

19 August 2011

Department of Transport  
InterCity West Coast Franchise Consultation Manager  
Zone 5/26  
Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street  
London,  
SWP 4DR

Dear Sir/ Madam

**INTERCITY WEST COAST FRANCHISE – DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT  
CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT INVITATION TO TENDER (ITT)**

The Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI) is an independent membership network that strengthens Scotland's competitiveness by influencing Government policies to encourage sustainable economic prosperity. The membership of SCDI includes businesses, trades unions, local authorities, educational institutions, the voluntary sector and faith groups.

SCDI has previously commented on the Department for Transport's consultation earlier this year on the next Intercity West Coast franchise. It notes that a diverse range of priorities were identified in responses to this consultation which cannot all be incorporated. SCDI is content with the Department for Transport's proposal that a simpler contract should be introduced, which gives bidders greater flexibility in how they develop the service offered to passengers. SCDI is currently speaking with short-listed bidders for the franchise to highlight the recommendations which we made in our response and inform preparation of their proposals.

We have, therefore, a limited number of comments on the proposed train service requirement.

Following the introduction of an early morning, limited stop Flying Scotsman service on the East Coast Mainline, SCDI would support the introduction of a similar service on the West Coast. The first service in the morning between Glasgow Central and London Euston currently leaves at 04:28 and arrives at 09:04. The draft specification states that this should continue to arrive before 09:05. SCDI would support a slightly later specification of an arrival time of before 09:30 on the basis that a faster, limited stop service is then introduced by the franchisee with a significantly later, more attractive departure time from Glasgow Central. In the opposite direction, SCDI recommends a marginally earlier specification of the arrival time for the first train from London Euston to Glasgow Central of before 10:30, rather than the proposed 10:40, to allow business meetings to commence no later than mid-morning.

Increased capacity on the West Coast is a key priority for Scottish business and tourism due to the size of the UK market. SCDI understands that the Office of the Rail Regulator has approved the Department for Transport's application for track access rights to enable three northbound and two southbound trains of the weekday services which currently operate between London Euston and Lancaster to extend to Glasgow Central. This would increase the total number of trains between London Euston and Glasgow Central to 32 on a weekday -

very welcome growth in capacity. The franchise would allow the operator to vary the number of daily services by 10%. The draft invitation to tender specifies a minimum of 23 services per day between London Euston and Glasgow Central, but, following the Office of the Rail Regulator's approval for these extended services, SCDI considers that this should be 28 daily services, with a specified requirement for 1 London Euston – Glasgow Central train per hour.

SCDI hopes that these comments are helpful and looks forward to opportunities to continue to offer input on the priorities for the Scottish economy as the franchising process progresses.

Yours sincerely

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