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Consultation Questions

The answer boxes will expand as you type.

Procuring rail passenger services

1. What are the merits of offering the ScotRail franchise as a dual focus franchise and what services should be covered by the economic rail element, and what by the social rail element?

Q1 comments:

2. What should be the length of the contract for future franchises, and what factors lead you to this view?

Q2 comments:

3. What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?

Q3 comments:

4. What, if any, profit share mechanism should apply within the franchise?

Q4 comments:

5. Under what terms should third parties be involved in the operation of passenger rail services?

Q5 comments:

6. What is the best way to structure and incentivise the achievement of outcome measures whilst ensuring value for money?

Q6 comments:

7. What level of performance bond and/or parent company guarantees are appropriate?

Q7 comments:

8. What sanctions should be used to ensure the franchisee fulfils its franchise commitments?

Q8 comments:

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

9. Under the franchise, should we incentivise good performance or only penalise poor performance?

Q9 comments:

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

Q10 comments:

11. How can we make the performance regime more aligned with passenger issues?

Q11 comments:

12. What should the balance be between journey times and performance?

Q12 comments:

13. Is a Service Quality Incentive Regime required? And if so should it cover all aspects of stations and service delivery, or just those being managed through the franchise?

Q13 comments:

14. What other mechanisms could be used for assessing train and station quality?

Q14 comments:

Scottish train services

15. Can better use be made of existing train capacity, such as increasing the permitted standing time beyond the limit of 10 minutes or increasing the capacity limit? What is an acceptable limit for standing times on rail services?

Q15 Whilst I would prefer a seat I have stood for up to 30 minutes rather than wait for a following train and would do so again.

16. Should the number of services making use of interchange stations (both rail to rail and rail to other modes) be increased to reduce the number of direct services? What would be the opportunities and challenges of this?

Q16 Whilst I would generally prefer direct services I am happy to change if this significantly improves journey time. Connecting bus services at railheads would improve options for travel by public transport and are not well advertised where they exist. Breaking journeys that are currently direct rail services is likely to extend journey times, deter passengers and increase congestion at the stations concerned.

17. Should Government direct aspects of service provision such as frequency and journey time, or would these be better determined by the franchisee based on customer demand?

Q17 For an effective system there needs to be a spec for services which would not be financially viable without support.

18. What level of contract specification should we use for the next ScotRail franchise?

Q18 comments:

19. How should the contract incentivise the franchisee to be innovative in the provision of services?

Q19 comments:

Scottish rail fares

20. What should be the rationale for, and purpose of, our fares policy?

Q20 comments:

21. What fares should be regulated by government and what should be set on a commercial basis? Do your recommendations change by geographic area (the Strathclyde area example), or by type of journey (for example suburban or intercity)?

Q21 comments:

22. How should we achieve a balance between the taxpayer subsidy and passenger revenue contributions in funding the Scottish rail network? At what rate should fares be increased, and how feasible would it be to apply higher increases to Sections of the network which have recently been enhanced?

Q22 comments:

23. What should the difference be between peak and off-peak fares? Will this help encourage people to switch to travelling in the off-peak?

Q23 comments:

Scottish stations

24. How should we determine what rail stations are required and where, including whether a station should be closed?

Q24 I would expect this to be determined largely by usage. For full closure to go ahead I would expect there to be reasonable alternative public transport available and a significant financial saving to be realised. For lightly used highland stations I don't believe that industry figures always reflect users with passes, rover tickets or indeed return tickets to the further station of their journey when they alight or board at a closer station on one leg of the journey.

25. What are the merits or issues that arise from a third party (such as a local authority or local business) being able to propose, promote and fund a station or service?

Q25 The opportunity to board/alight at the new facility needs to be considered against the extended journey time this will impose on other service users.

26. Should only one organisation be responsible for the management and maintenance of stations? If this was the franchisee how should that responsibility be structured in terms of leasing, investment, and issues relating to residual capital value?

Q26 comments:

27. How can local communities be encouraged to support their local station?

Q27 An obvious contact with the maintainer and funding for materials would encourage local residents to supply free time to maintain the station environment. The active use of any remaining buildings is also likely to keep them in better condition than if left empty.

28. What categories of station should be designated and what facilities should be available at each category of station?

Q28 comments:

Cross-border services

29. Should cross-border services continue to go north of Edinburgh? In operating alongside ScotRail services, how do cross-border services benefit passengers and taxpayers? And who should specify these services, the Department of Transport or the Scottish Ministers?

Q29 whilst cross border services would have to be DfT specified I would hope their pathing within Scotland could be agreed with Scottish ministers.

30. Or should the cross-border services terminate at Edinburgh Waverley, allowing opportunities for Scottish connections? And if so, what additional benefits would accrue from having an Edinburgh Hub?

Q30 comments: Breaking these journeys will increase journey time, inconvenience passengers and create rail and passenger congestion that I do not believe the station is capable of handling. Note that the rail traffic handled by Haymarket with 4 through platforms requires 13 West facing platforms at Waverley where many trains terminate – a through station is far more efficient for handling trains than a terminus.

Rolling stock

31. What alternative strategies or mechanisms could be used to reduce the cost of the provision of rolling stock?

Q31 comments:

32. What facilities should be present on a train and to what extent should these facilities vary according to the route served?

Q32 toilets should be available on all other than short commuter units. Cycle and luggage space is important on all trains as even short trips are used in connection with longer journeys.

Passengers – information, security and services

33. How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

Q33 comments:

34. How should we balance the need for additional seating capacity and retain the flexibility of a franchisee to offer first-class services if commercially viable?

Q34 comments:

35. What issues and evidence should be considered prior to determining whether or not to ban the consumption of alcohol on trains?

Q35 comments:

36. How can the provision of travel information for passengers be further improved?

Q36 comments:

Caledonian Sleeper

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

Q37 The value of sleeper services to the communities they serve is far greater than the revenue taken through the farebox. Services should continue to be specified where they would not otherwise run.

38. Should the Caledonian Sleeper services be contracted for separately from the main ScotRail franchise? Or should it be an option for within the main ScotRail franchise?

Q38 No preference – the service and cost to the end user are more important than the identity of the provider.

39. We would be interested in your views in the level and type of service that the Caledonian Sleeper Services should provide. Including:

- What is the appeal of the Caledonian Sleeper Service, and if there were more early and late trains would the appeal of the sleeper services change?
- What is the value of sleeper services to Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen and are these the correct destinations, for example would Oban provide better connectivity?
- What facilities should the sleeper services provide and would you pay more for better facilities?

Q39 The appeal of the sleeper service is the ability to travel large distances, asleep, overnight. Air and early rail equivalents require an 0430 departure from home (which is disruptive for the entire household) a taxi (significant extra expense) and don't really deliver me in a state fit to work a full day at my destination.

Highland users of the service would presumably feel the same way about their services as I do about the Lowland train. There is a wider benefit for them however in seamless delivery of high end tourism from the South of the uk. Having used similar provision from Paris to the Alps for a number of years the location of the overnight railhead was critical in choice of destination and I see no reason why this should not apply in the uk.

A better advertised provision of seated service from the central belt North would increase usage within Scotland, particularly if stops within the area could be improved.

Environmental issues

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

Q40 Train occupation (which drives emissions per passenger) should be considered as a kpi.