

Anne Martin, Consultation Manager
Rail Directorate
Buchanan House,
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow G4 0HF
email Rail2014@transportscotland.gsl.gov.uk

26th January 2012.

Dear Ms Martin,

Transport Scotland's recent consultation paper on future rail passenger services in Scotland

I write on behalf of all the members of the First ScotRail Stakeholder Advisory Board in relation to the above.

The Board welcomes this wide-ranging consultation which should give rise to an open debate on some potentially sensitive and difficult issues.

In particular, the Board highlighted the following areas:

1. Evaluation of the business case.

It is generally agreed that a sustainable rail service for Scotland is vital to the economic and social infrastructure of the country and therefore we endorse the proposal for a serious examination of the business and environmental case for rail.

2. Length of franchise.

This is clearly a political decision, but the Board favours a longer franchise of 20-25 years, which would encourage investment and long term planning, rather than short term gain.

3. Type of franchise.

Again, a political decision but Transport Scotland may be able to draw on reports from other sectors of the economy on the pros and cons of different franchise mechanisms.

4. The Caledonian sleeper.

The recent commitment from both the UK and Scottish governments, to the tune of £50million each, should facilitate the much needed upgrade of rolling stock. This would then permit promotion of the service as a more effective alternative to air travel.

Further market research could be employed to determine the final destination of sleeper services.

5. Closing stations.

The Board recognises that there is a balance to be struck between service and cost, especially in rural areas but equally acknowledges that it may not be viable to keep open stations that are hardly ever used.

6. WIFI/Mobile phone coverage.

Passengers' need for this will vary across the network. Further research could determine possible demand on specific routes.

Yours sincerely,

Chay Blyth
Chairman
First ScotRail Stakeholder Advisory Board

Board Members.

Sir Chay Blyth
Bob Downes
Howard R. Kirby
James McCormick
Hugh Raven
Marjory Rodger
Fiona Ross
Martin Stepek
Mel Young