

A Railway Fit for Britain's Future Consultation Response Intelligent Transport Systems UK

1. About Intelligent Transport Systems UK

- 1.1 Intelligent Transport Systems UK (ITS UK) is the national industry association for transport technology. We provide a national platform to support the roll out of technology for a cleaner, safer and more effective transport network, both at home and abroad.
- 1.2 ITS UK has 180+ members, from both the private and public sector, covering all sizes and disciplines, with members working in areas like smart ticketing, mobility as a service (MaaS), integrated transport, real time passenger information, public transport services, traffic management and enforcement, demand responsive transport, road user charging, connected and autonomous vehicles, and much more.
- 1.3 We would be happy to provide further information the submission provided below. If this would be of use, please email ITS UK Public Affairs & PR Executive Eduardo Pitts, at eduardo.pitts@its-uk.org.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Technology should play a key role in the Government's vision to reform the railways in a unified, simplified and efficient way, whilst providing the best possible service for passengers and customers. Technology can provide greater simplicity, better customer service, improve safety and support cost efficiencies across the rail network. Increasingly, the use of data is becoming essential in operations, planning and in how customers understand and use the network.
- 2.2 ITS UK welcomes the ambition for a simplified railway that aims to improve services for passengers and customers while prioritising taxpayers' value for money. We also support the outlined objectives of a railway that is reliable, affordable, efficient, safe, accessible and high quality. We believe technology will play a critical role in supporting these ambitions. In this response, we set out that in order to achieve these objectives, GBR must have an 'open data' approach to rail data, roll-out smart ticketing across the rail network, and ensure an enabling environment for innovation and private sector collaboration.

Key Recommendations

- A. Ensure an 'open by default' approach by GBR to rail data.
- B. Prioritise the collaborative rollout of smart ticketing by ensuring fare parity and by leveraging existing options from the private sector. Consider a national barcode standard.
- C. Ensure an environment where private sector innovation can flourish.

3. 'Open by Default' approach

- 3.1 In line with the Government's mission to create economic growth, and GBR's mission to drive innovation, we urge GBR to consider an 'Open by Default' approach to its non-commercial or sensitive data, creating tangible benefits for both the travelling public and UK plc.
- 3.2 Open data is data that anyone can access, use or share. When public sector actors have opted to open their non-sensitive data, it allows the private sector to produce new applications, products and services that benefit the public.¹ 'Open by default' means providing and maintaining data assets in an open, machine-readable format, publicly available unless there are specific reasons - such as privacy or commercial concerns - not to do so.
- 3.3 Open data can deliver significant returns on investment. Transport for London's (TfL) Open Data Initiative is an excellent example of this. The initiative costs around £1 million a year but has been proven to deliver £130 million a year in benefits, with estimated journey time savings of £70-90 million. It was also found to have supported 500+ jobs, contributed £12-15 million annually to London's economy and enabled the creation of 600+ transport apps, widely used by the public.²

Case study: Using open data to support better services for passengers | Transit

For journey planner Transit, open data has been instrumental in driving innovation. Their "Detours" service offers users accurate information during disruptions or diversions, and relies on Transit's ability to access and interpret real-time transport data. Similarly, Transit leverage vehicle positioning data to enhance the reliability of real-time transit arrival information, even in situations where official real-time schedules are unavailable or incomplete.

Open data has fostered a collaborative environment too, involving a wide range of stakeholders. Communities and organisations, such as MobilityData, collaboratively develop and refine data specifications like the General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS). These collective efforts significantly enhance data quality and reliability, directly improving public transit experiences for all riders.

- 3.4 Similarly, other open repositories of data like the Bus Open Data Service and the Rail Data Marketplace have helped the creation of products and services that facilitate and incentivise everyday travel on the public transport network. Through GBR, open data from across the railway can be centralised, so that it becomes more discoverable and easier to use by private sector organisations.
- 3.5 Going forward, as the Government develops its Integrated National Transport Strategy, a single source of rail data will be critical in allowing data sharing across modes, helping to

¹ <https://theodi.org/news-and-events/blog/what-is-open-data/>

² <https://content.tfl.gov.uk/deloitte-report-tfl-open-data.pdf>

ensure more seamless journeys for customers. In our response to the INTS call for ideas, ITS UK suggested the creation of a national Multi-Modal Data Initiative that positions the UK as a leader in data-driven transport innovation. This could involve a Centre for Excellence for Transport Data, establishing a dedicated hub for skills development, research, knowledge sharing, technology transfer, and best practices. It would be critical for GBR to be part of any such initiative.³

Recommendation A: Ensure an ‘open by default’ approach by GBR to rail data

4. Smart ticketing, fares parity and barcode standards

4.1 Smart ticketing plays a vital role in integrating rail fares and journeys. It provides passengers with greater convenience and faster access, as well as more detailed information about fares, journey times and disruptions. For GBR, smart ticketing can give insights into passenger movements and travel patterns, providing a useful tool in optimising rail services.

