

## Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

### 1. Name/Organisation

#### Organisation Name

Councillor Peter Bellarby

Title Mr ☐ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☒ *Please tick as appropriate*

#### Surname

Bellarby

#### Forename

Peter

### 2. Postal Address

13 Westfield Road

Stonehaven

Postcode AB39 2EE

Phone

Email

peter@pwbellarby.plus.com

### 3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

☒

/

Group/Organisation

☐

*Please tick as appropriate*

- (a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

*Please tick as appropriate* ☒ Yes ☐

- (b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

*Please tick ONE of the following boxes*

Yes, make my response, name and address all available ☒

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address ☐

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address ☐

- (c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

*Please tick as appropriate* ☐ Yes ☐ No

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate      x ☐ Yes      ☐ No

## 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: I do not believe that a dual focus franchise is the way forward. The rail system in Scotland should be seen as an integrated whole.

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

Q2 comments: Of the order of 10 years since there is a need to provide stability to the franchisee so that they are willing to provide investment.

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: Outcome measures must include measures of the needs and aspirations of rail passengers. Some current measures are to the disadvantage of passengers. eg over- emphasis on on-time arrival at destinations goes against putting in unscheduled stops which may be of assistance when an earlier train has had to be cancelled.

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: Financial penalties

### **Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

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

Q9 comments: Incentivising good performance is good although care needs to be made to ensure that what is regarded as good performance actually reflects the needs of passengers.

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: Basing it on service groups is the best way as the characteristics of different service groups are different.

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

Q11 comments: There is a need to have a thorough overhaul in this area. For instance, I am totally opposed to the practice of late running trains omitting scheduled stops. This practice severely disadvantages passengers at intermediate stations (both those wanting to alight and those expecting to be picked up). They have already been subject to delay and further delay and inconvenience is unacceptable.

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

Q12 comments: The practice of artificially increasing the published journey times to cosmetically improve the performance statistics is to be condemned.

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: Yes. Should include all stations since the holder of the franchise has a significant presence at stations managed by Network Rail.

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 comments: Some modest increase in permitted standing time would be reasonable. However, the present limit is frequently broken. This issue needs to be addressed by increasing capacity. Sometimes there is severe overcrowding and excessively long standing times.

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 comments: I am totally opposed to the reduction of through services. Every change that a passenger has to make is offputting and a disincentive to travelling by rail. Passengers are concerned that connections might be lost and there is the hassle of changing trains itself. This is especially true of a large station like Edinburgh Waverley.

I am very concerned at the suggestion that cross-border services might not go further north than Edinburgh or Glasgow. This would be a severe disincentive cross border travel by rail which has been increasing in recent years. Rail travel is environmentally friendly and should be encouraged, not discouraged. Cross-border services also provide high capacity, high quality services on routes to Aberdeen and Inverness and are often a preferred choice of passengers. However, the present service provided by Cross-country services fails to meet the criteria of high quality since no refreshment service is provided north of Edinburgh. This needs to be reinstated. More passengers changing trains at Waverley would increase the people congestion there. There is also the question of congestion of trains. Through trains occupy platforms for shorter periods than is usually the case for terminating trains.

The needs of passengers and the need to encourage rail travel outweigh any advantage that a rail operator might have in terms of simplifying the operational requirements. If it is deemed acceptable for all passengers travelling between north and south of Edinburgh to have to change at Edinburgh, why not do the same at Newcastle and require all passengers to change there?

Since there are considerable advantages in providing through trains, I think that the number of through trains should be increased.

On the question of interchanges between rail and other modes, this needs to be improved. It is to be regretted that there are not more opportunities for

easy interchange between rail and bus. The situation is in some ways getting worse, not better. Aberdeen is an example of where things have got significantly worse with the Union Square retail development. The bus station is now further away from the railway station than it was before the Union Square development took place. The situation of rail air interchange is also unsatisfactory. I am disappointed that the proposed rail link to Glasgow Airport has been scrapped. At present there is in Scotland no good interchange facilities between rail and air. This is in sharp contrast to England.

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 comments: Since there is significant public subsidy of rail services, there does need to be some direction of what is expected in terms of frequency, stopping patterns and journey times. However, this should not be at the level of micromanaging. There is also the question of meeting policy objectives of encouraging modal shift as a way of tackling climate change problems.

