

**WCML Track Access Rights
Consultation Document
August 2011**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alliance Rail Holdings (Alliance) is a Company established to provide new direct rail services between many northern towns and cities, whilst also offering direct links to London, both through Euston and Kings Cross.

This document is issued alongside an application by Alliance to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) to secure capacity for train services on the West Coast Main Line (WCML). During the past year Alliance and Network Rail have worked closely together to identify capacity to allow Alliance's services to operate. The culmination of this work will be:

- A new Inter-City service from London Euston to northern towns and cities including Huddersfield, Rochdale, Halifax, Blackpool, Barrow-in-Furness, Bradford and Leeds.
- New journey opportunities between Cumbria , West Yorkshire and Lancashire to Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire.
- Operation of up to 60 trains on a weekday.
- Services due to commence from December 2013.
- Services will use new 125 mph bi-mode tilting trains.
- Investment of over £200 million in trains, depots and stations.

The process Alliance and Network Rail are undertaking to secure capacity on the WCML is detailed within this document, and began in 2010.



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose

Alliance has proposed a new Inter-City rail service to link towns and cities in Northern England with London.

The introduction of significant private investment to bring direct Inter-City rail services to many new areas is in line with the Government's aim of providing wider economic benefits to the North of England in particular, and has been warmly welcomed by many bodies. It will help pave the way for the further benefits to be realised with the proposed building of HS2 from 2026.

The Government is looking to the private sector to lead the recovery, and the introduction of Alliance's services will provide a real and tangible economic stimulus to the many new markets to be served, whilst also creating a significant number of new skilled and permanent jobs. In total the transport economic benefits derived by the introduction of Alliance services is over £0.66 billion with the wider economic benefits valued at over £3.5 billion. In addition the introduction of new services brings some competition to the WCML, a proven driver of quality and innovation.

This consultation document outlines the proposed service groups, the types of trains to be introduced and the timescales for their introduction, and the level of investment planned.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Previous application

Alliance submitted an application under Section 17 of the Railways Act to the ORR on 28 October 2010 following a significant period of development with Network Rail on an emerging WCML timetable. The application was made against a background of competitive applications from the Department for Transport (DfT), London Midland and Grand Central. Only the Alliance and DfT applications proposed operating trains capable of running at the enhanced permissible maximum line speed (EPS).

Alliance welcomed the interest shown by a large number of WCML stakeholders, and the detail included in their responses to the original Section 17 application. The majority of the points raised by all respondents were then addressed via consultation and a copy of Alliance's response is available on the ORR and Alliance websites. In a few areas Alliance has now modified its plans in the light of comments made.

The ORR invited unsuccessful applicants to re-engage in the process and Alliance has held meetings with the ORR to indicate its intention of re-applying for rights. This has been followed by a number of further positive meetings with Network Rail seeking to identify additional capacity that could be revealed within the current WCML timetable. This application is the culmination of the capacity modelling undertaken by Alliance.



3.2 Development

It is the view of both Network Rail and Alliance that a number of additional paths are available within the current timetable, and that the situation will improve with the changes proposed from December 2013, which will also include less prescriptive access rights for the Inter-City West Coast (ICWC) franchise operator. The ORR's decision in March 2011 gave quantum rights to the ICWC franchise for the number of services that would be expected to utilise the available rolling stock.

It is extremely important for the industry that any proposals for additional services should be considered fully and at the correct time in the context of both the timetabling work to be undertaken and also the re-franchising of the WCML. With Alliance proposing the introduction of a new fleet of high speed trains, along with the associated maintenance facilities, then working within a prescribed time-frame should ensure a clear output from the process to enable all track access parties to plan their business with a reasonable degree of assurance.

Alliance is aware that applications for open access services give rise to a degree of hostility from parts of the industry. In the past this has usually been in relation to the access charges levied, competition, and the perceived effect on an operator's ability to plan its future business.

The issue of access charges for open access operators has been challenged previously, resulting in a High Court decision in 2006 where the arrangements and charging regime for open access services (as determined by the ORR) were confirmed.

The competitive element of applications is addressed through the ORR's processes as outlined in the *Criteria and Procedures* and *Moderation of Competition* documents which are available at the ORR website.

The timing of this application is to ensure that the WCML franchised operator has a clear picture of possible competing services prior to engaging in a formal agreement with the DfT.



