

William Brown

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: no opinion

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

Q2 comments: Long enough to allow for proper & effective medium- to long-term investment to take place and a return to be received.

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

Q3 comments: no opinion

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

Q4 comments: no opinion

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

Q5 comments: no opinion

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

Q6 comments: no opinion

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

Q7 comments: no opinion

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

Q8 comments: no opinion

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Poor performance should be penalised. Good performance should not be rewarded by the taxpayer/government. The increasing attraction of passenger numbers and hence revenue should be sufficient reward in of itself.

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: It should be sufficiently localised that areas of consistently poor performance are not offset by areas where performance is above average. Such a scenario would be to the detriment of the passengers who experience regular delays and cancellations.

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

Q11 comments: no opinion

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

Q12 comments: Journey times should be realistic and not padded to exaggerate performance.

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: no opinion

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

Q14 comments: no opinion

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: Increasing allowable standing times should not be an option

for increasing the notional capacity of services. There is little enough room on trains as it is for this to be seen as acceptable, especially given the cost of tickets.

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: Direct services ought to be the primary means by which routes are accomplished.

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: I have little faith that the franchisee will respond to customer demand in a timely manner so government should direct

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

Q18 comments: no opinion

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

Q19 comments: Length of franchise should be sufficiently long enough to allow investment to generate increased passenger numbers via affordable rail fares, comfortable seating and all round quality of service. More satisfied passengers should equal more profit. That alone should 'incentivise' the franchisee to be innovative. If they cannot implement that basic business model then they and the government should be brought to task.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: no opinion

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: no opinion

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: Rail travel needs to remain affordable for it to be viable, that should be obvious. Removing the subsidy as things stand would jeopardise that viability. The franchisee & government need to be more innovative in creating a self-supporting business. That innovation must concentrate on doing so by offering more quality services to generate greater passenger numbers.

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: Off-peak is only of any real value to occasional travellers. Peak travel almost by definition consists mostly of commuters so unless they have off-peak work hours it is difficult to see how off-peak services will meet their needs.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Utility & passenger numbers.

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: Why should this be the case? It is the job of the franchisee to react to such demand for services.

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: no opinion

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

Q27 comments: By having train travel being almost the default choice for travel! Affordable train fares for services with sufficient seating capacity and operating on frequencies that meet the communities travel needs will be the best possible advert for supporting a local station.

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

Q28 comments: No opinion.

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: Yes.

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: A ridiculous notion. Scotland extends north of Edinburgh and contains major population centres which themselves are hubs for peripheral

areas eg Perth. Cross border services must be maintained to the likes of Aberdeen and Inverness.

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: No. Get basic passenger needs sorted first and foremost ie sufficient seating to alleviate crowding.

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: "local" services/short journeys have no need for first class so basic but comfortable seating should be utilised to optimise the carriage capacity.

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

Q35 comments: A general ban would be unwelcome as the vast majority of people I regularly witness drinking do so responsibly. Who actually wants the ban? What evidence is there to support the

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 comments: Yes, the Sleeper service should continue to be operated. It's marketing does not do it justice.

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: no opinion

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:

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: no opinion