter service from hourly to half-hourly in December 2008, and it is intended that this enhancement will also be specified in the new franchise.

Building on this service pattern, the two additional Redhill to London Bridge services that are to be introduced in December 2008 by Southern (one each hour from Reigate and from Tonbridge) will also be specified in the new franchise, ensuring that Redhill and Coulsdon South benefit from a 4 tph service to London Bridge, in addition to the two Arun Valley to Victoria trains that both serve Redhill. These changes will ensure an appropriate level of off-peak service for this busy corridor.

From December 2008, these two additional trains will run to and from Charing Cross in most off-peak hours. It is not yet clear whether they can continue to reach Charing Cross once the revised Southeastern service (IKF SLC2) commences in December 2009. In response to stakeholder requests, an option for routing the two additional trains to Victoria has been considered but rejected, due to the impacts such a service would have on delays, and because it is envisaged that these services will eventually become part of the new Thameslink service pattern.

The Reigate and the Tonbridge branches will continue to have direct London trains in the peaks. This could be provided by means of attaching/detaching portions from trains at Redhill. Network Rail is reviewing the operational and performance implications of this option. In view of the low levels of demand on off-peak Tonbridge line trains, it has been considered whether the service should be reduced to peak only, but it has been decided that the hourly off-peak Charing Cross service, using the modern Class 377 Electrostar trains on all services, might increase patronage, so it will be continued for a trial period.

Coastway services

Coastway West runs from Brighton to Southampton via Worthing, Chichester and Fareham, with branches to Littlehampton, Bognor and Portsmouth. There are limited-stop services, mostly provided by trains to and from London, together with an hourly Brighton to Southampton service that was introduced in December 2007. In between these trains there are some all-stations stopping trains. Timetable patterns are dictated by the fact that there are few opportunities for the faster trains to overtake stopping services. No major changes to the specification are envisaged, although it is inevitable that some timings will be altered, driven by the timings of the long-distance trains in the London area.

It is proposed, subject to agreement by Network Rail, that the recently introduced Brighton – Southampton will be extended to operate on Sundays and so provide enhanced journey opportunities along the south coast on this increasingly important day of the week.

Coastway East runs from Brighton to Ashford International via Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings, with a branch line to Newhaven and Seaford. The route eastward from Hastings to Ashford ('the Marshlink') is the second of the two non-electrified lines in the franchise area. The service pattern is similar to that on Coastway West, with limited-stop services, mostly provided by trains to and from London, together with an hourly Brighton to Ashford service that was introduced in December 2004. In between these trains there are some all-stations stopping trains.

The hourly Brighton to Ashford service is supplemented at its eastern end by some additional stopping trains between Rye and Ashford. Although the Brighton trains are well used, the 'Rye shuttles' have been less popular and demand levels remain low. Bidders will be invited to judge whether the diesel rolling stock used for these shuttles would be more usefully deployed possibly to provide additional capacity on the Uckfield – London Bridge route. In response to crowding on some Ashford to Brighton trains, especially between Brighton and Lewes, bidders will also be asked to judge whether a viable case exists to lengthen some of these trains, or to alter the service pattern.

The Ashford – Brighton service was designed to provide a fast regional service linking a number of major settlements across the south coast and to achieve modal shift from road to rail. We are aware of plans by Network Rail to further enhance journey times on this route by removing a number of speed restrictions, which will further enhance the attractiveness of this service.

There are several stations on the eastern end of this route, including Winchelsea, Doleham and Three Oaks, where demand in 2004 was very low. The withdrawal of these intermediate stops has generated considerable local opposition, but it is believed that the attractiveness of the service will be reduced if all trains call at all stations. Bidders for the franchise will be invited to form their own views on the stopping patterns for these trains compared with the value of reduced journey times, although a minimum service to each of the low-use stations will be mandated.

Otherwise, no significant changes to the Coastway East specification are envisaged, although it is inevitable that some timings will be altered, driven by the timings of the long-distance trains in the London area.

West London Line

The West London Line (WLL) branches away from the Brighton Main Line at Clapham Junction, and runs via Kensington Olympia to Mitre Bridge Junction (near Willesden), from where there are connections both to the North London Line and to the West Coast Main Line. The core service on this route is provided by London Overground – a basic 2 tph at present, but due to become a 4 tph service from Clapham Junction when TfL has sufficient trains to resource the service – expected to be December 2010.

The service was first conceived as an hourly direct connection between Brighton and Birmingham via East Croydon and Watford, but Southern and its predecessors were never able to secure paths to operate into the congested West Midlands area, and the service terminated first at Rugby, and then, when the West Coast upgrade works started, at Watford.

This service has never managed to establish itself as a successful long-distance service, possibly because it has never been possible to operate it as a through service at peak times of day, and possibly because it has been so frequently interrupted by engineering

works at weekends. It has, however, been extremely successful as a short-distance connection to, from and between the stations in west London.