18. What level of contract specification should we use the 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: By financial reward

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments: Fares policy should be aimed at producing an environment where the public see rail as a mode of choice (where it is available) rather than a mode of last resort. This should be seen in the context of efforts to tackle climate change and in the context of meeting societal needs for public transport generally. I am opposed to a fares policy that would have high fares for short journeys as a way of discouraging short distance travel

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: Since there is a significant public subsidy of rail services

generally, it is right that there should be regulation of fares. Short distance fares should be totally regulated in order to meet societal needs. For longer distances, especially what might be termed inter-city, there needs to be some regulated fares but also the scope to be innovative and to be able to react to commercial considerations. One aspect of fares is the consideration of restriction on time of travel. Operators have generally increased restrictions on off-peak travel over the years to the detriment of the passenger and there is bewildering variation between operators - not which operator's services are used but which operator sets the fare. Particularly annoying is the recent change to off-peak returns set by Cross Country Trains. There is now a blanket "no travel before 9.30am" restriction whereas previously there was no restriction at all on long distance tickets, even though they were labelled off-peak. This was a reasonable approach given the journey time. We now have the situation where it is possible to get a through train from Stonehaven to Penzance but with no off-peak return fare available. To use the off-peak fare a passenger has to use a later service with two changes.

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: I am comfortable with the present balance and would not wish to see it changed much. Railway services have to be seen in the context of tackling climate change and meeting societal needs. There is some justification for a modest increase in fares where the service has been noticeably enhanced. But it depends on what has been done and where. Airdrie - Bathgate has been reopened with an electrified double track railway carrying a frequent service. High fares on this route would, however, be contrary to a lot of the reasons for the reopening ie regeneration needs.

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: Generally speaking it is sensible to have a difference between peak and off-peak fares although the difference should not be excessive. There are some situations where it is not sensible to have a difference. The situation with respect to very long distance services has been discussed under Q21. There are also situations within Scotland where this is not sensible due to lengthy journey times or infrequent services. This would apply to journeys involving the West Highland line and the Far North lines. I include in this journeys to and from these lines and not just journeys confined to these lines.

## **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments: There are very few stations that I would not object to closure, even if the usage is low. Some low usage stations are in remote rural locations where a service should be maintained on a request basis. There may be few users, but they would be disadvantaged by closure. In most cases there is no alternative public transport. There are some stations where the usage is not high due to the level of service provided. Portlethen has not many trains stopping there. Portlethen is a significant urban area and should be provided with a much better level of service.

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 comments: Local authorities could usefully do this if there was funding provided to them to do this. Local businesses might do this if there was a significant development that they were involved in.

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: I don't see a need to change the present situation

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

Q27 comments: Community sponsorship as currently works at a number of stations.

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 comments: Cross- border services most definitely should continue to operate north of Edinburgh. Indeed I would call for the number to be

increased. See answer under Q16. Cross-border services benefit passengers by giving them a greater assurance of reaching their destination without undue delay and avoidance of the hassle that changing trains involves. Passengers north of Edinburgh benefit from high capacity and high quality services. Taxpayers benefit from the general encouragement this gives to rail travel and therefore a reduced subsidy overall.

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: Cross-border services should not terminate at Edinburgh. Connections are already available at Edinburgh for places not served by through trains. I see very little benefit in having Edinburgh as a hub if by that it is meant that all trains would start and terminate at Edinburgh. Some operators may say it makes operations easier for them if they don't have to bother about north of Edinburgh. They may talk of knock on-effects of delays south or north of Edinburgh on north or south of Edinburgh but these should be capable of being managed. But providing a service to the public suggests that cross-border trains must continue to serve the north of Edinburgh.

### **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 comments: Provision of refreshment services should be maintained much as at present but some gaps in provision on longer distance services filled. Provision for bicycles should be maintained. Provision of WiFi should be extended.

### **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: Prioritise in terms of business usage and so first class has high priority.

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: First-class is an important part of what is offered and needs to be retained and even extended. To be blunt additional seating capacity. has to be met by increased train lengths and more coaches, expensive though that may be. The number of passengers using the railways has been increasing steadily in recent years and so there is some increased revenue that could be used to off-set the costs.

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

Q35 comments: Alcohol misuse is a serious issue. Passengers need to be surveyed on the issue.

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

Q36 comments: Information to passengers needs to be radically improved when things go wrong. Passengers are generally understanding that things do go wrong from time to time but they do want to see that things are being done and that they are kept informed. This applies both on-train and at stations. One aspect of this is the live arrival and departure information. It would be helpful if this information was continued to be available after the actual arrival/departure time for a short time, say 30 minutes. It is particularly important to keep this information available after the scheduled time when there are delays. Use of modern technology should be encouraged. Websites selling tickets need to be reviewed as they do not provide for the full range of possibilities eg going outward via one route and returning by another.

### **Caledonian Sleeper**

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

Q37 comments: Sleeper services should continue to be specified to meet customer expectations.

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 comments: I am content with the present arrangements.

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 comments: The longer the distance the more value there is in a sleeper service. Aberdeen and Inverness and intermediate stations are significant and important destinations so should continue to be served by sleeper services. It is possible that Oban might be a better destination than Fort William for the sleeper service serving the north west. There would need to be a thorough study, including ascertaining the views of passengers and potential passengers, before any change is made. One possibility that should be looked into is the provision of a connecting service from Crianlarich to Oban whilst maintaining the sleeper destination as Fort William.

### **Environmental issues**

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

Q40 comments: