

Rail Delivery Group

Response to:

Department for Transport

South Eastern Rail Franchise consultation

Date: June 2017

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Organisation: Rail Delivery Group

Type: Business representative organisation

- 1) The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) brings together Network Rail and passenger and freight train operating companies. The purpose of the RDG is to enable Network Rail and passenger and freight train operating companies to succeed by delivering better services for their customers. Ultimately this benefits taxpayers, passengers and the wider economy. We aim to meet the needs of:
 - a) our members, by enabling them to deliver better outcomes for customers and the country;
 - b) government and regulators, by developing strategy, informing policy and confronting difficult decisions on choices; and
 - c) rail and non-rail users, by improving customer experience and building public trust.

Overview

- 2) The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Department for Transport's (DfT) consultation on the future of the South Eastern Rail Franchise. During the next South Eastern rail franchises we would like to see:
 - a) Improvements in the understanding, measurement and delivery customer experience through the use of the 'customer promises' and The Customer Heartbeat™;
 - b) A better approach to fares and ticketing which improves simplicity and choice for customers underpinned by the Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) guidelines; and
 - c) Effective collaboration between the infrastructure manager and the train operator through the alignment of incentives for the benefit of passengers.

Improving customer service and the overall passenger experience

National Rail Passenger Survey

- 3) The National Rail Passenger Surveys (NRPS) conducted by Transport Focus on behalf of the rail industry, is a key metric which operators use to assess those areas of customer experience that should be prioritized for improvement. NRPS results for the South Eastern franchise consistently identify 'improving service' as the top priority for customers. RDG, working closely with Transport Focus, has optimised the tool for the industry.

The Customer Heartbeat™ and Customer Promises

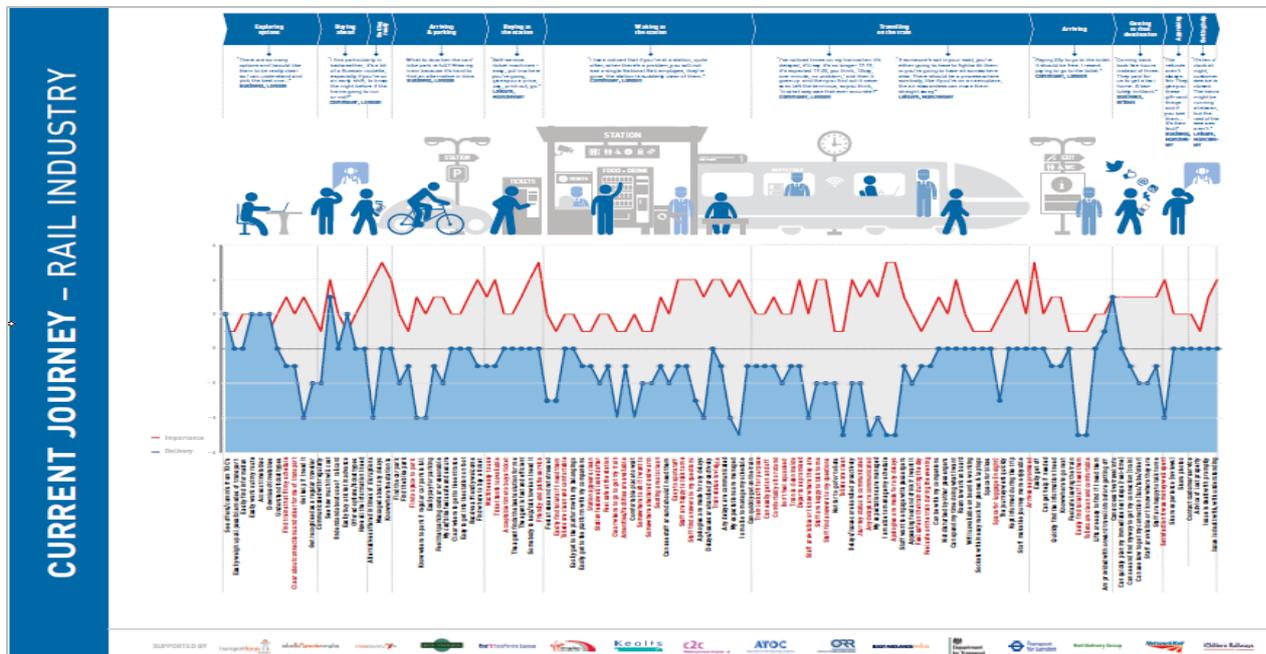
- 4) RDG has invested in understanding customer expectations, customer needs and customer priorities. RDG has created a means of measuring that journey every step of the way. We now understand and can demonstrate what customers truly want and need; this gives us the unique ability to prioritise work in the areas that will deliver an improved customer rail experience.

- 5) RDG has developed five ‘customer promises’ that act as guiding principles, giving a consistent way of focussing the industry's efforts for future delivery. These promises are as follows:
- Put the customer ‘in control’;
 - Let the customer ‘travel my way’;
 - Enable the customer to be ‘always on’;
 - Give the customer ‘clear value’;
 - Ensure that the customer is always ‘feeling loved’.
- 6) Further, RDG has developed The Customer Heartbeat™, which maps 108 segments or touchpoints of a rail journey and helps us to understand where the service we provide does not yet meet customer expectations. We have appointed ‘Customer Champions’ who will be responsible for implementing improvements in each of these areas and will directly liaise with TOCs to achieve this. We will also be supporting the industry with an innovation team, which will make us collectively more responsive to the expectations of passengers. All of this work is focused on ensuring that the industry is delivering what passengers want. This tool may help the operator and the Department to develop a more detailed understanding of customer needs across the life of this franchise.

RDG Customer Promises

<p>Put the Customer IN CONTROL</p> 	<p>Let the Customer TRAVEL MY WAY</p> 	<p>Enable the customer to be ALWAYS ON</p> 	<p>Give the Customer CLEAR VALUE</p> 	<p>Ensure that the customer is always FEELING LOVED</p> 
<p>“I always know what’s happening before, during, after my journey so I can make informed choices & decisions”</p>	<p>“The train company understands and appreciates me, offering me services that meet my individual needs”</p>	<p>“My train journey keeps me connected from one part of my life so that it's not interrupted”</p>	<p>“It’s clear what I’m getting from my money and I feel that pricing is straightforward”</p>	<p>“I feel the train company values my custom and recognises my loyalty”</p>

The Customer Heartbeat™



Fares Structure and Ticketing

- 7) We recognise that many customers find getting the best fare for their journey complicated. As such the industry is working with the Department to simplify this so that customers can have confidence in buying the right ticket for them. The fares and ticketing policy for this franchise should align with the fares reform agenda the RDG has recently set out, which seeks to remove outdated fares regulation, and allow the franchisee sufficient freedom to innovate in meeting customer expectations in this area. The franchise specifiers need to provide sufficient space to the operator to facilitate changes to the current fares regulation, set out through the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement (TSA). By facilitating changes this can remove major obstacles in ensuring every customer finds the right fare for their journey.
- 8) More broadly, the franchise specification should be aligned to the RDG retailing vision, which aims to provide customers with an easy-to-understand and convenient-to-use ticketing proposition. The RDG retailing vision is to enable passengers to have tickets linked to a range of devices, including their smartphones and bank cards, so that they can easily access their tickets and gain entry to trains, without the need to print out paper tickets if they wish. The future South Eastern rail franchise operator should be incentivised to drive forward digital ticketing innovation that improves the customer experience in-line with the principles of the RDG retail vision, [a railway for the digital age](#).
- 9) Underpinning the approach to ticketing on the South Eastern franchise should be

the RDG [Ticket Vending Machines: Design Guidelines](#). This document provides a set of design guidelines, which will improve the ticket purchasing experience for customers and reduce the risk of customers purchasing the wrong ticket.

Improving access and facilities at stations

- 10) We recognize that customers are at the heart of everything we do and that we should understand how their needs vary depending on their journey, their personal circumstances and preferences. The RDG Vision for Stations outlines nine principles of good station design for Britain's Railway stations, principle one of which is that they should be customer focused. While acknowledging differences, stations should be, "inclusive so that everyone can use them (including disabled people...), thereby going beyond the minimum standards set out in the Equality Act's public sector equality duty (2010)."¹
- 11) Further, RDG sees the franchise specification as an opportunity to develop a fully inclusive railway, with well-defined and appropriate interventions that support customers through their end to end journey, tailored to meet their specific needs. As such we along with the rail industry and are seeking to remove the "label" of accessibility by ensuring requirements for all customers are considered from the inception of all projects and programmes. The approach is guided by four key principles:
- a) A phased, improvement plan, clearly informed by insight;
 - b) 'Inclusive' design principles embedded in Digital, Retail, Ticketing, Fares & Information Strategies;
 - c) Close working and early collaboration with Key Stakeholders and Customer Groups; and
 - d) Clear evidence of both customer and demand benefits to support any required investment.
- 12) In terms of investment – beyond the investment necessary to bring rolling stock up to the required PRM–TSI standards – investment priorities should focus on:
- a) Improving the information related to how accessible station and on-train facilities are;
 - b) Shifting the dialogue towards how accessible journeys are, not stations;
 - c) Making it easier for customers to understand IF and HOW to travel;
 - d) Enhancing the ways through which assistance is booked and provided on the day, creating an 'end to end' chain of care throughout the customer's journey, not just at stations; and
 - e) Progressively increasing our provision of [Turn Up and Go](#), improving the ease with which customers can more simply turn up and board our trains and navigate our stations.
- 13) The specification of the South Eastern franchise, therefore, has the potential to begin a sea change in the way that accessibility and facilities provision is delivered, not just within and around stations but for the entire customer journey. RDG

¹ [Vision for Stations: Nine principles for the future of Britain's stations](#), RDG (October 2015), p13.

encourages the Department to work with industry to embed this approach.

Collaboration between the train operator and Network Rail

14) We support collaboration between infrastructure provider and the train operator. Further passenger benefits could potentially be unlocked on the South Eastern franchise, through the implementation of Digital Railway schemes, such as Traffic Management. This has the potential to assist in improving performance targets and creating additional capacity by optimising the network.

15) To do this, RDG supports greater alignment between track access agreements and Franchise Agreements, particularly where targets are concerned. This should be done in line with ORR's regulatory framework.

Summary

16) In conclusion, the RDG welcomes the approach taken by DfT to the South Eastern franchise. It is important that the customer is placed at the heart of the franchise specification. RDG has a range of resources which can be used to assist this such as our customer promises and The Customer Heartbeat™. We would encourage the use of our TVM guidelines and promote the idea of closer collaboration between the train operator and the infrastructure manager.

For enquiries regarding this consultation response, please contact:

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