

Lars Brunner

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 perceive few merits in splitting the ScotRail franchise at a time when consolidation is the trend in most transport sectors. The ScotRail brand is a strong one, and is already split from an operational point of view into Highland, express etc.

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

Q2 comments: Longer than the current 7 years, to allow for further private investment – the example being the 20 yr Chiltern franchise in England

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: Definitely incentivise good performance, the current SQUIRE system is a good example in this regard.

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: keep it uniform as one whole system for Scotland.

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

Q11 comments: It does so already, can be refined further with emphasis on the to three passenger issue (seating, price, punctuality)

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

Q12 comments: a good balance is struck at the moment. Investment in civil engineering works to provide incremental journey time improvements.

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, and all aspects

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: Inner commuter services could be increased from 10 to 15 minutes, but it is the beginning of a slippery slope – focus should rather be on trying to increase capacity

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 are very important for niche markets, and existing ones should be encouraged, new ones can be planned, but making better use of stock – i.e. direct services provided by units that can detach from other units

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:

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:

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 comments:

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:

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 comments:

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: Absolutely yes. It is often seen by those in the central belt of Scotland, or in London, that north of Edinburgh services are a operational nuisance and costly. Rather it should be seen that they provide direct key links from peripheral areas of the country to major centres of population, often utilising better rolling stock than the current ScotRail franchise provides. More control over the timing & destinations for these services should come to the Scottish ministers, but direct services to destinations such as Aberdeen & Inverness (as well as sleeper services) are vital for business, tourism and local use.

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: Absolutely not. Direct services at (at least) the current level should continue.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Very little that can be done under the present rolling stock situation, although some directly funded vehicles that would form a core ScotRail fleet may be useful.

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

Q32 comments: Facilities should be dictated more by route. As an example, at present services on the West Highland line are operated by rolling stock that is more suited to local suburban services in the central belt. While it is difficult to build a business case for new stock specifically for the WHL, stock could be made to be much more suitable for this route, i.e. better seating (for 4-5 hour journey times), buffet, 1st class provision etc.

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: most people who cause problems through alcohol on services are already inebriated on boarding the train, and the continuation of drink consumption on-board adds to the problem. Better powers for conductors/guards to remove offending passengers from trains, combined with a zero-tolerance approach to drunkenness on-board would go a long way to solving the problem.

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

Q36 comments: through mobile based (app?) based methods that allow users to select exactly the information they need.

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. From a purely commercial point of view sleeper services do not make sense.

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, keep them within the existing ScotRail franchise.

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 appeal of the sleeper is that it provides a seamless and very quick (travelling while you sleep) route from a large swathe of Scotland to London. There may be a decrease in usage of the Glasgow and Edinburgh portions as early and late, but the sleeper still allows arrival into central London before 7am, which no intercity service or flight is going to manage.

As regards connectivity, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness are all logical destination points. In an ideal world, the west highland sleeper would split at Crianlarich (at least in the summer months), as daytime trains do, with one continuing on to Oban, and the other to Fort William – alas this is likely to be prohibitive on cost as well as operational grounds. Perhaps a connecting sprinter service could be provided from Oban that could double as an early morning Oban commuter service, then turning round to do a Oban- Glasgow- Oban trip before finishing the day with a connection into the southbound sleeper?

Facilities on the sleeper is a moot point. Existing Mk3 stock is likely to be fine mechanically for another 10-15 yrs, but the layout and facilities on board, as noted in the consultation, do not meet modern standards. For budget end

travel the current berth layout (without personal facilities) is acceptable, provided the cost of travel is kept low. For Business or first class travel, the size of berth and lack of WC facilities in-cabin is a major negative point. The problems encountered with the abandoned nightstar project in the nineties showed the problems encountered with increased hotel demand if you provide these services, and a major re-build of the Mk3 carriages would be necessary to provide enough space larger cabins with WC facilities, although with the right will, it could be done. Alternatively new stock will be needed.

The sleeper is a service that will never cover its cost, regardless of how it is run it will always require subsidy. I maintain that these services are ESSENTIAL from a business and social point of view and the continuation (and improvement) of these services must be undertaken by the Scottish Ministers and the holders of the ScotRail franchise.

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: