

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

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

Surname

Forename

2. Postal Address

Taigh a' Dot		
Castlebay		
Isle of Barra		
Postcode HS9	Phone 01871 810	Email

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 ☐ No

- (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 ☒

or

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

or

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

☒ 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: It is obvious that there is de facto a dual focus in the provision of rail services. However, there is not a single service in Scotland that does not benefit from tourism (and therefore is to some albeit minimum extent seasonal). Accordingly, a service which is 90% social in January might be 100% economic in July. I cannot see how routes could be separated by function on the basis of social and economic, except in the sense that where possible competition should be introduced on (for example) the Edinburgh to Glasgow routes.

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

Q2 comments: No comment, except to observed that perhaps a rolling renewal programme for contracts should be considered, where (for example) one year it is the sleeper, next it is Edinburgh Glasgow, next it is Oban and Fort William, then Inverness, Thurso, and Kyle, then Aberdeen, etc. This would have the benefit of allowing a softer impact to both the user and the operator of changing franchisee, as well as being more open to smaller bidders.

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: If a profit share mechanism is envisaged then it should be ring-fenced for improvements and investment in the rail network, otherwise franchisees will not be sufficiently incentivised to maximise profit.

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: Any penalties imposed on the franchisee should be equivalent across the network. If the penalty is based on traffic carried, all that will happen is that operators will replace deficiencies in central belt provision by “borrowing” staff and/or rolling stock from “thinner” routes. These thinner routes are crucial to the overall connectivity of the travel network. For example, if the Glasgow to Oban train is delayed or cancelled, passengers travelling by ferry could easily be delayed by two days, as many islands are only served by ferry three times a week. Thus the consequences of a minor delay on the rail network becomes a major failure in connectivity. The costs to the user are massive, as two nights overnight accommodation and board have to be found and paid for.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Generally speaking the market would be expected to reward good performance. However, in routes where this will not happen, or only to a limited extent (for example routes operating near capacity, or very thin routes) a positive incentive for good performance would take the place of the market. It would certainly be worth trialling.

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: Any penalties imposed on the franchisee should be equivalent across the network. If the penalty is based on traffic carried, all that will happen is that operators will replace deficiencies in central belt provision by “borrowing” staff and/or rolling stock from “thinner” routes. These thinner routes are crucial to the overall connectivity of the travel network. For example, if the Glasgow to Oban train is delayed or cancelled, passengers travelling by ferry could easily be delayed by two days, as many islands are only served by ferry three times a week. Thus the consequences of a minor delay on the rail network becomes a major failure in connectivity. The costs to the user are massive, as two nights overnight accommodation and board have to be found and paid for.

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

Q11 comments: Regular market research and satisfaction surveys should be an integral part of operation. By definition, few routes will have any real competition so keeping in touch with passenger requirements and aspirations is critical.

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: Regular market research and satisfaction surveys should be an integral part of operation. By definition, few routes will have any real competition so keeping in touch with passenger requirements and aspirations is critical.

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:

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: Passengers will always choose a direct service over a changing service. Not only is it inherently less likely to fail, the level of stress increases with each changeover, even amongst regular users.

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: Regular market research and satisfaction surveys should be an integral part of operation. By definition, few routes will have any real competition so keeping in touch with passenger requirements and aspirations is critical. It is necessary to keep in contact with both rail users and the wider community of potential customers

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: Currently rail is attractive to single travellers. It is also relatively attractive (through friends fares, free children etc.) to groups in excess of three. Where it signally fails to attract modal transfer from cars is in couples. Serious consideration should be given to an off-peak couples fare, travelling together for the entire journey. This could either be BOGOF or the second ticket at a substantial discount. Sensibly priced, and properly publicised, this could result in substantial modal shift to rail from car.

The operator should be encouraged to experiment as much as possible with off peak discounts. There is no sense in running empty trains. At the moment rail travel is attractive to a car owner only if travelling alone, and off peak tickets could be offered for couples travelling the entire route together at 150% of the applicable off peak / advance single to encourage modal shift. On some lighter routes eg. Stranraer, Oban, Fort William and Kyle a winter BOGOF could be offered where the second passenger travels free. Perhaps an incremental scale could even be introduced, where as the group increases in size the additional cost per person reduces. eg.

- 1 passenger = 100%
- 2 passenger = 150%
- 3 passenger = 200 %
- 4 passenger = 250%
- 5 passenger = 300%

This already exists for some group or friends tickets. I am simply suggesting formalising it across the board for off peak tickets, and starting from two

passengers instead of three

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: There is substantial public acceptance of the air fare model which is transparent and open. Travellers can change their plans specifically to benefit from a cheaper fare. Rail pricing is not nearly so transparent, however, so if the air fare model were to be adopted by railways attention would need to be given to the passenger interface.

One of the major selling points of rail however, is the ability to walk up and buy a ticket, which is almost impossible in the air pricing model. There is considerable resentment when a rail passenger knows the fare would have been 50% less the previous day simply because it was a walk-up fare, so care should be taken not to alienate walk-up passengers, especially on already thin services.

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 would not suggest increasing fares beyond current relative levels, even on busy routes, as they are currently at a level which does not encourage much modal shift.

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: The operator should be encouraged to experiment as much as possible with off peak discounts. There is no sense in running empty trains. At the moment rail travel is attractive to a car owner only if travelling alone, and off peak tickets could be offered for couples travelling the entire route together at 150% of the applicable off peak / advance single to encourage modal shift. On some lighter routes eg. Stranraer, Oban, Fort William and Kyle a winter BOGOF could be offered where the second passenger travels free. Perhaps an incremental scale could even be introduced, where as the group increases in size the additional cost per person reduces. eg.

- 1 passenger = 100%
- 2 passenger = 150%
- 3 passenger = 200 %
- 4 passenger = 250%
- 5 passenger = 300%

This already exists for some group or friends tickets. I am simply suggesting formalising it across the board for off peak tickets, and starting from two passengers instead of three.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: At a time when rail use is increasing closing a station is absurd. Innovative solutions should be sought, working with local communities and transport operators to increase traffic rather than closing stations.

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: Properly regulated, I can see no reason why this should not be actively considered. However, the asset should be lent or leased, not sold.

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: There is probably a case for the local community having at least a part share in ownership of stations, as they are the main users and beneficiaries.

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

Q27 comments: Most stations have excess land and buildings around them. These should be made available to local commercial and non-profit organisation at beneficial rates.

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

Q28 comments: Maximum flexibility should be used in this area, in consultation with local communities affected by any changes. There is certainly not "one size which will fit all".

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: The world does not revolve around Edinburgh. Of course services should continue to serve Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William direct from England. Both tourism and business travel would be much the poorer if

they were to cease. Furthermore, modal shift will be much less likely with changing services instead of direct trains.

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: The world does not revolve around Edinburgh. Of course services should continue to serve Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William direct from England! Both tourism and business travel would be much the poorer if they were to cease. Furthermore, modal shift will be much less likely with changing services instead of direct trains. The Oban service may well benefit from being extended to either the north of England or Edinburgh, for example. We should not attempt to emulate the artificial “success” of Heathrow twenty years ago where passengers were forced to use it as a hub. As with air, direct services are vastly preferable. I can see no benefit in using Edinburgh as a hub.

Instead of trying to stop the connectivity at Edinburgh we should be looking at ways to achieve direct services to and from Europe from Scottish stations, eliminating the “hub” of London.

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:

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: Mobile phone and wi-fi provision should not be prioritised over more basic facilities like quiet modern trains, good seating, food and drink

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: I think this is a call best made by the operator in consultation with customers and the government.

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

Q35 comments: I do not think that the consumption of alcohol should be permitted on trains, other than with food. No more than two or three units should be permitted to be sold to each passenger.

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

Q36 comments: Real time screens have worked well for buses, and are now available in shopping centres and other locations. These should be fitted in as many locations as feasible, as they serve not merely as information but also as practical effective advertising. Screens are also very useful on the sides of rolling stock, especially at unstaffed stations.

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 certainly be specified as they are an integral part of Scotland's connectivity to the European rail network via London.

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:

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 sleeper is useful for business meetings in London and the surrounding area, catching rail and air connections, and removing the need to spend a night en route. Early and late trains would not cover the service offered by the sleeper.

The sleeper becomes more useful on the longer journeys such as Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William. Oban is also a very strong contender- perhaps the service could terminate at Oban on alternate days to test demand. Oban is a more important tourist destination than Fort William and is a major ferry terminal.

I personally would not pay much more for better facilities, but I am sure there is a market for some improved provision as a "luxury" service.

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: