

**TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP****EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****16 AUGUST 2018****CONSULTATIONS****REPORT BY SENIOR PARTNERSHIP MANAGER**

This report seeks approval of a proposed response to the Department for Transport consultation on Cross Country Passenger Rail Franchise.

**1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Executive Committee approves a proposed response to Department for Transport consultation on the Cross Country Passenger Rail Franchise, as detailed in Appendix A.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Department for Transport published public consultation on the [Cross Country Passenger Rail Franchise](#) on 7 June, with responses to be submitted by 30 August 2018.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 26 June 2018 the Partnership agreed to delegate authority to the Executive Committee to consider and approve a Tactran response to the Department for Transport consultation on the next Cross Country Passenger Rail Franchise for submission by the deadline of 30 June 2018 (Report RTP/18/25 refers).

**3 DISCUSSION**

- 3.1 The Cross Country franchise stretches from North East Scotland to Cornwall, Manchester to the south coast of England, and Wales to Stansted Airport and serves seven out of the ten major cities in Great Britain, helping grow the economy, by linking markets and people across the country. The franchise has seen continued growth with passenger numbers increasing year on year to 40 million in 2017/18. The majority of travellers on the Cross Country services are leisure travellers (64%), followed by commuters (23%) and business users (13%).
- 3.2 Cross Country rail franchise provides rail services connecting Scotland with West Midlands and South West England. North of Edinburgh there are 2 direct services per day to West Midlands and South West England in each direction, one starting/ending at Dundee and one starting/ending at Aberdeen. Services to/from Edinburgh are roughly hourly, with the majority of services being between Edinburgh and Plymouth, with Bristol being the next most

frequent start/end point and a few services starting/ending at Reading, Birmingham or York. Approximately half of the Edinburgh services also serve Glasgow.

- 3.3 The current Cross Country passenger rail franchise is due to end in December 2019 and the Department for Transport will be running a competition to select the next operator for the franchise.
- 3.4 The Cross Country Passenger Rail Franchise consultation seeks views on various aspects of the Cross Country passenger rail service which will inform the Department for Transport's 'ask' from potential operators when re-letting the franchise in 2019.

#### Summary of Tactran response

- 3.5 It is considered that Cross Country should be a long distance operator focussing on providing good quality direct long distance and inter-regional services, without the need to interchange. However, it is recognised that the Cross Country services currently also serves a significant role in providing for shorter commuter journeys at various points along the route.
- 3.6 Transport Focus research identifies that the need to interchange between services can be a significant deterrent to rail use. For long distance cross border travel this could lead to less sustainable modes, such as air travel being chosen or could lead to tourists to choose not to travel to the area with economic consequences.
- 3.7 The direct services from North of Edinburgh offer good direct connections between the Tactran area and West Midlands/Birmingham area and South West England/Bristol area and these direct services provide important business and tourism/leisure connections. The need for efficient and effective strategic long distance connections are highlighted within the Tay Cities Economic Strategy as being essential to unlocking the full economic potential of the region enabling easier access for tourists and businesses to access markets more easily.
- 3.8 The direct Cross Country services, combined with LNER East Coast and Caledonian Sleeper services providing cross border long distance connectivity are seen as essential to the region's economic prosperity.
- 3.9 Tactran therefore considers it important that the existing two services per day North of Edinburgh are maintained as a minimum service requirement for Cross Country franchise and consideration should be given to exploring whether this can be increased, possibly extending the Dundee – Plymouth service to Aberdeen and giving consideration to serving Stirling and Perth.

- 3.10 The consultation document identifies routes in and around Birmingham and between Exeter and Bristol as particularly suffering from overcrowding. However, the issue of overcrowding occurs in general where a the Cross Country service provides for both short distance commuting in morning or evening peaks as well as for long distance travellers.
- 3.11 It is recognised that as well as commuting journeys causing overcrowding, the Cross Country service is currently part of the solution by adding much needed passenger seating capacity for commuter journeys into major cities. Examples of this are the 06:32 Dundee to Plymouth service which arrives in Edinburgh at 08:09 the 06:42 Dundee to Aberdeen service arriving in Aberdeen at 07:58 – both these services provide much needed capacity for commuters to Edinburgh and Aberdeen.
- 3.12 If these services were rescheduled outside the peaks, other capacity provision would need to be provided for these commuters. Given that local commuter fleet tend to have fewer seats due to the number of carriages in comparison to the Cross Country fleet, it is likely that more services may be required to provide the same capacity and there may not be suitable paths for this.
- 3.13 Tactran would therefore only support retiming of these services if resources are provided to Scottish Government to provide the same peak time capacity into Edinburgh and Aberdeen through the ScotRail franchise and if this is technically feasible within the pathing constraints.
- 3.14 Tactran considers that the hourly services between Edinburgh and West Midlands and South West England should be maintained as a minimum. Currently the majority of these services serve Plymouth and Bristol. Tactran would be supportive of consideration being given to other destinations south of Birmingham. However, this would need to be evidence based regarding the demand for these destinations to/from Scotland.
- 3.15 Outside the Cross Country franchise, the intention to increase the frequency of the TransPennine Express service between Manchester and Edinburgh is welcomed and consideration should be given to extending some of these services to provide a direct connection North of Edinburgh to Manchester/Liverpool. Likewise consideration should be given to extending the West Coast Main Line north of Glasgow/Edinburgh to provide direct connections Carlisle, Crewe, Birmingham and Milton Keynes.
- 3.16 The Executive Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed Tactran response, as shown in Appendix A to allow submission by the deadline of 30 August 2018.
- 3.17 This consultation was discussed at the RTP Lead Officers meeting on 13 August 2018, when it was agreed that a joint RTPs response, supplementing individual RTP responses, will be submitted to the Department for Transport. At the time of writing this is the subject of ongoing discussion and development with the other RTPs.

## **4 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 Tactran officers have consulted with relevant Constituent Council officers, Transport Scotland and other RTPs in developing the Tactran response as detailed in Appendix A.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no resource implications arising directly from this report.

## **6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment and no major issues have been identified.

**Niall Gardiner**  
**Senior Partnership Manager**

Report prepared by Niall Gardiner. For further information e-mail [niallgardiner@tactran.gov.uk](mailto:niallgardiner@tactran.gov.uk) or tel.01738 475764.

### **NOTE**

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report.

Report to Partnership RTP/18/25, General Consultations, 26 June 2018

Cross Country Passenger Rail Franchise, Department for Transport, June 2018

**Cross Country Passenger Rail Franchise Public Consultation**

To Reduce crowding on current train services for Cross Rail Passengers.

**(1) What are the particular services, routes and times of day where you think crowding on Cross Country services needs to be addressed most urgently?**

It is considered that Cross Country should be a long distance operator focussing on providing good quality direct long distance and inter-regional services, without the need to interchange.

The consultation document identifies routes in and around Birmingham and between Exeter and Bristol as particularly suffering from overcrowding. However, the issue of overcrowding occurs in general where a the Cross Country service provides for both short distance commuting in morning or evening peaks as well as for long distance travellers.

It is recognised that as well as commuting journeys causing overcrowding, the cross country service is currently part of the solution by adding much needed passenger seating capacity for commuter journeys into major cities. Examples of this are the 06:32 Dundee to Plymouth service which arrives in Edinburgh at 08:09 the 06:42 Dundee to Aberdeen service arriving in Aberdeen at 07:58 – both these services provide much needed capacity for commuters to Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

If these services were rescheduled outside the peaks, other capacity provision would need to be provided for these commuters. Given that local commuter fleet tend to have fewer seats due to the number of carriages in comparison to the Cross Country fleet, it is likely that more services may be required to provide the same capacity and there may not be suitable paths for this.

Tactran would therefore only support retiming of these services if resources are provided to Scottish Government to provide the same peak time capacity into Edinburgh and Aberdeen through the ScotRail franchise and if this is technically feasible within the pathing constraints.

**(2) Which of the following potential measures do you think could overcome crowding caused by short distance commuters using long distance Cross Country trains, assuming that suitable alternative services are available?**

Removing calls from towns closest to the conurbation centre either completely or just at peak times.

Yes or No? Yes

Retaining calls at such stations but restricting them to pickup/set down only?

Yes or No? No

Removing the validity of multi-modal tickets on long distance trains?

Yes or No? No

Other:

Removing calls from towns closest to the conurbation centre either completely or just at peak times could potentially overcome overcrowding in particular circumstances. However, it is recognised that as well as commuting journeys causing overcrowding, the Cross Country service is currently part of the solution by adding much needed passenger seating capacity for commuter journeys into major cities.

If Cross Country services were to be rescheduled outside the peaks, other capacity provision would need to be provided for these commuters. Given that local commuter services tend to have fewer seats due to the number of carriages in comparison to the Cross Country fleet, it is likely that more services may be required to provide the same capacity and there may not be suitable paths for this.

Retaining calls at stations but restricting to pick up/set down only or removing the validity of multi-modal tickets are not supported as these would be too difficult to manage and be confusing to passengers.

Provide specific instances where these may be applicable.

No specific instances given.

To improve the service pattern and network to offer journeys that better meet your needs

**(3) Rank the following in order of priority for improvement for your future Cross Country services. Rank 1 for most important to 6 for least important.**

more additional summer only services	6
later times of last trains	4
more frequent weekend services	2
earlier Sunday morning services	5
earlier times of first trains	3
more frequent weekday services	1

Which routes and stations and why?

Aberdeen/Dundee to/from West Midlands/South West England

More frequent direct services without the need to interchange at Edinburgh would provide better connections to West Midlands and South West England. Given the significant leisure use this would be applicable 7 days per week.

Scotland to/from South West England.

An earlier start and later finish on the route would give better access between

Scotland and major conurbations in West Midlands and South West England by providing an earlier arrival and later departure at the destination, thus providing a more useful day.

**(4) If it were possible would you agree with transferring these local routes to the West Midlands franchise:**

	Yes	No
Birmingham to Nottingham	X	
Birmingham to Leicester	X	

Why?

It is considered that Cross Country should be a long distance operator focussing on providing good quality direct long distance and inter-regional services, without the need to interchange. If these routes can be covered fully within another franchise, without the need for passengers to interchange between services during their journey, consideration should be given to transferring.

Would you like to see any other routes or stations transferred to or from the Cross Country franchise?

Yes	X
No	

Which routes and stations and why?

If there are other franchises which wholly cover the end to end journey of the particular route, then consideration should be given to transferring these local routes. It is considered that Cross Country should be a long distance operator focussing on providing good quality direct long distance and inter-regional services, without the need to interchange.

**(5) If the network was unable to cope with all the service enhancement aspirations north of Northallerton on the East Coast mainline, would a:**

curtailment of one of the existing Cross Country services be acceptable (with the resources redeployed to enhance other existing or new routes)?

	Yes	No
curtailment of one of the existing Cross Country services be acceptable (with the resources redeployed to enhance other existing or new routes)?		X
diversion of one of the existing Cross Country services be acceptable (with the resources redeployed to enhance other existing or new routes)?		X

diversion of one of the existing Cross Country services be acceptable (with the resources redeployed to enhance other existing or new routes)?

Why / why not?

It is considered that the one train per hour Cross Country service between Scotland and South West England needs to be maintained as a minimum. The proposed

increase in TransPennine services between Edinburgh and Manchester from every two hours to hourly is welcomed. It is also considered that the current two trains per hour LNER Edinburgh to London service is the minimum frequency that needs to be maintained. Consideration should be given to bi-mode longer trains (9 carriage) to provided additional capacity. If there are any service curtailments required this should not be on cross border Scotland to England services.

**(6) Should bidders be given flexibility to make limited changes to the extremities to the network so that benefits such as reduced crowding in the centre of the network can be provided?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes, but only if alternative services are provided by other operators
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Comments:

Bidders should be given limited flexibility to consider changes to the timing of services, but only if alternative services can be provided. The North of Edinburgh Cross Country service adds much needed passenger seating capacity for commuter journeys into Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh. If these services were rescheduled outside the peaks, other capacity provision would need to be provided for these commuters. Given that local commuter services tend to have fewer seats due to the number of carriages in comparison to the Cross Country fleet, it is likely that more services may be required to provide the same capacity and there may not be suitable paths for this.

It is considered that Cross Country should be a long distance operator focussing on providing good quality direct long distance and inter-regional services, without the need to interchange. As such dividing the network into “core” and “extremity” is unhelpful and counter to the long distance purpose of the Cross Country franchise.

The direct services between Scotland and West Midlands and South West England, including North of Edinburgh route, provides a sustainable alternative to domestic aviation. Transport Focus research identifies that the need to interchange between services can be a significant deterrent to rail use. It is therefore important the direct rail services from North of Edinburgh to West Midlands and South West England are maintained as a minimum and increased, if possible.

The direct services from North of Edinburgh offer good direct connections between the Tactran area and West Midlands/Birmingham area and South West England/Bristol area and these direct services provide important business and tourism/leisure connections.

