

The Enterprise and Business Committee is undertaking an inquiry into the future of the Wales and Borders Rail Franchise.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are:

- What lessons can be learnt from the current franchise?
- What priorities can be identified to ensure that rail passenger services in Wales and the borders provide the best possible service for passengers from 2018?
- How can service delivery after 2018 deliver connectivity and value for money for passengers while reducing the burden on the tax payer?

Key issues

Issues that the Committee is considering as part of these terms of reference include:

- Whether the current franchise meets passenger needs and what lessons should be learnt from it;
- How passengers should be involved in the franchise development and delivery;
- How communities and local government / Regional Transport Consortia should be involved. Could they be involved in specifying the franchise or perhaps even in delivering services?
- The management model to be adopted, including the Welsh Government's proposal for a not-for-dividend franchise;
- How the franchise specification should improve the passenger experience, including issues such as franchise length, targets / incentives and the core service standards which should be included;
- The routes, particularly cross-border routes, which should be included;
- The rolling stock needed for the new franchise. What factors need to be considered and how this should be procured? Will new rolling stock be required?

- Whether additional lines, enhancements to existing lines, new stations or other infrastructure are needed; and
- Whether the franchise can support an enhanced relationship between Network Rail and the franchise operator and the benefits this might bring.

Invitation to contribute to the inquiry

The Committee welcomes responses from both individuals and organisations.

Generally, we ask for submissions to be made in writing because it is normal practice for us to publish evidence on our internet site so that it becomes part of the public record. However, we are also able to accept evidence in audio or video format.

The Committee welcomes contributions in English or Welsh and will consider responses to the inquiry and hold oral evidence sessions during the autumn term.

If you wish to submit evidence, please send an electronic copy of your submission to enterprise.committee@wales.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can write to:

Dr Siân Phipps
Clerk, Enterprise and Business Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay, CF99 1NA.

Submissions should arrive by **Friday 13 September 2013** and should preferably be no longer than four pages of A4, have numbered paragraphs and in a word format. It may not be possible to take into account responses received after this date.