4. PROPOSAL

4.1 Objectives

Alliance has developed its WCML timetable proposals to meet a number of different objectives. These include:

- ✎ Providing regular services to a number of northern towns and cities that do not currently have through trains to London.
- ✎ Providing improved connectivity between them.
- ✎ Promoting economic growth in areas that would benefit from regeneration.
- ✎ Encouraging people to switch from road to rail, especially for longer journeys.
- ✎ Setting a high standard for the quality of train services.
- ✎ Providing a limited amount of competition to existing operators on the proposed routes.
- ✎ Making best use of capacity on the proposed routes.
- ✎ Meeting industry-wide objectives as identified in Route Utilisation Strategies (RUS).
- ✎ Providing a suitable return on the investment.

The timetable and any initial rights granted as a result of the application are not planned to be used for operational train services, and as a result are initially only sought for 5 years. The actual rights for service operation will be sought by way of a further application following the WCML Events Steering Group (WCESG)¹ output, and when more precise details of the rolling stock to be used can be provided.

4.2 Routes

Alliance is proposing to operate new services on the following routes:

- ✎ Leeds to London (Euston) via Stockport every 2 hours.
- ✎ Bradford to London (Euston) via Rochdale and Warrington every 2 hours.
- ✎ Blackpool to London (Euston) - 5 services per day.
- ✎ Cumbrian Coast to London (Euston) - 3 services per day.

As far as possible, the services to and from Bradford and Leeds will run in alternate hours to provide an hourly service between Euston and West Yorkshire. On the other routes, the aim is to provide a two-hourly service between Euston and Preston extended to either Blackpool or the Cumbrian Coast. In total, Alliance plans to run almost 50 trains per weekday to or from London on the routes above, with another 10 trains making shorter journeys at the start and end of the day. Saturdays and Sundays would see a slightly reduced service.

Target journey times to London include Huddersfield in 2h 40m, Blackpool North in 2h 55m, Rochdale in 2h 45m and Barrow-in-Furness in 3h 45m.

¹ Discussed further in section 4.5.



4.3 Route map



4.4 Stations to be served

Excluding London, a population of over 5 million will benefit from the introduction of these services. Some stations will have direct links to London for the first time in many years.

Alliance has revised its list of stations to be served in the light of consultation responses from the previous application. It has also taken account of issues arising from timetabling work, from gaps identified in the WCML and Northern RUSs and re-examination of the business case.

Calls at Kings Langley cannot be made in the existing timetable without compromising line capacity. Milton Keynes is proposed as an alternative because there is an additional platform which can be used to allow other trains to overtake where necessary. This also addresses a gap identified in the WCML RUS regarding connectivity between Milton Keynes to London and locations in the north-west.

Currently it would be difficult to call at Guide Bridge, at least until Northern Hub proposals are implemented. As a result Alliance proposes to call at Stalybridge instead. Capacity is available there because the track layout will be improved during autumn 2012 to provide two additional platforms.

Timetabling work has confirmed that it may be necessary for some Alliance trains in both directions to be overtaken by franchise trains. One key location where this is required is Rugby. Subject to re-examination of the revenue case, Alliance therefore proposes to make occasional calls at Rugby. On similar grounds, it became apparent that most trains that call at Tamworth could also call at Lichfield Trent Valley without affecting overall journey times or compromising capacity.

Alliance proposes to call all Bradford, Blackpool and Carlisle trains at Warrington Bank Quay. In some cases this will replace the stop at Crewe, where platform capacity is at a premium. Calling at Warrington could allow the franchise to speed up some London to Glasgow trains by omitting the call. It will also address a peak-time passenger capacity gap between Warrington and Manchester.

At peak times, capacity on the route between Stockport and Crewe is also scarce. Alliance therefore proposes to run via, and call at Macclesfield as an alternative to Alderley Edge, which will also offer diversionary route knowledge.

Representations from various groups and individuals have resulted in reconsidering calling patterns for the Calder Valley, Fylde and Cumbrian Coast. Alliance has decided to apply for optional calls at Todmorden, Poulton-le-Fylde and Millom, in addition to those previously considered.



4.5 Identifying spare capacity

The ORR decision in March 2011 gave the current ICWC franchise holder quantum rights to continue and slightly expand the current level of service to enable it to use its entire fleet of rolling stock. At the same time the track access contract (for ICWC) was to become more flexible to prevent ossification of the timetable pending decisions on both the new franchise, and also potential additional operators.