The need for efficient and effective strategic long distance connections are highlighted within the Tay Cities Economic Strategy as being essential to unlocking the full economic potential of the region enabling easier access for tourists and businesses to access markets more easily. Tourism is one of Tay Cities major industries with an estimated 1,580 businesses in the Tay Cities economic region (12% of Scotland’s total) and 22,000 people working in the tourism industry,



approximately 11% of all jobs in the area. Major tourism investment is underway, planned or in the pipeline, including most notably the V&A Dundee which is projected to attract 270-300,000 visits per annum and together with the region's inherent strengths, will provide strong foundations to increase the sector's impact and contribute to the target in growing the value of tourism to Scotland's economy (growing visitor spend by £1bn from £4.5bn to £5.5bn by 2020).

**(7) Do you agree that the current level of Cross Country services to the following routes are the minimum that must be specified for:**

	Yes	No
West of Plymouth to Penzance?		
Exeter to Paignton?		
Newton Abbot to Paignton?		
North of Edinburgh to Aberdeen?	Yes	
Southampton to Bournemouth?		
Guildford?		
Bath?		
Cardiff to Bristol Temple Meads?		

Do you agree that the changes to the following routes would be acceptable if a similar or improved service was provided by another operator:

	Yes	No
West of Plymouth to Penzance?		
Exeter to Paignton?		
Newton Abbot to Paignton?		
North of Edinburgh to Aberdeen?	Yes	
Southampton to Bournemouth?		
Guildford?		
Bath?		
Cardiff to Bristol Temple Meads?		

The North of Edinburgh route currently provides for both commuter and long distance passengers. Consideration to retiming the Cross Country service should only be made where alternative resources and services are provided for commuters and it is feasibly possible to provide the same passenger carrying capacity.

**(8) Do you think the department's minimum specification should preserve exactly the existing pattern of services and station calls rather than offer an opportunity to change?**

	Yes
X	No

## Comments:

Overall there should be a minimum, maybe expressed as a minimum frequency between stations. However regarding specifying routes such as North of Edinburgh, where there are only few services per day, a minimum number of services and time of day should be specified to ensure the service provides a meaningful and useful long distance service.

Where currently the North of Edinburgh route provides for both commuter and long distance passengers, consideration to retiming the Cross Country service should only be made where alternative resources and services are provided for commuters and it is feasibly possible to provide the same passenger carrying capacity.

**(9) Should bidders have some flexibility to make fewer calls at some stations, for example if that enabled them to accelerate services?**

X	Yes
	No

On what routes could this be introduced?

Further information would be required to make an informed decision on this. Fewer calls at stations will not necessarily accelerate services as there are other timetable and infrastructure considerations that may not permit this.

**(10) Should the minimum specification have the number of trains from each station to Birmingham but give bidders the flexibility to decide where the trains go after Birmingham?**

X	Yes
	No

**(11) Are there stations beyond the geography of the Cross Country network that should receive calls that they currently do not receive (include examples and supporting evidence)?**

In addition to the current North of Edinburgh services to Dundee and Aberdeen, consideration could be given to extending services North of Edinburgh to Stirling, Perth and Inverness where rail capacity exists. This would enable the Cross Country franchise to provide a direct service connecting all of Scotland's cities to West Midlands and South West England.

Outside the Cross Country franchise, the intention to increase the frequency of the TransPennine Express service between Manchester and Edinburgh is welcomed and consideration should be given to extending some of these services to provide a direct connection North of Edinburgh to Manchester/Liverpool. Likewise consideration should be given to extending the West Coast Main Line north of Glasgow/Edinburgh to provide direct connections Carlisle, Crewe, Birmingham and Milton Keynes.

**(12) Are there stations within the geography of the Cross Country network that should receive calls that they currently do not receive (include examples and supporting evidence)?**

Maintaining the current stations served in Tactran area (Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose) is considered suitable.

Tactran considers that the hourly services between Edinburgh and West Midlands and South West England should be maintained as a minimum. Currently the majority of these services serve Plymouth and Bristol. Tactran would be supportive of consideration being given to other destinations south of Birmingham, such as Oxford, Reading, Southampton and Cardiff. However, this would need to be evidence based regarding the demand for these destinations to/from Scotland.

To improve and simplify fares and ticketing

**(13) What changes would you like to see to the way Cross Country currently sells and provides tickets?**

It is agreed that passengers should be provided with widespread and easy access to a full range of tickets and that they have all the information required to select and purchase the most appropriate ticket. All methods of payment should be available. A consistency of offer should be provided between franchises, such as ScotRail "Kids go Free" being able to be used on all franchise services in Scotland.

