

South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

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The Draft Franchising Policy Statement appears to satisfy the statutory requirement.

The policy of franchisee selection through competitive tendering is standard practice, and the selection criteria proposed are accepted. It is suggested that “Innovation” and “Added Value” as criteria would allow bidders to demonstrate their strengths above and beyond the bare specification

It is recognised and accepted that there may be a need to let short term franchises in exceptional circumstances. Nevertheless, the policy should be more precise on this point, and specify a maximum of 2 years for exceptional short-term franchises.

The potential opportunity afforded by short term franchises for franchise re-mapping is welcomed. However, it is important to include consultation with Regional Transport Partnerships in this process.

In common with other Regional Transport Partnerships, SWestrans Regional Transport Strategy and its associated Delivery Plan includes a number of rail related interventions. It is important that Regional Transport Partnerships be consulted on the detailed specification for future franchises in order to take advantage of any opportunity to incorporate any viable proposals for rail enhancements.

The selection of a franchisee or operator where the franchise agreement relates to a company which is wholly owned by Scottish Ministers is acknowledged as a necessary expedient in circumstances where it is the only option to guarantee continuity of service.