4.2 ITS UK welcomes current efforts by the Government to reduce fragmentation and improve the passenger experience through the rollout of smart ticketing, through investment in contactless pay-as-you go (PAYG) across the South East,⁴ and through trials in the North and the Midlands too.⁵

4.3 However, as GBR continues to roll out PAYG, a commitment to fares parity across all methods of purchasing a ticket is essential. To incentivise the use of smart ticketing solutions, passengers require certainty that they are paying the best fare for their journey.

4.4 As GBR looks to reform the complex rail fares system, ITS UK calls for a shift to single leg pricing, that provides a simple and consistent approach for passengers and ticket retailers alike. It is also important that all ticket retailers have the ability to offer the same discounts and fare capping mechanisms to ensure a competitive environment for private sector retailers seeking to innovate in the rail retail space.

Case study: Private sector investment in digital ticketing | Trainline

Digital tickets are QR codes that hold the same information as a paper ticket. There are two types of digital tickets, an eticket and a Mobile Ticket, one of each option is generally available on the rail network, with third party retailers currently providing both depending on the route.

³ <https://www.its-uk.org/publications/response-to-the-integrated-national-transport-strategy-call-for-ideas/>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/simpler-train-travel-for-the-south-east-as-contactless-ticketing-rolls-out-at-47-more-stations>

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/trials-for-contactless-ticketing-in-the-north-and-midlands-takes-another-step-closer>

Digital tickets have led to a simpler, easier-to-use ticketing method for passengers, which contributes to a less fragmented network. Digital tickets are contactless, can be used offline, reduce queues at ticket machines or offices, and avoid the use of paper. Whilst now almost ubiquitous on the rail network, arriving at this outcome has come at significant effort and cost from third party retailers, who have been the direct funders of the industry's Barcode enablement programme through a levy on every barcode ticket sold. In cash terms, this has contributed to an estimated 80% of the cost of the industry's £30m barcode enablement programme.

The rollout of these digital ticketing options, and their transformative effect on how passengers interact with the rail network, are a testament to what third party ticket retailers can accomplish with the right incentives to innovate and improve the customer experience.

4.5 If GBR wishes to move quickly and efficiently in the deployment of smart ticketing across the rail network, it should consider the wealth of experience, capabilities and investment that has already been undertaken by the private sector to create and implement smart ticketing solutions. For example, there has been strong private sector investment in barcode ticketing, the integration of tickets to Apple and Google Wallets, digital railcards, split save and flex-season tickets.

4.6 Furthermore, there should be consideration of a national barcode standard for tickets, as currently, the lack of one hampers integrated ticketing solutions for transport providers and complicates the user experience. This could support multi-modal ticketing solutions across the bus and rail networks too.

Recommendation B: Prioritise the collaborative rollout of smart ticketing by ensuring fare parity and by leveraging existing options from the private sector. Consider a national barcode standard.

5. Supporting innovation from the private sector

5.1 We welcome GBR's intentions to deliver innovation across the network. Industry is keen to collaborate with GBR in delivering products and services that fundamentally improve the cohesiveness of the rail network. The creation of GBR presents the opportunity align the interests of private and public actors in rail, but must also ensure that the private sector is able to continue innovating in the sector.

5.2 To ensure fairness, the Government should include, in primary legislation, the creation of an independent regulator, or the attribution of these duties to the ORR, to ensure fair competition for retail and smart ticketing companies. Responsibilities should include licensing, an appeals function, and designing a market access code.

5.3 This will also mean ensuring GBR retail competes on equal terms with existing retail companies. This requires structural separation preventing cross-subsidy; equal access and processes to obtain data, retail licenses, and GBR services.

5.4 By collaborating with the private sector for the deployment of these ‘oven ready’ solutions, GBR can save costs and improve taxpayer value for money in the rollout of smart ticketing solutions that join-up the rail network.

Recommendation C: Ensure an environment where private sector innovation can flourish.

Intelligent Transport Systems UK
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