The ORR also asked Network Rail to develop a series of revised timetables for the WCML starting with the December 2013 timetable, based on these rights. Alliance cannot apply directly for paths in this timetable, because the detail has not been developed. However, both the ORR and Network Rail agree that there is spare capacity on the WCML. Work carried out by Network Rail in June 2010 identified capacity for a number of additional off-peak paths. Since then Alliance has worked with Network Rail to revise these paths and identify some additional ones, including in the peaks. The WCML RUS also identified at least one morning peak path into Euston that could be available for a 125 mph train.

In order to confirm this spare capacity, and probably reveal more, and to make best use of the WCML infrastructure, Network Rail will convene and lead a WCML Events Steering Group (WCESG) starting at the end of 2011.

To determine what capacity is available now – and therefore as a minimum for December 2013 – Alliance has worked closely with Network Rail train planners to identify suitable train paths, and to identify some of the bottlenecks or other issues that restrict the number of paths available. This work has been carried out against the background of the December 2011 timetable, and its associated planning rules, and alongside existing track access rights for all operators.

These services are predominantly on the West Yorkshire routes. This theoretical timetable will not be implemented as it is, but Alliance will use this work as a basis for discussions within the WCESG if the application is successful.

Alliance has therefore chosen to seek only quantum access rights at this stage – specifying a number of services on each route, without constraints that could restrict further development of the timetable. This way forward has been chosen to help avoid the drawn out and continuing problems that beset the East Coast Mainline (ECML) timetable during 2008 and 2009.

If the application is successful, Alliance will have rights to a number of paths that it would seek to develop within the WCESG to make the best use of the capacity. This should then lead to an evolving timetable with which Alliance would be prepared to confirm investment in its new fleet of trains and seek a revised contract with Network Rail under a further application.

An hourly path (for most hours) has been developed for this purpose, with the main service to be provided to and from West Yorkshire. However Alliance also has aspirations to serve Blackpool and the Cumbrian Coast, and further timetable work is continuing to develop those additional paths needed to complete the WCML 'network' that Alliance is seeking to introduce.



4.6 New trains

Unlike other previous open access applications, Alliance proposes to run with new trains from the start. These trains will be capable of operating at a speed of at least 125 mph on the WCML where they will operate under electric traction. These will be tilting trains in order to take advantage of the enhanced permissible speed limits (EPS) on the WCML.

Away from the electrified route, the top speed will be no less than 100 mph, using diesel traction. Currently, the highest speed limit on any of the proposed Alliance routes away from the WCML is 85 mph.

Alliance will operate trains initially with six passenger vehicles, offering over 300 seats including both first and standard class accommodation.

To operate the proposed service in full, Alliance expects to operate a fleet of 17 of these trains. Current plans involve maintaining the vehicles at an existing depot in Crewe, with just under half the fleet stabled elsewhere overnight.

Alliance has prepared a business specification for these trains and is continuing discussions with a number of potential suppliers who are capable of offering suitable rolling stock.



4.7 Performance

Alliance and Network Rail recognise that actual performance of the network is important. Alliance has been discussing performance issues with Network Rail General Managers and others, and arising from these discussions, Alliance has started to develop a performance strategy. This will address such issues as contingency plans, drivers' knowledge of diversionary routes, the use of diesel traction when there are power supply problems, and the ability to couple with other operators' trains in an emergency.

Alliance and Network Rail have agreed that it would not serve any purpose to undertake performance modelling of the theoretical timetable developed at this time. However, it is expected that full performance analysis will be undertaken on all the paths, including Alliance's, which will be developed as part of the WCESG's work.

Alliance is happy to discuss performance issues in more detail with all other operators to examine strategies for dealing with incidents and delays.



4.8 Timescales

Alliance expects to commence operations during the timetable that will be introduced in December 2013. The precise timing depends both on lead times for the delivery of new trains, and on the outcome of the WCESG study.

Alliance is seeking only a 5 year contract at this stage, as it does not wish to restrict further development of the WCML timetable as new infrastructure is delivered both on and off the WCML itself. Examples of such schemes are the Northern Hub project and the Norton Bridge (Stafford) avoiding line.

Following output from the WCESG, and once precise details of the characteristics of the new trains are known, Alliance will seek rights in proportion to the level of investment proposed, in line with the ORR's criteria on longer term track access contracts.

4.9 Aligning with rail industry objectives

As well as developing its own plans, Alliance is keen to contribute to the development of the rail industry. Alliance has played an active part in development of recent Route Utilisation Strategies, principally the WCML RUS and the Northern RUS.

Each RUS identifies, and attempts to find solutions for, a number of gaps. These gaps include such issues as shortage of passenger capacity, poor journey times or connectivity, train frequency and the use of infrastructure.

Alliance is proposing services that have been modified specifically to address the following gaps:

- ✦ Overcrowding on peak services between Northampton/Milton Keynes and Euston. The solution identified by the RUS requires a train of up to 8 vehicles operating at 125 mph between Milton Keynes and London. Alliance can provide services in each of the morning and evening peaks between Euston and Milton Keynes.
- ✦ Connectivity between Milton Keynes and the North West. The solution envisaged a semi-fast service between Milton Keynes and Warrington, Wigan and Preston. Alliance can address this with a service approximately every two hours, at least to Warrington.
- ✦ Slow journey times from Euston to Glasgow. By providing new station calls south of Preston, Alliance could enable the franchise holder to eliminate some stops in the Glasgow service.
- ✦ Shortage of peak capacity, especially in the morning peak,
 - ✦ Huddersfield to Leeds.
 - ✦ Rochdale to Manchester.
 - ✦ Warrington to Manchester.

Alliance can provide significant additional capacity on each of these routes, mainly by using trains which will then return to provide a London service. Using the marginal time for these trains means that public sector investment in additional trains specifically for the peaks can be avoided.



5. BUSINESS PLAN

5.1 Business case

The full Business Plan to support the initial application has been provided to the ORR. The business case shows that the proposal is not primarily abstractive (as defined by the ORR's criteria) and will provide a suitable return to support the level of investment required. The investment planned is over £200 million in a fleet of 17 new 6 (passenger) car 125 mph tilting bi-mode trains - £10 million in the creation of a new servicing depot at Crewe - £4.8 million in recruiting and training the workforce from scratch (including train-crew) - and £5.5 million in improvements at a number of identified stations along the route. This would include, as an example, an upgrade at Eccles to provide a new concourse, ticket office, covered access, toilets, heated waiting areas and the installation of passenger lifts. It is expected that this model, once agreed could be rolled out to other stations requiring upgrade and/or improved facilities.

In respect of whether Alliance's proposals offer value for money, we would expect that the ORR will be in a position to make this judgment based on the information supplied.

Alliance welcomes the support for the case for trains to operate between Euston and Blackpool. Both TPE and Passenger Focus believe that the service will help to stimulate demand and promote regeneration in the area, presumably through the provision of through trains to London. Alliance agrees with this analysis which is supported by its development work, and has presented its case to the ORR.

Clearly then, the same argument applies to Rochdale, Barrow-in-Furness and Huddersfield for example, as none of these currently has a direct service to London. Indeed Rochdale doesn't even enjoy the option of a single interchange into a service to London, except a limited number via Bradford. Alliance's view, supported by its Business Plan is that these locations are just as deserving of direct services to London as Blackpool is.

The Business Plan is constantly updated to reflect changing service patterns and costs.



5.2 Revenue development and modelling

Alliance asked AECOM to assist them in producing the demand and revenue case to support their ongoing scheme development. This work fed into the Business Plan and contributed to the shaping of the final proposal submitted to the ORR.

The importance of developing a model that followed industry best practice and used industry-recognised tools as the basis for estimating demand and revenue was acknowledged in order to maximise the credibility of the scheme with industry stakeholders and the ORR.

The development of a modelling process to estimate the demand and revenue associated with the scheme required a number of considerations to be met. Firstly, the results needed to be robust and reliable to provide the Alliance Board, and its parent company, with the necessary assurance that the business case for the planned services is sound. Secondly, the demand and revenue estimates produced by the model form one of the key inputs to support Alliance's negotiations with rail industry stakeholders, in particular with the ORR.

The forecasts have therefore been based upon using the same methodology as undertaken by AECOM when preparing and submitting previous successful open access applications.

The ORR has indicated that the proposals put forward by Alliance are not primarily abstractive.

A revenue risk analysis has also been undertaken to determine the potential variation around the core results, taking into account possible variations in macro-economic variables into the future (e.g.: changes in GDP forecasts, etc.). This found that there was potential upside variation to circa +20% and downside variation to circa -10% through to 2026. In addition, in order to provide further confidence in the results, an alternative demand forecasting methodology was used to estimate demand on the key Alliance flows. This produced forecast demand and revenue that was within 5% of that forecast by the core modelling process.

In its statement on "*Moderation of Competition – Final Conclusions*", the ORR has set out a process for determining the economic aspects of track access applications for open access services. This has subsequently been supplemented by a further stage relating to the relative benefits of competing applications for the use of the same infrastructure. In essence, applicants need to demonstrate:

- The proposed service will be financially viable, so that the operator will continue to run it and the allocated paths will be utilised.
- The new service is not primarily abstractive from existing services.
- Capacity is, or will be available to allow the proposed services to operate.
- If more than one operator is seeking to utilise the same capacity, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the proposed service makes the best use of the available capacity.

Clearly there are interactions between these requirements. For example, a service with a high level of generated revenue would pass the not primarily abstractive test relatively easily, but could be seen as being relatively risky in terms of its overall financial viability. It is therefore often necessary to seek to demonstrate an appropriate balance between the criteria.



5.3 Fares structure

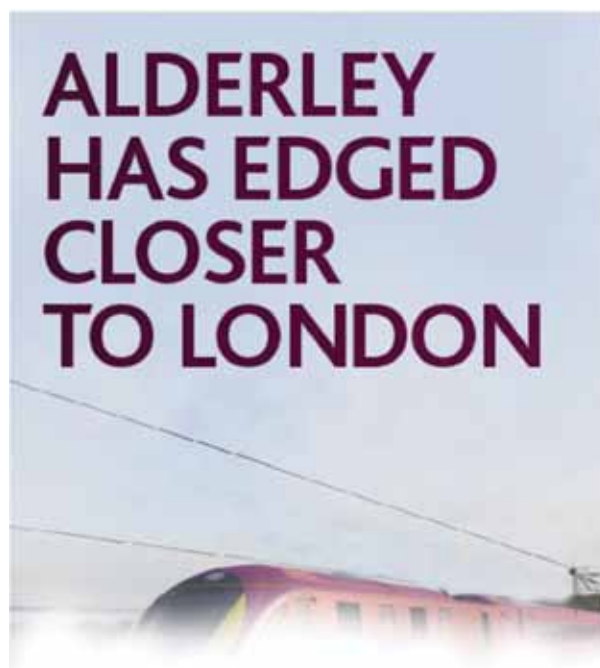
Alliance proposes a simple fares structure, and has held discussions with Passenger Focus to outline its plans and gauge reaction, which has been favourable. Tickets will be available from all the usual outlets, and Alliance will also look to access all the latest technologies to make purchasing a ticket as accessible and uncomplicated as possible. In addition, where stations are not gated, passengers will be able to purchase a ticket on board the train from the train crew at the advertised fare. There will be no penalty for boarding without a valid ticket.

The fares structure is based upon the creation of an Off Peak Single. Stations are also zoned to further simplify the structure. This would allow for example, a Euston - Huddersfield passenger to catch the next train to Halifax, the ticket being valid into that zone. All further fares are derived from the base fare, with ratios applied consistently through the fares structure.

A particular unique selling point will be the offer of a 50% refund to passengers unable to get a seat during their long distance journey², whether pre-booked or not.

5.4 Marketing

An outline draft Marketing Plan has been included in the Business Plan, and has a significant annual budgeted spend to ensure the service is properly and professionally promoted. The revenue development forecast though does not take into account increased marketing to promote the service to non-users of rail.