**(14) What changes would you like to see to the current Cross Country current fares structure?**

Ticket pricing should be incentivised to encourage off peak use for long distance journeys.

**(15) What changes would you like to see to the Advanced Purchase on the day (APOD) system?**

APOD providing access to cheaper advanced fares up to 10 minutes before departure is welcomed. However, by allocating a seat to these purchases it does give difficulty for other passengers already on the train knowing whether a seat has been reserved or not. Perhaps APOD could provide access to low cost fares without reserving a specific seat. As stated later in the document the operator could be encouraged to develop ideas to 'segregate' passenger and one option could be that APOD are intelligently allocated a carriage, rather than a seat.

To improve access, information and making connections

**(16) What additional information would be useful to you when planning your journeys or making connections onto other services?**

As noted in the consultation document, Transport Focus has undertaken research that shows the top ten passengers priorities. The franchise should look to maximise these priorities.

How would you like the information communicated to you?

As noted in the consultation document, Transport Focus has undertaken research that shows the top ten passengers priorities. The franchise should look to maximise these priorities.

**(17) How could the way in which Cross Country deals with your complaints and provides compensation to you be improved?**

Information on how to make complaints must be clear, easy and readily available for the passengers and staff must be trained in dealing with these efficiently.

**(18) What more could be done to improve access and provide facilities for those with disabilities or additional needs?**

As noted in the consultation document, Cross Country does not manage any stations, with station management undertaken by ScotRail or directly by Network Rail at stations in Scotland. The Cross Country operator should be required to work with the station management company to ensure improved access and facilities for those with disabilities or additional needs.

It is agreed that franchise bidders should consider solutions to improve access and interchange for people with accessibility needs; improve passenger assistance systems and offer better and accessible connections with other forms of transport.

**(19) How do you believe Cross Country staff could be more effective in providing service and assistance that passengers need on a modern railway network?**

Passengers value the presence of staff on-board and at stations. Currently Cross Country staff members are fairly anonymous at stations compared to other franchises and their presence at stations should be increased to be more visible. Staff should be trained to provide information and be present to guide and reassure passengers.

**(20) What comment do you have on improving the overall passenger experience before, during and after the journey?**

The passenger should be suitably informed throughout the journey to have confidence in the journey they are making and for onward connection.

Prior to making the journey, as well as timetable and fare information, the franchise bidder should be asked to consider methods of providing information on crowding and availability of seats.

At the station clear and concise wayfinding should be provided, as well as real time information train times.

On-board there should be clear information given on any delays and the effect this may have on onwards journeys and how to access onward connections. In addition staff should be trained and informed to provide information and, for example direct passengers to suitable seating.

At destination station, clear and concise wayfinding and information on onward connections to all modes to make interchange as easy as possible.

#### To improve the on-board experience

#### **(21) Rank your priorities for improvement to the carriage layout for local trains on Cross Country? Rank 1 for most important to 7 for least important.**

More seats	<input type="text" value="1"/>
More table seats as opposed to 'airline' seats	<input type="text" value="6"/>
More comfortable room for short distance standing	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Cycle storage	<input type="text" value="4"/>
Seats that align with windows	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Greater leg-room	<input type="text" value="7"/>
Extra room for luggage	<input type="text" value="2"/>

#### **(22) Rank your priorities for improvement to the carriage layout for long distance inter-city Cross Country trains? Rank 1 for most important to 7 for least important.**

More seats	<input type="text" value="1"/>
More table seats as opposed to 'airline' seats	<input type="text" value="4"/>
More comfortable room for short distance standing	<input type="text" value="7"/>
Cycle storage	<input type="text" value="3"/>
Seats that align with windows	<input type="text" value="6"/>
Greater leg-room	<input type="text" value="5"/>
Extra room for luggage	<input type="text" value="2"/>

Where and when do you think these facilities are most required?

It is considered that Cross Country should be a long distance operator focussing on providing good quality direct long distance and inter-regional services and as such the carriage layout should be designed more for the long distance passenger. However, if more seats could be provided this may reduce the overcrowding at peak times.

Consideration could be given to utilising two types of carriages – one catering for shorter journeys and one for longer - and an intelligent booking system used to allocate passengers to seats in the appropriate carriage depending on their journey length.

Increasing cycle storage capacity on rolling stock and easier access both on train and when booking for people with bikes to support and encourage inter-modal travel and tourism, is supported.

### **(23) What other comments or suggestions do you have about the on-board experience?**

The standard of catering is poor, particularly north of Edinburgh where it is curtailed, and this needs to improve. Other requirements valued are provision of power points and free wifi.

### **(24) Which initiatives would you suggest to try to reduce the disturbance caused by the 'churn' of passengers alighting and boarding at frequent station calls?**

The potential approach for the operator to develop ideas to 'segregate' passengers according to the distance they travel through intelligent allocation of seat reservations is supported and considered worthwhile exploring. This could allow different carriages for short journeys and long journeys, potentially increasing the seating capacity of the service.

### Stakeholder Engagement and Community Rail Partnerships

### **(25) Are there any improvements to the level stakeholder engagement by Cross Country that you would like to see and how could stakeholder engagement be improved?**

Tactran would welcome direct engagement regarding the Cross Country Passenger Franchise.

### **(26) Does Cross Country provide a sufficient level of support to relevant Community Rail partnerships in your experience?**

N/A	Yes
N/A	No

**(26) Has their support improved in the last year to 18 months?**

N/A	Yes
N/A	No

**(27) Provide ideas on what more you feel the franchise could do to help the relevant Community Rail partnerships?**

Transport Scotland, ScotRail and Regional Transport Partnerships work closely to develop and advise Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) in Scotland. Where Cross Country Passenger services provide services to stations within a given CRP it would be expected that the operator would engage with the CRP.

**(28) Do you have any other views on how the future Cross Country franchise could be improved that have not been captured in the questions above?**

It is considered that Cross Country should be a long distance operator focussing on providing good quality direct long distance and inter-regional services, without the need to interchange. However, it is recognised that the Cross Country services currently also serves a significant role in providing for shorter commuter journeys at various points along the route.

Transport Focus research identifies that the need to interchange between services can be a significant deterrent to rail use. For long distance cross border travel this could lead to less sustainable modes, such as air travel being chosen or could lead to tourists to choose not to travel to the area with economic consequences.

The direct services from North of Edinburgh offer good direct connections between the Tactran area and West Midlands/Birmingham area and South West England/Bristol area and these direct services provide important business and tourism/leisure connections. The need for efficient and effective strategic long distance connections are highlighted within the Tay Cities Economic Strategy as being essential to unlocking the full economic potential of the region enabling easier access for tourists and businesses to access markets more easily.

The direct Cross Country services, combined with LNER East Coast and Caledonian Sleeper services providing cross border long distance connectivity are seen as essential to the region's economic prosperity.

Tactran therefore considers it important that the existing two services per day North of Edinburgh are maintained as a minimum service requirement for Cross Country franchise and consideration should be given to exploring whether this can be increased, possibly extending the Dundee – Plymouth service to Aberdeen and giving consideration to serving Stirling and Perth.

The consultation document identifies routes in and around Birmingham and between Exeter and Bristol as particularly suffering from overcrowding. However, the issue of

overcrowding occurs in general where a the Cross Country service provides for both short distance commuting in morning or evening peaks as well as for long distance travellers.

It is recognised that as well as commuting journeys causing overcrowding, the Cross Country service is currently part of the solution by adding much needed passenger seating capacity for commuter journeys into major cities. Examples of this are the 06:32 Dundee to Plymouth service which arrives in Edinburgh at 08:09 the 06:42 Dundee to Aberdeen service arriving in Aberdeen at 07:58 – both these services provide much needed capacity for commuters to Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

If these services were rescheduled outside the peaks, other capacity provision would need to be provided for these commuters. Given that local commuter fleet tend to have fewer seats due to the number of carriages in comparison to the Cross Country fleet, it is likely that more services may be required to provide the same capacity and there may not be suitable paths for this.

Tactran would therefore only support retiming of these services if resources are provided to Scottish Government to provide the same peak time capacity into Edinburgh and Aberdeen through the ScotRail franchise and if this is technically feasible within the pathing constraints.

Tactran considers that the hourly services between Edinburgh and West Midlands and South West England should be maintained as a minimum. Currently the majority of these services serve Plymouth and Bristol. Tactran would be supportive of consideration being given to other destinations south of Birmingham. However, this would need to be evidence based regarding the demand for these destinations to/from Scotland.

Outside the Cross Country franchise, the intention to increase the frequency of the TransPennine Express service between Manchester and Edinburgh is welcomed and consideration should be given to extending some of these services to provide a direct connection North of Edinburgh to Manchester/Liverpool. Likewise consideration should be given to extending the West Coast Main Line north of Glasgow/Edinburgh to provide direct connections Carlisle, Crewe, Birmingham and Milton Keynes.