From January 2009, with the West Coast upgrade substantially complete, it will be possible once again for a number of trains to run northwards to the key growth area of Milton Keynes. At its southern end, however, partly because of rolling stock constraints and partly because of the need to restrict the number of crossing moves between slow and fast lines, it will be possible only to reach East Croydon – and then only with off-peak trains.³ This, augmented by the existing morning peak additional service from East Croydon to Kensington Olympia (Shepherds Bush when that station opens) will be the basis of the SLC1 service.

In SLC2 it is intended to implement the South London Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) recommendation, which calls for 2 tph to be operated between Shepherds Bush and Croydon. Ideally, one of these two trains would form the hourly service to Milton Keynes, but, at the time of writing, Network Rail has been unable to match the available path on the West Coast Main Line with either of the paths through to Croydon, so it is anticipated that the Milton Keynes service will only run to Clapham Junction – giving a total South Central service over the WLL of 3 tph, in addition to the London Overground service of 2 tph.

In December 2010, the London Overground service will be increased to 4 tph between Clapham Junction and Willesden Junction. The hourly Milton Keynes service, if it has been successful, will make a fifth train per hour. This is likely to be the limit of off-peak capacity on the route, given that there is also substantial freight activity. The 2 tph Shepherds Bush to Croydon service would then become a peak-only operation, giving 7 tph between Shepherds Bush and Clapham Junction in the peaks. This is the proposal for SLC2 and SLC3.

Reliability and performance

In recent years the reliability of Southern and Gatwick Express services has improved, so that by the end of 2007 both operators were achieving Public Performance Measure (PPM) scores of around 90 per cent (Southern 89.2 per cent, Gatwick Express 90.3 per cent).

The specification will expect this improving trend to continue and for South Central to provide its contribution to the overall London and the South East PPM score of 93 per cent by 2014, as set out in last year's White Paper. Alongside this, bidders will need to demonstrate how they would provide a reduction in 'significant lateness and cancellations'. London and South East operators as a whole are expected to deliver a 21 per cent decline in delays of more than 30 minutes or cancellations.

In line with recent franchise replacements, a single compensation policy based on delays to individual journeys will apply for all passengers.

³ The service is subject to final confirmation.

Table 10.2 Summary of proposed service specification changes

Routes	SLC 1 (late 2009 – mid-2010)	SLC 2 (mid-2010 – 2011/12)*	SLC 3 (2011/12* – mid-2015)
Brighton Main Line and Airport	<p>Merger of Southern and Gatwick Express services.</p> <p>Six trains in AM and PM peaks extended to/from Brighton with other service changes.</p>	<p>Some timings to change.</p>	<p>Some timings to change.</p> <p>London Bridge peak train period extended.</p> <p>Increased capacity through FCC Thameslink 12-car trains.</p>
South London Metro	<p>All routes served with minimum 4 tph except Epsom Downs/Beckenham Junction/Tattenham Corner (2–3 tph).</p> <p>Norbury to Victoria service 6 tph both peak and non-peak.</p> <p>4 tph service requirement on all lines until 11pm Mon – Sat. (SLC 1 or 2)</p> <p>Improved Sunday service sought (SLC 1 or 2).</p>	<p>Changes to services at London Bridge.</p> <p>All slow line SC trains on Sydenham corridor to stop at all stations (with service reducing to 6 tph peak, 4 off-peak to accommodate ELL trains).</p> <p>Peak service frequency north of Sydenham to increase to 16 tph (including ELL).</p> <p>Peak Epsom/Tattenham Corner/Caterham services to run non-stop between Norwood Junction and London Bridge with some services requiring splitting and joining at Purley.</p> <p>4 tph service from West Croydon and Crystal Palace onto ELL.</p> <p>Some consequential retimings of Victoria services.</p>	<p>Sydenham and Forest Hill to London Bridge capacity increases due to 10-car trains.**</p> <p>Capacity increases – suburban services to Victoria.</p> <p>Some timings to change.</p> <p>Withdrawal of London Bridge to Victoria (via Peckham Rye) replaced by Victoria – Catford loop service.</p>

* Exact date dependent on further work currently being undertaken by Network Rail.

** Network Rail continues to investigate the possibility of 12-car trains.

Routes	SLC 1 (late 2009 – mid-2010)	SLC 2 (mid-2010 – 2011/12)*	SLC 3 (2011/12* – mid-2015)
East Grinstead	No changes	Some timings to change.	London Bridge peak train period extended.
Uckfield	No changes	Some timings to change Possible additional late train service from London Bridge. Possible Sunday through service.	London Bridge peak train service reduced to hourly. Connecting services to be planned with East Grinstead service at Oxted.
Tonbridge/ Redhill/Reigate Corridor	Two additional Redhill to London Bridge services to be introduced, continuing to Charing Cross (until December 2009) off-peak.	Some timings to change	London Bridge peak train period extended.
Arun Valley	No changes	Some timings to change	London Bridge peak train period extended.
Coastway	No changes	Some timings to change. Brighton to Southampton service to run on Sundays, subject to timetabling feasibility. Consider withdrawal of 'Rye shuttle'.	London Bridge peak train period extended. Some timings to change.

* Exact date dependent on further work currently being undertaken by Network Rail.

Routes	SLC 1 (late 2009 – mid-2010)	SLC 2 (mid-2010 – 2011/12)*	SLC 3 (2011/12* – mid-2015)
West London Line	Service to extend to Milton Keynes and terminate at East Croydon.**	<p>London Overground service due to increase from 2 tph to 4 tph.</p> <p>Milton Keynes service to terminate at Clapham Junction (1 tph).</p> <p>Shepherds Bush service to terminate at South Croydon (2 tph – peak only).</p>	Some timings may change.

* Exact date dependent on further work currently being undertaken by Network Rail.

** Subject to final confirmation.

Whilst many of the changes highlighted are required to facilitate the delivery of other major projects, respondents are asked to highlight any areas of particular concern so that the Department can ensure that proposed mitigation measures are acceptable.

Respondents are also encouraged to consider the levels of service on evening and weekends and comment as to whether the proposed changes are appropriate.

It should be noted that, as with other timetable changes, the operator will be required to consult more fully nearer the timetable change date.

Delivering improvements for passengers

The Department proposes to include a number of elements within the franchise specification aimed at improving the overall quality of service delivered to passengers. Bidders will be encouraged to enhance the level of provision over and above the minimum that is specified, and will be free to propose alternative approaches to those noted below.

Successful bidders will be required to produce a Disabled Persons' Protection Policy (DPPP) that sets out the policy for accessibility and service levels that disabled people should expect.

Security and safety

Improvements in station and on-train security are an important element in enhancing the overall passenger perception of the railway, which in turn helps attract new passengers.

Some 106 stations within the South Central franchise area are currently covered by Secure Station Accreditation (SSA), covering 93 per cent of relevant footfall. The scheme represents a national standard for passenger safety and security on Britain's railway stations and ensures that stations that have received accreditation meet minimum security standards.

Bidders will be required to maintain the current level of accreditation, and the specification will propose that the scheme is extended to cover 95 per cent of station footfall (excluding Network Rail managed stations). Most of the rolling stock that operates on this franchise now has in-train CCTV coverage. This level of coverage will be maintained and enhanced. Of the 72 car parks operated by South Central, 24 have been awarded the Park Mark award.

Bidders will also be expected to outline plans for other security enhancements, such as extensions to CCTV coverage, and identify opportunities to secure external funding.

Fares, ticketing and revenue protection

Commuter fares and protected fares are assumed to be capped at RPI +1 per cent throughout the franchise term, consistent with the announcement made in *Delivering a Sustainable Railway*, published in July 2007.

Whilst overall revenues are capped at RPI + 1 per cent, Passenger Focus has suggested that the flexibility that operators have to alter individual fares should be dependent on the overall level of performance delivered to customers, possibly measured by PPM. Providing a stronger link between fares and performance has a number of attractions. Any such system would have to be fair to operators as well as to passengers and capable of being operated effectively.

The Department would welcome views as to whether such an approach is desirable, and what performance measures should be used to assess overall performance.

It is proposed that operators will remain free to alter unregulated fares as they see fit, although the Department will publish the assumptions upon which the winning bid has been made.

Zonal single and return fares were introduced in London in 2007 and zonal season tickets will be implemented from 2010. Bidders will also be free to propose other fare simplification measures, including new zonal schemes outside London where appropriate.

The Department would welcome views on where such schemes might be beneficial. We would also welcome proposals as to how fares on this franchise could be made easier to understand, in line with the approach advocated in last year's rail White Paper, and – going further – what proposals would give passengers greater confidence in the system.

Embracing new technology on a consistent network basis will cut queues and speed up the overall journey for passengers. In London, the Oyster smartcard is already accepted for season tickets, and from 2009 Oyster pay as you go (PAYG) will be valid on all national rail services in London. The new franchise will require continued acceptance of Oyster PAYG.

In addition, the Department proposes that the operator of the franchise will be required to retail some Oyster products from stations within the Travelcard boundary. However, this will be dependent on an acceptable commercial agreement being reached with TfL.

Research by Passenger Focus has indicated that ticket retailing is an area of concern for passengers.

In line with other recent franchises, the Department will also require the operator to develop and to roll out smartcard products across the franchise area. These will be based on the ITSO standard and, subject to TfL completing the required upgrade of their equipment, will allow ITSO products to be used on Underground and bus services in London. Integration of these products with other modes of transport outside London will also be encouraged.

In recent years new ticket machines have been provided across the franchise, and their use has increased significantly. The base specification will also include a requirement for further enhancements to ticket machine availability, with an expectation of around 30 additional machines provided across the franchise. Bidders will be expected to consider locations for additional ticket machines suggested by Passenger Focus in their bids. Bidders will also be asked to suggest enhancements to the current functionality of ticket machines to increase the range of tickets available.

Bidders will also be encouraged to propose new retailing methods to reduce time taken to purchase tickets, such as internet-based sales.

The base specification will seek proposals to increase the number of stations that are gated across the South Central area. As well as improving revenue protection, these initiatives will increase staff visibility and help improve security and reduce vandalism. Improving staff visibility was a key finding from the Passenger Focus research.

In the London area, TfL are proposing station gating at a number of stations for which it will assume responsibility in September 2009. These are

- New Cross Gate, Brockley, Honor Oak Park, Forest Hill, Sydenham, Crystal Palace and Norwood Junction.

In addition, the Department may seek proposals to gate around 30 additional stations across the franchise. Where gates are in place, it is expected that they will be operational until around 2300 (or last train, whichever is earlier), seven days a week.

Overall, this package (alongside existed provision) will provide improved security and increased staffing at 50 stations across the current South Central network.

The Department is considering whether a Ticketless Travel monitoring regime should be implemented as part of the franchise to ensure that all appropriate efforts are made to collect revenue.

Improving access to stations

Improving access to stations is an important element in improving the door to door journey, of which rail is just one element. Car parking is seen as a constraint in many locations due to limited capacity, and bidders will be encouraged to develop proposals to enhance car parking provision across the franchise area. The Passenger Focus work highlights a number of areas where additional car parking is a priority, and the Department believes that a case exists for around 1,000 additional car parking spaces across the franchise.

Subject to the successful completion of a number of pilot studies, the Department proposes to extend the trials of Station Travel Plans to cover some 30 additional stations across the franchise area. Station Travel Plans are intended to highlight ways in which access to stations by all modes can be improved for both current users and those at present not travelling by train due to lack of convenient access.

The operator will be required to work with local authorities to develop these, although it will be up to local authorities to decide which stations they believe are important and whether station access is a local priority. It is expected that, where significant car parking enhancements are proposed, a station travel plan will also be developed.

The Department also proposes that, as a minimum, some 1,000 additional cycle parking facilities are provided across the franchise area. It will be for bidders to decide upon the locations of this provision in consultation with stakeholders. These facilities will need to be developed in line with overall DfT's Cycle Policy and approaches developed by the Cycle-Rail Integration Task Force.

Passenger information

Research by Passenger Focus highlights that the provision of timely and accurate information is an important priority for passengers, and this is especially true during periods of disruption. In recent years considerable improvements to information provision

have been made with the introduction of real-time information at stations and improved access via mobile phones and the internet. The National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES) now provides a large amount of high-quality information on all aspects of the rail journey.

The specification will seek proposals from bidders that fully utilise existing channels of communication, such as real-time information both at-station and on-train to provide accurate and up to date information, especially when things go wrong.

The specification will seek to extend on-station passenger information to stations not currently served and enhance provision where it is currently limited (especially given the development of the 10 car suburban railway).

Bidders will also be encouraged to propose new ways in which they will communicate with their passengers. They will also be encouraged to highlight ways in which issues raised by Passenger Focus can be addressed, including the adoption of industry standard good practice.

Other initiatives, such as an enhanced level of staffing at stations, will also increase access to information for passengers.

Improving service quality

The improvements noted above are all aimed at improving overall service quality. However the operator will also be required to improve other aspects of the rail journey not covered elsewhere, such as the quality and cleanliness of stations and trains. Bidders will be required to specify how they will monitor service quality and ensure stations and trains are clean and maintained to a high standard.

Managing change; keeping passengers informed

As detailed in Chapter 7, a number of major projects will impact on the operations of the South Central franchise. This will require at least two major timetable changes and is likely to result in disruption, particularly at weekends, while enhancements are carried out.

The Department will require bidders to provide detailed and robust plans as to how they will manage such disruption. They will need to detail how they will keep customers informed about planned engineering works and major timetable changes, including using new or existing communication channels.

They will also be required to set out how they will provide frequent, high-quality, accessible and well-managed rail replacement services during such periods of disruption and will also need to demonstrate how they will plan for such changes.

Respondents are asked to consider the appropriateness of the measures proposed for inclusion within this chapter of the specification. Respondents are also asked to highlight any issues that have been omitted so that these can be considered further. The Department would also appreciate information on any locations where particular issues need to be addressed.

Improving the environmental performance of the railway

Although rail is a relatively clean and efficient means of transport, as with all modes it must play its part in reducing its environmental impacts and contribute to Government's broader sustainable development objectives. In addition, with over five million people living near the railway, all train operators have an important role to play in managing their activities to reduce noise and disturbance to their line-side neighbours.

Consequently, the Department will expect bidders for this franchise to set out plans for measuring and reducing the environmental impact of their rail activities. In particular, the Department will require bidders to set targets for improving the environmental performance of the franchise, including for traction and non-traction CO₂ emissions, waste generation, recycling, emissions of air quality pollutants, noise, water consumption and other environmental impacts. Bidders will be required to monitor and publish the overall environmental performance of the franchise.

The specification is likely to require at least a 10 per cent reduction in non-traction electricity consumption within the life of the franchise.

The major power consumption for the franchise, however, comes from traction-based electricity, and Southern and Network Rail have already started to trial regenerative braking technology. If successful, the bidders will be required to take part in further trials and extend regenerative braking to the rest of the network in due course.

Respondents are asked to consider what environmental key performance indicators (KPIs) should be set within the franchise specification and whether it is appropriate to set particular targets, or require bidders to set their own binding targets within their bids.

Chapter Eleven

Additional proposals and schemes promoted by third parties

The base specification for the franchise only assumes those schemes that are funded within the High Level Output Specification. Whilst Network Rail's Regulatory Settlement for Control Period 4 (2009–2014) has not as yet been agreed by the Office of Rail Regulation, the Department has assumed that the outputs specified within the High Level Output Specification and detailed with Network Rail Strategic Business Plan will be delivered.

In addition to the base case specification, bidders may be asked to submit proposals for a number of priced options. These options, usually promoted by local authorities, might involve additional services or in certain circumstances a reduction in the level of service proposed by the DfT. These increments or decrements will be schemes that:

- stakeholders have requested be included and which the DfT believes demonstrate good value for money and can be funded by the partners concerned for the franchise period; and/or
- require infrastructure investment to facilitate the aspiration, and which has a good chance of being delivered within the franchise period.

Any proposed increments or decrements must:

- comply with the objectives of the franchise;
- be operationally robust;
- demonstrate value for money; and
- be funded by stakeholders (for which the stakeholder will need to provide written guarantees).

Respondents who wish to pursue increments or decrements should make these clear in their response to this consultation. Further information on the DfT requirements for increments/decrements can be made available on request.

The DfT is aware of a number of other schemes that are being considered for delivery within the life of the new franchise. If these are delivered, standard industry processes would be used to progress them.

Bidders will be encouraged to work with third-party promoters to develop the feasibility of these projects, and respondents to this consultation are encouraged to highlight other schemes that they believe have a case for inclusion within the franchise.

Lewes – Uckfield reopening

A consortium of local authorities, including East Sussex County Council, has been promoting a scheme to reopen the Lewes – Uckfield route, which was closed in 1969. The value for money and costs associated with this reopening are currently under consideration in a study led by Network Rail. This study is due to report shortly.

The reopening of this route was not included in last year's High Level Output Specification, and no Government funds are available for the scheme. As a result, the Department does not propose to include a requirement to operate services on this route within the life of the next franchise, as it is unlikely that the route would be reopened within this period.

If private sector funding is available within this period to cover both the capital costs and likely additional subsidy, the change mechanism that exists within all franchise agreements would be used to incorporate the scheme into the franchise.

Tunbridge Wells – Eridge reopening

The reopening of the Tunbridge Wells – Eridge route is promoted alongside the Lewes – Uckfield scheme. However, no significant development work is being carried out on this proposal at this stage and, as a result, the Department does not propose to include this within the franchise specification.

New stations

The Department is aware of a number of new station aspirations. However, the Department does not believe that any have reached a sufficient level of feasibility and development to be included as committed schemes at this stage. If a satisfactory business case and funding package can be developed during the life of the franchise, existing industry processes can be used to facilitate delivery.

Croydon Tramlink extension (CTLE)

Transport for London is investigating an extension of the Croydon Tramlink. Various route options are under consideration that may have an impact on the new South Central franchise between the Crystal Palace area and Beckenham Junction.

CTLE has funding up to design and application stage; it does not yet have powers or funding for construction. Subject to securing the necessary approvals and funding for

construction, work could start in 2011/12, with the extension open by 2013/14. The implementation of the project would involve detailed discussions with the franchise operator and Network Rail, especially regarding alternative terminating locations for the Beckenham Junction service.

Respondents are asked to highlight any other third-party schemes that are likely to be delivered during the life of the next franchise. Local authorities are also asked to highlight any increments or decrements that they would like to propose as part of the franchise specification.

Chapter 12

Consultation

Consultees are requested to comment on aspects of the proposed DfT base specification as noted in Chapter 10. DfT would also welcome formal notification of any specific increments or decrements to the base specification that stakeholders wish to pursue as part of the franchise.

This consultation is issued in accordance with the Cabinet Office Code of Practice (the essential criteria of which are included at Appendix 4).

Production of a full Impact Assessment is not considered appropriate, as no policy changes are proposed.

Action following consultation

Following the consultation period, the Department will consider responses, undertake such further analysis as might be necessary and, if appropriate, include the results within the ITT as part of the Base Specification or as a priced option.

The Department will produce a summary of the outcome of the consultation process.

The ITT will be made available in November 2008.

Invitations to consultees

A list of bodies formally consulted is set out in Appendix 2.

Rail User Groups should send comments in the first instance to the Department for Transport and also provide copies to Passenger Focus or London Travelwatch as appropriate.

Members of the general public may wish to make their views known to their local district, county, unitary authority or London borough. Copies of comments can also be made available to Passenger Focus or London Travelwatch.

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and, in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

It should be noted that not every submission made by members of the general public will receive a response.

This document can be made available in appropriate accessible formats on request.

Responses to this consultation should be sent to:

South Central Franchise Consultation Manager
Department for Transport
Zone 5/28
Great Minster House
76 Marsham St
London SW1P 4DR

Or by email to: southcentral@dft.gsi.gov.uk

The deadline for responses is 14 August 2008; earlier replies will be very welcome.

Appendix 1

Maps

Figure A1.1 The South Central franchise area

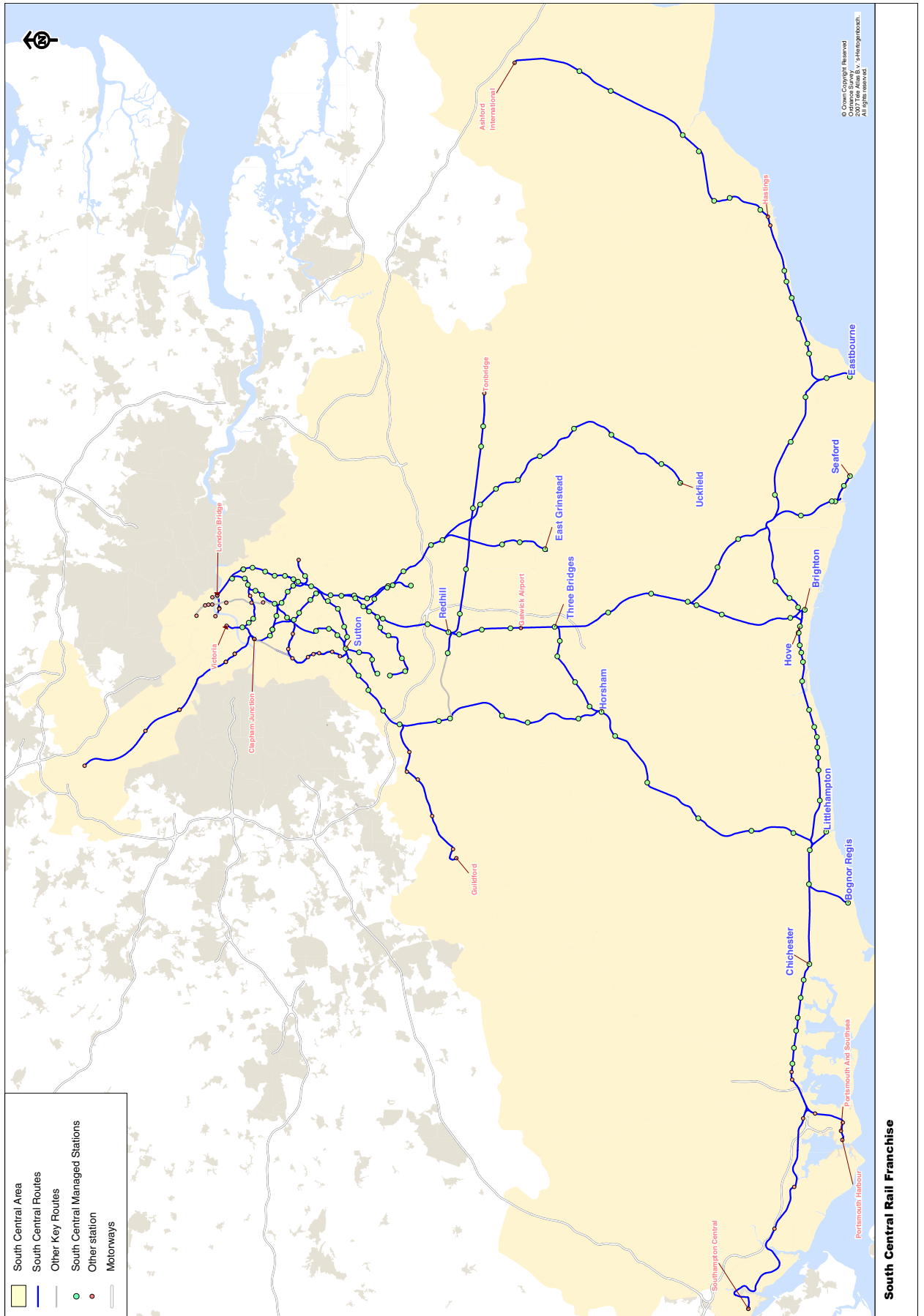


Figure A1.2 Diagrammatic representation of South Central services (December 2008): London area

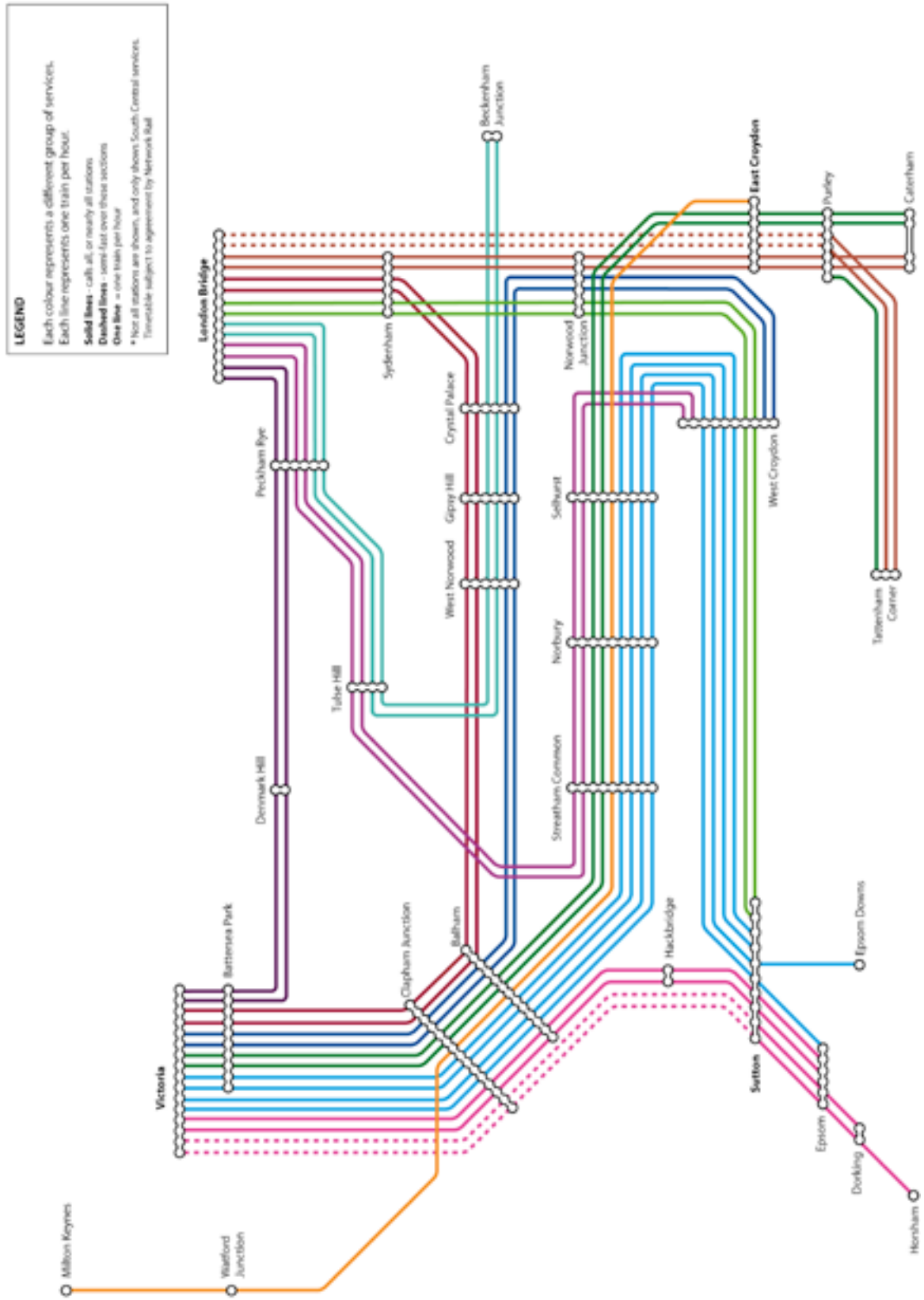
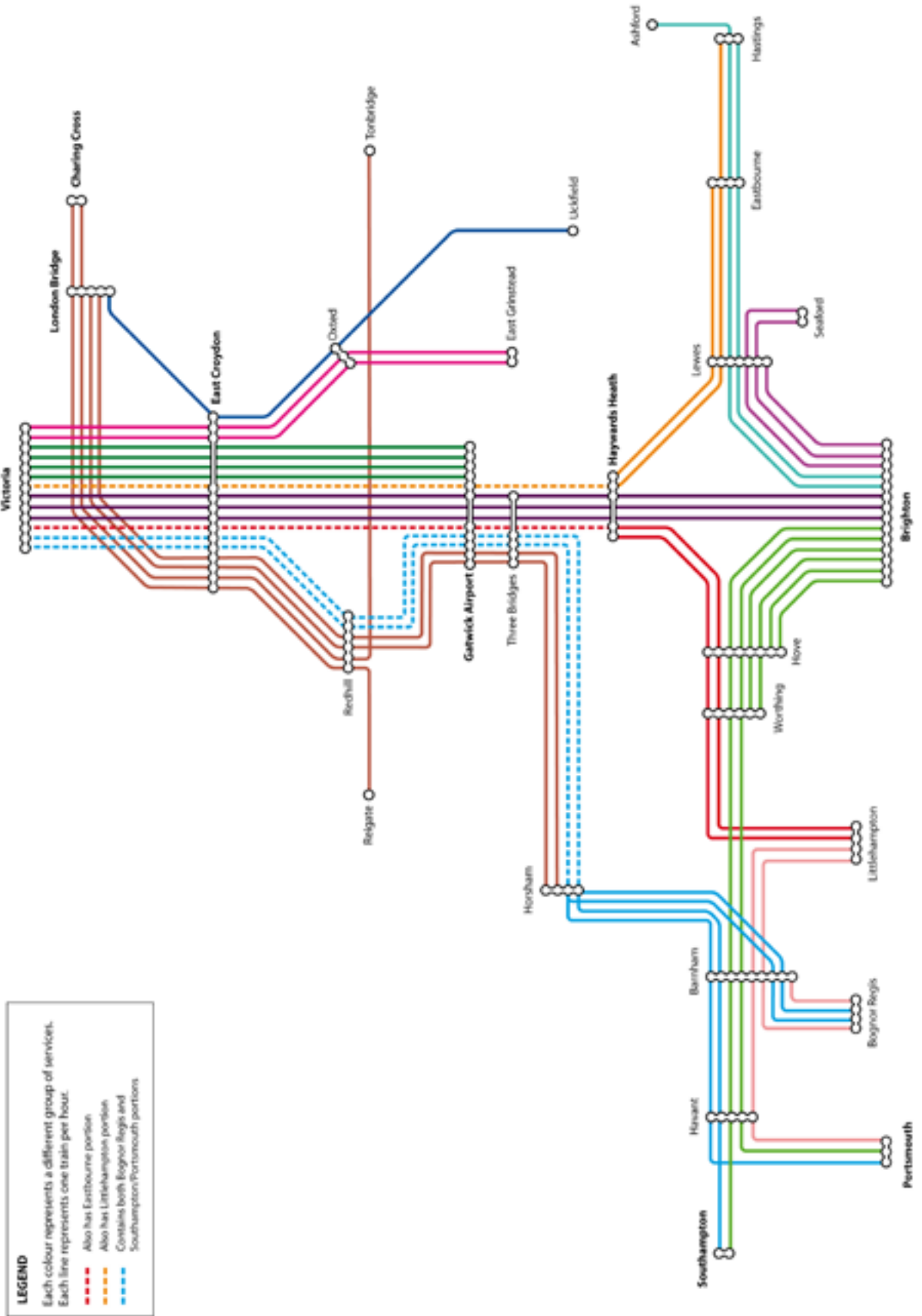


Figure A1.3 Diagrammatic representation of South Central Services (December 2008): Uckfield, Horsham and East Grinstead, Main Line and Coastway areas



Appendix 2

List of formal consultees

Association of Train Operating Companies
BAA
Board of Airline Representatives in the UK
Corporation of London
Development Agencies – East of England, London, South East England
Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Freight Transport Association
Government Offices for London, South East, East
Greater London Authority
Local Government Association
Local, county and unitary authorities⁴
London Assembly
London boroughs⁴
London TravelWatch
Mayor of London's Office
Members of Parliament⁴
National Rail Contractors Group
Network Rail
Office of Rail Regulation
Olympic Delivery Authority
Passenger Focus
Rail Freight Group
Rail Freight Operators Association
Regional Assemblies – South East England, East of England
Rolling stock leasing companies
Transport for London

⁴ Within the franchise area.

Appendix 3

Glossary of terms

A4A	Access for All
BML	Brighton Main Line
CCTV	closed circuit television
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CTLE	Croydon Tramlink Extension
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfT	Department for Transport
ELL	East London Line
ELLX	East London Line Extension
HLOS	High Level Output Specification
IKF	Integrated Kent Franchise
ITSO	ITSO (smartcard system)
ITT	Invitation to Tender
MAA	Moving Annual Average
NPS	National Passenger Survey
NRES	National Rail Enquiry Service
NSIP	National Stations Investment Programme
ODA	Olympic Delivery Authority

PAYG	pay as you go
PIXC	passengers in excess of capacity
PPM	Public Performance Measure
RPI	Retail Price Index
RUS	Route Utilisation Strategy
SLC	Service Level Commitment
SSA	Secure Station Accreditation
TfL	Transport for London
tph	trains per hour
WLL	West London Line

Appendix 4

Code of Practice on Consultation

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The code of practice applies to all UK public consultations by government departments and agencies, including consultations on EU directives.

Though the code does not have legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g. under European Community Law), it should otherwise generally be regarded as binding unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

The code contains six criteria. They should be reproduced in all consultation documents. There should be an explanation of any departure from the criteria and confirmation that they have otherwise been followed.

Consultation criteria

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the time-scale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out an Impact Assessment if appropriate.

A full version of the code of practice is available on the Better Regulation Executive website at <http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/documents/consultation/pdf/code.pdf>

If you consider that this consultation does not comply with the criteria or have comments about the **consultation process** please contact:

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Consultation Co-ordinator
Department for Transport
1/33 Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

Email: consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk

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