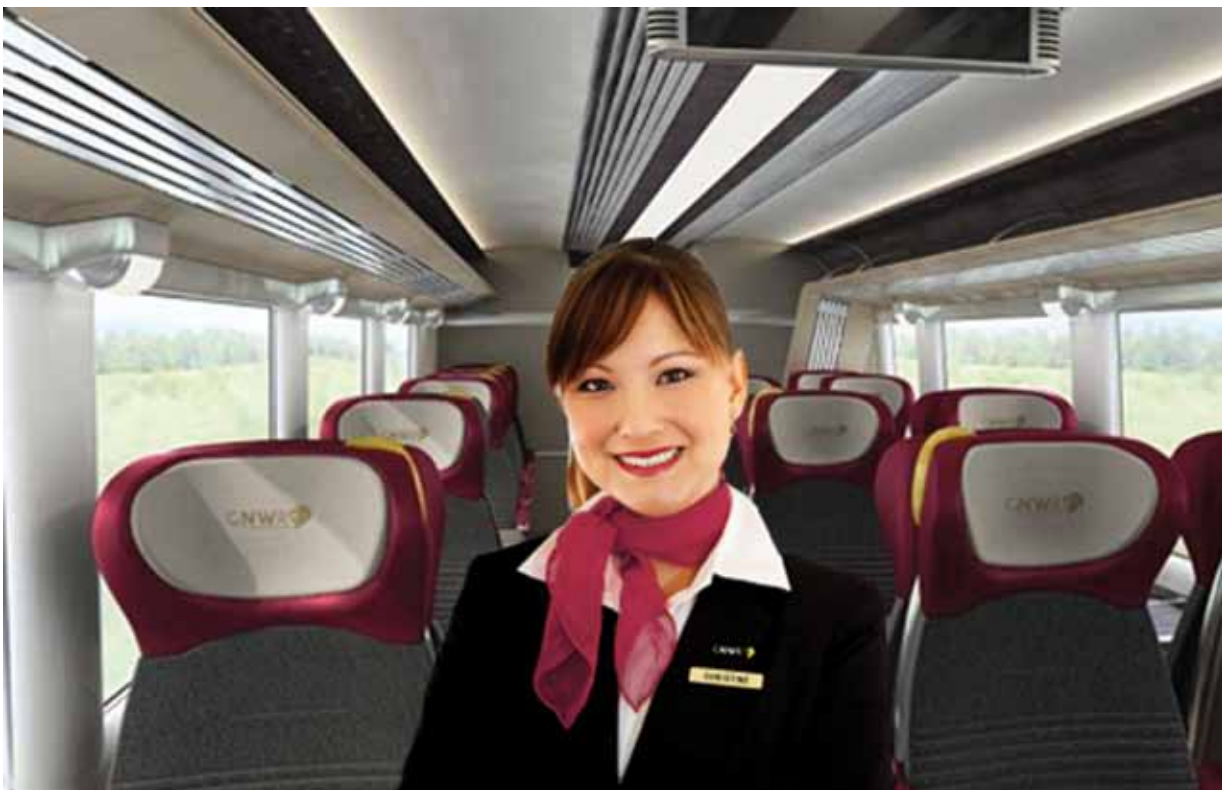


² Only applies to journeys of more than 30 mins

5.5 Employment

A total of 393 permanent jobs will be created, bringing increased employment to a number of areas. The majority of these posts will be filled by recruiting and fully training staff from outside the industry. Recruitment and training will commence around 18 months prior to operational start. This will address the understood concern of some industry observers about the impact on TOC resources if trained staff (particularly drivers) were to be targeted by Alliance for recruitment. A total of £4.8m (excluding salaries) will be invested in this training. The table below shows a breakdown of staffing:

ROLE	LOCATION	NUMBER
DRIVERS	Crewe	35
	West Yorkshire	20
	London	15
TRAIN CREW	Crewe	140
	West Yorkshire	80
	London	60
MANAGEMENT / ADMIN	Crewe	33
	West Yorkshire	5
	London	5
	TOTAL	393



5.6 Wider economic benefits

Alliance's proposed services offer significant benefits in providing some areas with new direct rail links to the capital and with each other. With the introduction of such an extensive network of services there is a broad argument to explore the wider economic benefits gained by the areas being served by these new services.

In particular the following have been considered:

- ✎ Employment benefits – Introduction of these services will require a substantial work force which is particularly important in the current economic climate.
- ✎ Tourism and visitor benefits – Providing direct services to London and elsewhere for currently excluded towns and cities and introducing competition for others opens up regions, improving the leisure and tourism market.
- ✎ Environmental and safety benefits – The introduction of competition on certain routes and new direct services to London will have a positive impact on local air quality and climate change through modal shift from the private car.

Employment benefits

Employment benefits comprise of three main elements:

- ✎ Direct employment arising from the introduction of new services. It is proposed that the headquarters and a train crew depot would be established at Crewe resulting in 208 full time employment opportunities in the area. Further train crew depots would be established in Kirklees employing 105 staff and in London employing 80 staff. 60 further full time equivalent (FTE) employment opportunities would be generated in the Crewe area for train maintenance.
- ✎ Indirect employment arising from third parties requiring additional staff to meet the needs of Alliance's operation.
- ✎ Induced employment from new employees to the area spending part of their income within the local economy.

A summary of the total impact on Gross Value Added (GVA) and full time employment opportunities is shown below.

