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Planning

GBR Online Retail - Market Engagement

DFT OPERATOR LIMITED

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

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Scope

Description

Background

This preliminary market engagement exercise is being conducted by DfT Operator Limited (DFTO) on the basis described in this notice and in the accompanying documents.

The Fares, Ticketing and Retail (FTR) Programme brings together teams from across the rail industry to transform how passengers purchase and use tickets. By modernising outdated fares, enhancing the passenger experience and unlocking retail innovation, the FTR Programme will improve passenger journeys, drive commercial growth and achieve greater cost efficiency across the rail network.

We intend to make retail, easy, reliable and smart for passengers using modern technology to bring excellence to the experience. The retail experience will be built on a tech stack containing future-facing technology allowing us to take advantage of retail technical advances as these appear.

Through bringing together cross-sector expertise, the FTR Programme is delivering impactful changes for passengers now, ahead of the transition to Great British Railways (GBR). These modernisations will help bring decades of fragmentation and inefficiency to

an end through a simpler, more unified railway owned by the public, for the public under GBR.

The FTR Programme is actively steering a series of transformational, cross-industry initiatives re-shaping fares, ticketing and retail. They include trials of easier to understand fares, introduction of tap-in, tap-out payments, and the introduction of smart ticketing. The Government released the Railways Bill on 5 November, sharing its policy position on GBR Online Retail in the related information and consultation-see Railways Bill: tickets and retail - GOV.UK.

The FTR Programme is a collaboration between the Department for Transport (DfT), DFTO, Rail Delivery Group, Devolved and Regional Transport Bodies, and train operators. It is governed by DfT. The FTR Programme regularly engages with other industry stakeholders and delivery partners including ticketing retailers and campaign groups.

Project Description

The GBR Online Retail project will deliver the passenger-facing channel for GBR, GBR Online (website and app), at launch. The aim is to provide a high-quality national retail and journey information service, aligned with broader GBR branding and transition. This preliminary market engagement exercise will set out the current direction and seek supplier insight ahead of procurement.

We will create a unified GBR Online digital experience that:

- Simplifies customer experience and opportunity to increase revenue as a result
- Realises cost efficiencies from reduction in duplication of websites and apps across DfT operator brands and nationalrail.co.uk
- Enables improved service information authority and aligned post journey support
- Supports wider FTR initiatives (e.g., fares reform, delay repay, railcards).

GBR Online Retail will operate within a fair and open retail market, designed to foster real improvements for passengers and taxpayers, including innovation in customer service, wider ticketing availability and diverse options to support digital journeys.

Emerging Scope

It is currently envisaged that there would be two phases of work under the GBR Online Retail project:

Phase 1 launch scope (non-exhaustive)

- Ticket retailing and associated services (purchase, fulfilment across paper/Barcode/ITSO, seat & cycle reservations, Passenger Assist).
- Journey planning with clear pricing, comparison and best fare guidance.
- Live service information including disruption and future travel advice.
- Post-sale customer support (changes, refunds, Delay Repay).

Phase Two : TOC integration - over up to 12-months post-launch to integrate capabilities, across all Department for Transport (DfT) publicly owned operators. Beyond the Phase 1, GBR may expect the solution to be continually developed and enhanced based on a roadmap that is agreed with GBR and regularly updated based on customer and market needs. It is anticipated that this may see the phase-out of some services delivered in place of new capabilities.

A significant outcome to GBR of any procurement would be the delivery of an end-to-end accredited online national rail ticket retailing solution, associated payment gateway service and CRM platform, which provides flexibility with regards to future scope and access to APIs for ongoing development opportunities.

Project Objectives

GBR Online Retail will serve as the direct digital sales channel for GBR, supporting the FTR Programme's objectives by delivering a streamlined, accessible, and inclusive ticketing experience. Passengers will benefit from clear fare choices, simplified ticketing across digital and physical formats, and personalized journey information. The platform is designed to integrate railcards, concessions, and support services, ensuring inclusivity from launch.

GBR's ticketing website will combine the existing 14 rail operator websites and apps into one - with the previous websites ceasing to function. The solution will integrate with industry initiatives such as Fares Reform and Delay Repay, accelerate new product development, and support innovative customer propositions.

Key outcomes include a trusted one-stop shop for tickets, best price guarantees, seamless support, and a unified customer experience. For the rail industry, benefits include lower operational costs, increased brand impact, and a platform that drives innovation and competitiveness. The approach emphasises continuous improvement, data-driven customer insights, and rapid response to market opportunities. Hooks will be built in to enable the use of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence.

Contract dates (estimated)

- 2 January 2027 to 1 January 2033
- Possible extension to 1 January 2039
- 12 years

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 22459000 - Tickets
- 30144400 - Automatic fare collection
- 34980000 - Transport tickets
- 48000000 - Software package and information systems
- 63512000 - Sale of travel tickets and package tours services
- 72260000 - Software-related services

Engagement

Engagement deadline

31 January 2026

Engagement process description

To facilitate market engagement, DFTO intends to hold an open day supplier session followed by a series of additional engagement activities, with further details provided in the MOI.

The open day supplier session is to be held on 11th December 2025 ,online via Microsoft Teams or equivalent.

Before further information on the scope and engagement process of this project can be shared, suppliers must review and sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

Suppliers intending to participate in the Pre Market Engagement are required to notify DFTO by submitting an expression of interest and completing the NDA. Both must be uploaded via the Message Centre through the Delta E-Sourcing Platform link below by 17:00 on 8th December 2025 :

<https://www.delta-esourcing.com/respond/8U5B2W69TG>

Upon submission of the completed NDA, access shall be granted to the Memorandum of Information. This document outlines the project background, objectives, and key timelines, including the formal next steps in the market engagement process.

If you wish to request access to the MOI after 8th December 2025, please contact procurement@dftoperator.co.uk. We will arrange for an NDA to be signed and provide access to the MOI and published engagement materials upon request; however, participation in the engagement sessions cannot be guaranteed. Those who miss the deadline to participate in the market engagement sessions may still submit a request however inclusion is at DFTO discretion.

Publication of this notice does not bind DFTO or subsidiaries, or any related person, in any way regarding the subject matter of this notice and it is possible that no procurement process will be launched in respect of the subject matter of this Pre-Market Engagement Exercise or that no resulting contract will be awarded. DFTO expressly reserves the right to amend details of the anticipated scope, requirements, contract duration, start and end dates, or any other matter, detailed within this notice. In no circumstances will DFTO be liable for any costs incurred by the suppliers.

This preliminary market engagement exercise does not constitute a formal procurement process, and participation in it does not confer any advantage or guarantee of success in any future procurement exercise.

Where used throughout this notice, the meaning of Train Operating Companies includes all and any of those train operating companies who, currently or in the future, provide

services for the carriage of passengers by railway:

- a) under a franchise agreement with the Secretary of State within the meaning of section 23(3) of the Railways Act 1993 or
- b) under, or secured under, the Secretary of State's duty in section 30(1) of the Railways Act 1993; or
- c) in accordance with legislation which supersedes or amends the powers referred to in a) and b), including where such powers are transferred from the Secretary of State to another body.

The list of current providers of services for the carriage of passengers by railway under these provisions can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-register-of-rail-passenger-contracts>.

Novation or Assignment

The conduct of this preliminary market engagement exercise, any subsequent procurement process, and / or any resulting contract, may be transferred, novated or assigned by DFTO to (or delivered for the benefit of) one or more Train Operating Companies, or any successor parent company to a Train Operating Company, or any other relevant entity, following a corporate restructuring or similar circumstance, or to align to the allocation of responsibilities between relevant sector participants, including those entities that are owned (directly or indirectly) by the Secretary of State for Transport. This may include, for example, novation of any resulting contract(s) to Great British Railways after it is launched.

Depending on the contracting approach, any resulting contract(s) may be a utilities contract (special regime contract) for the purposes of the Procurement Act 2023.

If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact procurement@dftoperator.co.uk directly.

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Contracting authority

DFT OPERATOR LIMITED

- Companies House: 07141122
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PXPM-5448-GHBZ

Waterloo General Office 2nd Floor

London

SE1 8SW

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@dftoperator.co.uk

Region: UKI45 - Lambeth

Organisation type: Public undertaking (commercial organisation subject to public authority oversight)

Other organisations

These organisations are carrying out the procurement, or part of it, on behalf of the contracting authorities.

Department for Transport

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor.

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PLTC-5358-LTWZ

33 Horseferry Road

London

SW1P 4DR

United Kingdom

Email: mycommercial@dft.gov.uk

Region: UKI32 - Westminster

NETWORK RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 02904587
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PNZN-9524-VCQJ

Waterloo General Office

London

SE1 8SW

United Kingdom

Email: rsc&pprocurementoperations@networkrail.co.uk

Region: UKI45 - Lambeth

RAIL DELIVERY GROUP LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 08176197
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PMXW-9895-MJXN

First Floor North

London

EC4V 3DS

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@raildeliverygroup.com

Region: UKI31 - Camden and City of London

C2C RAILWAY LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 04659669
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PCHL-2158-CTCQ

Floor 7, Centennium House, 100 Lower Thames Street

London

EC3R 6DL

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@c2crail.net

Region: UKI31 - Camden and City of London

GA TRAINS LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 12544897
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PNZP-3886-PVCD

One Stratford Place, Montfitchet Road

London

E20 1EJ

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@greateranglia.co.uk

Region: UKI41 - Hackney and Newham

NORTHERN TRAINS LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 03076444
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PZCJ-2164-HJQZ

George Stephenson House

York

YO1 6JT

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@northernrailway.co.uk

Region: UKE21 - York

SE TRAINS LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 03266762
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PWRR-2348-DXXP

Second Floor

London

SE1 2AU

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@southeasternrailway.co.uk

Region: UKI44 - Lewisham and Southwark

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 03266760
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PQHL-7495-VCQT

South Bank Central 4th Floor, 30 Stamford Street,

London

SE1 9LQ

United Kingdom

Email: Procurement@dftoperator.co.uk

Region: UKI44 - Lewisham and Southwark

TRANSPENNINE TRAINS LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 12544930
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PXNX-1214-CQYL

7th Floor, Bridgewater House

Manchester

M1 6LT

United Kingdom

Email: procurement.services@tpexpress.co.uk

Region: UKD33 - Manchester

LONDON NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY LIMITED

Summary of their role in this procurement: Contributor

- Companies House: 04659712
- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PQZP-5496-ZTHY

West Offices

York

YO1 6GA

United Kingdom

Email: procurement@lner.co.uk

Region: UKE21 - York

Contact organisation

Contact DFT OPERATOR LIMITED for any enquiries.