



PR23 draft determination consultation

About you

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2. Comments on our supporting draft settlements for the System Operator (SO), Scotland and England & Wales regional documents

For further information, please see our [Scotland](#), [System Operator](#), [Northwest & Central](#), [Wales & Western](#), [Eastern](#) and [Southern](#) draft settlement documents.

Within the framework of the next 5-year period to 31st March 2029, which covers the remaining period of Great Western Railway's contract to 25th June 2028, we wish to see active recognition of the dynamic growth in ridership being witnessed on the Tarka Line, connecting directly to one of the most successful provincial cities in the country, reflected in the quality of the supporting infrastructure. Before the end of CP7 we expect to be travelling over continuously-welded rail throughout rather than any of the four sections of jointed track which still survive – south of Barnstaple, Eggesford, Morchard Road, and Crediton – and we do not expect train crew still to be exchanging tokens at Crediton and Eggesford and also operating the level crossing at the latter. We should also wish to see, before the end of CP7, platform 2 at Barnstaple station restored to operational use as a siding for storing trains be they 'cripples,' overnight stores, or even tours.

13. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Elaborating our reference to dynamic ridership growth in response to Q2, we observe that journeys recorded by GWR on the Tarka Line continue to break all records since the current series began in 2001. In the first seven 4-week periods of calendar 2023 ridership was 11.5% ahead of the comparable period in 2019. In 2022/23 annual ridership exceeded 700k for the first time ever. The Tarka Line may be perceived as the operator's longest branch line, but for the communities which it serves it's Northern Devon's Main Line.