

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

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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 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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 <input type="checkbox"/>
	or
	Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address <input type="checkbox"/>
	or
	Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address <input type="checkbox"/>

(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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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: A dual focus franchise is essential for Scotland as rural and urban/inter-urban rail use are incomparable. Rural rail routes must be covered by the social rail element as rail connectivity to the Highland communities is vital, yet this service will never achieve financial sustainability. Urban and inter-urban rail routes will, in some cases be able to self sustain but franchisee must be willing to implement the social rail element over the economic where required in order to ensure adequate service provision and avoid any potential detriment to the socio-economics of an area.

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

Q2 comments: Future franchises should be for a term of around 15 years- this would allow return on the required investment in rail services. However, in order to avoid complacency and ensure quality of service, there should be review breaks every 5 years. The franchisee would have to evidence quality service provision throughout Scotland at these reviews in order to retain franchise for remainder of term.

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

Q3 comments: Transport Scotland would be default operator, but every effort made to avoid failure with early intervention and assistance being implemented to franchisee in the first instance.

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

Q4 comments: There should be a profit share mechanism that will provide an incentive for the franchisee to make rail services more attractive, thus increasing custom and income.

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

Q5 comments: Should this be considered, advice should be sought on an individual basis from Transport Scotland, Regional Transport Partnerships

and Local Authorities.

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

Q6 comments: Quality of service provision must be central to incentive proposal, franchisee must commit to ongoing investment into rail service for Scotland.

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

Q7 comments: No comment

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

Q8 comments: Sanctions upon franchisee fulfilling franchise commitments should be made clear from the outset. Fines, penalties and other sanctions should be fully investigated and be taken into account at mid term reviews/breaks in service as part of the overall evaluation of franchisee.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: In order to provide best service provision the CTF suggest the use of both incentives for good performance and penalties for poor performance. The Scottish rail service has diverse needs and a franchisee may excel in one area yet have severe shortcomings in another so both should be addressed appropriately.

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: The performance regime should be aligned to routes or service groups as rail provision differs greatly across Scotland. However, there should be an overarching performance system with basic criteria that can be met by the whole of Scotland no matter which route or service group.

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

Q11 comments: Consultation with passengers should be carried out and the issues that are of concern should be addressed as part of the performance

regime.

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

Q12 comments: Timetable adjustments should not be made to increase journey times by franchisee as this will have an adverse impact upon use of rail services, especially on rural routes that are already over 4 hours long eg Inverness to Wick/Thurso. Every effort should be made by the franchisee to reduce journey times although not to the detriment of 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: A Service Quality Incentive Regime may be beneficial, covering all aspects of station and service delivery whether or not managed through the franchise in order to allow measurable monitoring and evaluation.

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

Q14 comments: Sampling of users; Use of private random inspectors to assess train and station quality – this could feed into a Service Quality Incentive Regime.

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: For short train journeys, an increase of standing times may be acceptable – again this suggestion would benefit from consultation with users.

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 should not be reduced as they are attractive to train users. It is particularly appealing for disabled users, older people, passengers with young children, luggage, or business travellers to have access to direct services. Interchange stations should be immediately upgraded by franchisee, ensuring that they are fit for purpose with well signposted platforms, warm waiting room with up to date rail information, refreshments available etc.

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: A recent survey of local rail users in the far north has confirmed that reduced journey times would be the most important improvement that would encourage greater use of train (Wick/Thurso – Inverness). Reduced journey times would make rail travel more attractive to business users in the Caithness/North Sutherland area also which is particularly important during this period of regeneration.

Ideally, the Government should liaise with the franchisee and rail users to determine frequency of services, on an area by area basis. The Government should also take into account the highlighted need for reduction in journey times, especially in rural areas that do not have seasonal fluctuations therefore cannot be construed as being a ‘tourist offering’ ie Wick/Thurso to Inverness journey times.

Consideration should be given to the ‘social rail’ element within rural travel and the Government must ensure that regeneration, and the economic and social stability of a rural area is progressed and enhanced by frequent rail services. The franchisee should commit to investing in reducing rural rail journey times as this will further aid regeneration.

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

Q18 comments: The Caithness Transport Forum would suggest **no.3 Targeted Specification** (as per 5.21) and welcome Transport Scotland’s “desire to improve social inclusion and employment opportunities, and promote tourism” in the Far North.

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

Q19 comments: The Franchisee should actively engage with and listen to local Stakeholders as they are best placed to understand the needs of an area, and the requirements for interconnectivity regionally and nationally. Transport Forums, Regeneration & Development Agencies, Chambers of Commerce, Local Authority and other local stakeholder groups all have valuable knowledge that could be used to assist Franchisees to maximise services. In areas that are undergoing transition or regeneration the gathered information will be particularly valuable to the franchisee in planning service provision.

Delivery of innovative and quality/journey time improvements should be incentivised to encourage franchisee to excel in service provision.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares should be set at a level that will encourage travellers to switch from car journeys to rail travel thus reducing road traffic

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: Current regulated fares should remain as per previous 2 Franchises to ensure that rail travel is affordable. However, the Franchisee could determine some of the lower fares using their knowledge of the pattern of service use in order to encourage take up of the less busy services, thus creating increased revenue and developing greater demand of rail travel. This would promote rail travel, increase passenger use and income.

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: Fares should not reflect the amount of taxpayer subsidy. Rural routes are never likely to become self sustainable however they are an essential part of the rail service under the 'social rail' element.

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: Fares for peak times must not be increased in order to make off-peak travel more appealing. However, there is room for encouraging those who would usually travel by car to travel by rail during off-peak times by offering low cost fares.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: All Scottish Stations should remain open. Stations that have previously been closed should be re-opened if considered to be of socio-economic benefit to the area (example being Halkirk Station in Caithness). Retaining and promoting rural rail stations will encourage new rail passengers, and provide a greener alternative to car travel in remote areas.

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: This proposal would require considerable support from the franchisee, along with their being ultimately responsible. However, there could be good business opportunities here, especially for the tourism sector.

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: Yes, Station management and maintenance would work best under once governance. This responsibility could be undertaken by the franchisee but could also be undertaken by an arms length organisation without having any detrimental impact.

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

Q27 comments: There is already evidence of community involvement with art work projects, floral displays etc. This could be built upon by the franchisee, and the local rail station could become a focal point of information of what is available in an area – from hotels and accommodation to nature walks, outdoor activities, sightseeing, towncentre shops, food and drink etc. Plasma screen, maps, leaflets, advertisements should all be to hand for visitors when they come into a station. If communities felt they benefitted from attracting new visitors/increased duration of visit then they would continue to feed rail station with up to date information of their area.

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

Q28 comments: All stations should be well lit with up to date information available. Where toilet facilities are available, these should be open for use for the same period as the station is open. Car parks at rail stations should be well signposted and lit for security reasons and in order to make the station seem attractive and safe to passengers.

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, cross-border services should continue to go north of Edinburgh! Cross-border services are essential for connectivity from

Inverness or Aberdeen, and in turn, their wider connecting areas. Wherever possible passengers should benefit from end to end journeys, rather than several changes of trains to complete a journey.

Cross-border services benefit both passengers and taxpayers as they allow business use of rail thus assisting the UK economy. Use of the cross-border services was particularly advantageous for Highland businesses during the disruption caused by volcanic dust last year.

The DfT and Scottish Ministers should endeavour to work together in order to maximise direct UK connectivity for business and leisure users.

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: No – a major benefit of cross-border services is avoiding Waverley for passengers continuing north. It is essential to have a continuous transport link the length of the UK.

Waverley is already busy and crowded and it is doubtful whether it even has the capacity to cope with becoming a hub for passengers travelling northwards.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Consider use of an arms length organisation for supply of rolling stock, as it may be a better option than leasing from outside bodies.

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

Q32 comments: Basic comfort should be available on all trains, no matter which route is being served. Every train user should enjoy basic cleanliness, comfortable temperature, safe boarding and alighting, clean toilets and good information flow. This is especially important on longer journeys.

Catering should be available for journeys exceeding 1 hour, also wi-fi and power sockets for laptops. This is becoming increasingly important for business use, as travel time may then be used constructively as passenger has full connectivity to conduct business from train. These measures will be welcomed by all passengers, business and leisure.

There should be increased space available for bicycle storage, as current provision is very restrictive.

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: Priority would be provision of wi-fi for journeys with a duration exceeding 1 hour.

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: Demand for first class seating should be monitored, as should demand for additional seating capacity. A balance can then be struck to best fit the needs of each service.

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

Q35 comments: Consideration should be taken of the amount of leisure use of trains, where there are likely to be no constraints of driving. Drunkenness should not be tolerated however, and any passengers exhibiting anti-social behaviour should be removed from the train at the earliest opportunity.

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

Q36 comments: On board displays on all carriages, all staff to have relevant up-to-date information and be willing to share with customer. Continued development of website. More information regarding linkage to other modes of transport eg bus timetables would be advantageous to passengers. Franchisee should liaise closely with bus, ferry and air transport providers in order to provide seamless transport provision across Scotland.

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: The UK and Scottish Government's recent investment in the cross-border rail service is welcome evidence of the need to continue this well used service. Sleeper services should continue to be specified, as they are vital for business, as well as having a social benefit.

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: As long as the service is not compromised in any way, it would be acceptable as part of the overall contract or as a separate entity.

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 is to travel the distance during usual sleep period, thereby making most efficient use of business or leisure time. Also, the sleeper is almost guaranteed to have the passenger at their chosen destination at the time specified – relying on air travel can be more prone to disruption due to unforeseen circumstances (fog, volcanic ash etc).

We would agree that the current 3 sleeper destinations are correct – Inverness is the capital of the Highlands, connecting to more remote areas including those supporting the renewable energy industry and northern oil and

gas development, and the decommissioning of the nuclear power plant; Aberdeen is the major centre for oil & gas related business and requires good connectivity to London; Fort William is a major tourist destination in west Scotland. The sleeper service provides a green alternative to road and air travel to each of these destinations and is reliable.

Consultation should be undertaken with users of the service in order to understand what customers want. Consideration should also be given to increasing standard of first class sleeper service, and subsequently raising the fare. This would allow lower fares for standard sleeper travel, and would be likely to increase both first class and standard usage of sleeper 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: Franchisee's carbon emission targets must meet Government set targets and be strictly adhered to. Regular monitoring and evaluation of environmental KPIs, have a clear role in the overall performance regime of the franchisee.