	TOTAL FTE'S	TOTAL GVA OUTPUT
Direct	453	£19,836,117
Indirect & Induced	489	£21,423,006
Annual Total	942	£41,259,123
Total over 30 years		£1,237,773,690



Additional Visitor Spend

It is anticipated that in addition to employment benefits, the introduction of new services will have a positive impact on visitors to the different regions served as a result of improved access and the introduction of competition along the route.

Data has then been taken from the UK Tourism Survey 2009 and the Great Britain Leisure Survey 2002/3 and combined with the passenger demand forecasting report to produce the outline summary below.

DESTINATION	ADDITIONAL VISITORS	TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT	TOTAL OVER 30 YEARS
Yorkshire & Humber	16,182	£3,142,755	£149,517,868
North West	30,512	£6,644,654	£316,122,184
West Midlands	3,035	£561,482	£26,712,742
South East	4,266	£513,762	£24,442,433
London	82,243	£31,082,842	£1,478,779,122
Total	136,239	£41,945,495	£1,995,574,348

Environmental and Safety Impacts

Improvements to public transport has positive impacts on local air quality and climate change through modal shift from private car.

Following the most recent rail appraisal guidance the following environmental and safety benefits have been calculated.

DESCRIPTION	COST BENEFIT OVER 30 YEARS
Road User Benefits	£246,000,000
Accident	£18,000,000
Air Pollution	£4,000,000
Noise	£1,500,000
Climate Change	£4,000,000
Total	£274,000,000

Summary

The total economic benefits based on the 3 areas addressed is over £3.5 billion.

DESCRIPTION	COST BENEFIT OVER 30 YEARS
Employment Benefits	£1,237,773,690
Additional Visitor Expenditure	£1,995,574,348
Environmental and Safety Impacts	£274,000,000
Total	£3,507,348,038



6. INVESTMENT

6.1 Rolling Stock

Alliance will be introducing a fleet of 17 new build high speed trains with EPS, capable of operating at the maximum line speed of 125mph. The trains will have dual fuel capability so that they can draw power from the overhead wires when working on electrified sections of the network, and also be capable of producing their own power when on non-electrified sections. This will also give the train greater capability in the event of disruption.

The initial investment planned in the fleet and to provide the associated maintenance facilities will be in excess of £200 million.

6.2 Stations

Alliance will also make available £5.5 million for investment at a number of stations to improve accessibility (by the introduction of lifts for example), and introduce or upgrade the platform, waiting and staff environment. Further discussions will take place with Network Rail, the station facility owner and other interested stakeholders on the level and timing of the improvements to be undertaken. An initial list of identified and priced options is included within the Business Plan.

This work will also include an increase and improvement in parking spaces at a number of locations to encourage car drivers to use rail services for the major part of their journey - the importance of which is also recognised in the recent McNulty Report.

6.3 Investment Summary

The table below shows an estimate of the initial anticipated investment as a result of the introduction of these services.

INVESTMENT TYPE	COST
Rolling Stock	£200 million
Depot Improvements	£10 million
Stations	£5.5 million
Employee Training (excluding salaries)	£4.8 million
Total	£220.3 million



7. SUMMARY

Alliance's proposals provide journey opportunities that will generate new demand and provide limited competition at a number of stations. These services will also give an economic stimulus to a number of northern towns and cities. Following its detailed economic and revenue development work, the output from that work indicates that the proposals are not primarily abstractive as defined by the ORR's criteria.

Alliance will invest over £220 million at a time when public sector investment is being curtailed. Whilst the timescales for introduction of the new trains are challenging, they are achievable, and the industry should welcome the fact that any risk is borne entirely by the private sector. Alliance will also invest significant sums in upgrading selected stations and car parks on its route whilst providing significant levels of full time employment.

Alliance has worked closely with Network Rail to identify the availability of further WCML capacity, and provided such paths do not lead to excessive journey times, Alliance's business case is robust.

Alliance has worked hard to provide stakeholders with a clear idea of its proposals ahead of the award of a new West Coast franchise, so that competitors know what to expect and can plan accordingly. Alliance is seeking rights from December 2013, rather than April 2012.

Alliance has taken an active part in the RUS process, both to help it identify gaps that its proposed services can address and to understand the aspirations and plans of other stakeholders. Many RUS gaps relate to on-train crowding and Alliance aims to relieve current or future crowding wherever it can.



