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Planning

Supply of Freight Operating Company services to Great Western Rail for Passenger Diversions, Depot Strategy and Test Trains

FIRST GREATER WESTERN LIMITED

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-058974

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-05a05c

Published 23 September 2025, 3:40pm

Scope

Description

First Greater Western Railway, trading as Great Western Railway (GWR), is issuing a Preliminary Market Engagement (PME) Notice to obtain market feedback in relation to an intended services for the provision of Freight Operating Company (FOC) Drivers, Person in Charge (PIC) and Shunters to support GWR in delivering passenger mitigations during planned perturbation.

HS2 Possessions

GWRs strategy during the construction of Old Oak Common (OOC) is to provide an alternative London terminus for its customers for any All-Line Block (ALB) greater than 12 hours and provide the same level of customer experience as that of London Paddington (PAD). For any possession that is greater than 12 hrs., GWR will implement one of its three diversionary routes, to ensure a London terminus is retained for GWR customers.

With limited to no access to London North Pole (LNP) GWRs principal engineering depot via the Great Western Main Line (GWML) during OOC possessions poses a significant

risk to GWR. GWR has created a Depot Strategy that allows a limited number of services on/off LNP via the West London Line (WLL) entrance/exit. Additionally, and a series of mitigations across the GWR network. During Christmas 2024 High Speed Two (HS2) possession the amount of displaced rolling stock equated to 5kms.

GWR requires a FOC to provide route conducting services and where applicable driving and PIC services to deliver for its customers and to retain a high-speed service.

Control Period Possessions

Like HS2, there are other planned Network Rail (NR) possessions between Reading (RDG) and PAD, preventing access to PAD and LNP.

There are also other possessions on the GWR network which cuts off GWR engineering depots to the rest of the network, requiring mitigations to ensure we can maintain our fleet to deliver for our customers.

Scope

To have a pool of trained Drivers and PICs to deliver GWR passenger diversions and GWR Depot Strategy when required. There will be a requirement to maintain competency, for Drivers and PICs on all routes, traction and locations. A variation will then be issued for each possession where there is a requirement for Depot Strategy (only applicable locations) and/or passenger diversions and for what duration.

Provision of a dedicated FOC Operations Specialist to work with GWR Operations Standards department.

Test Trains

A FOC operator to provide test trains when required for GWR, for Depot Strategy locations, diversionary routes and other requirements as necessary to ensure GWRs plans are tested, operationally valid to deliver mitigations when required.

Resource required - FOC Traincrew Driver and Guard (where necessary) and PICs.

Off network Method of Work will be produced by the FOC and agreed by GWR ahead of any test trains being scheduled.

Total value (estimated)

- £16,000,000 excluding VAT
- £19,200,000 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 18 May 2026 to 18 September 2029
- Possible extension to 19 September 2031
- 5 years, 4 months, 2 days

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 60200000 - Railway transport services

Contract locations

- UKG - West Midlands (England)
 - UKI - London
 - UKJ - South East (England)
 - UKK - South West (England)
 - UKL - Wales
-

Engagement

Engagement deadline

7 November 2025

Engagement process description

This Preliminary Market Engagement exercise is being conducted ahead of any potential formal procurement process and does not constitute a pre-qualification or tendering exercise. The outcomes are intended to inform business cases and the development of the tender documentation if a procurement takes place in the future.

Any interested parties should follow the instructions on the portal to register interest by Friday 03 October 2025. Interested parties will be required to sign and return a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) prior to any engagement. The NDA will ensure fair and effective competition in the preparation and conduct of the tender competition and is in the interests of achieving best value for the taxpayer.

Following receipt of registered interest and a signed NDA, suppliers will be invited to attend an in-person supplier event and will be provided with initial questions relating to the multi-procurement of services. A response to these initial questions will be required prior to the supplier event.

Further details on the project will be provided during the supplier event along with the procurement approach and timescales. The supplier event will take place on Friday 10 October 2025 at GWR headquarters in Swindon. The event will be limited to three (3) persons only per supplier.

Following the supplier event, a set of technical and commercial questions will be provided to the registered suppliers, and a response will be requested to these within 10 working days following receipt.

Further consultation may be sought with some or all interested parties using one-to-one meetings either virtually or in person. This will provide an opportunity for suppliers to ask further questions and for GWR and other involved operators to obtain input from the market on key areas to help develop specifications and the contract documents. It is anticipated that these meeting will take place Friday 10 Oct 2025.

Any costs of participation in the market engagement events will be borne by the participant.

Please follow the following link to Express your interest, and gain access to the Non Disclosure Agreement, which needs to be completed by 3rd of Oct 2025.

<http://redirect.transaxions.com/events/td0cW>

Procedure

Special regime

Utilities

Contracting authority

FIRST GREATER WESTERN LIMITED

- Companies House: 05113733
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PXVG-2764-GZCQ

Milford House 1 Milford Street

Wiltshire

SN1 1HL

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@gwr.com

Website: <https://procurement.gwr.com/tenders/12-tenders/gwr-notice/108-foc-pic>

Region: UKK14 - Swindon

Organisation type: Private utility