

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

Fife Council

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

Surname

Clarke

Forename

Phil

2. Postal Address

Fife Council

Transportation and Environmental Services

Bankhead Central

Glenrothes

Postcode KY7 6GH

Phone

Email phil.clarke@fife.gov.uk

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 x ☒ 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?

Focus services more on social and economic requirements

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

15 years plus to enable greater investment in infrastructure and rolling stock

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

Related to investment in infrastructure and rolling stock

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

None – profits should be limited with excess going back into capital investment in infrastructure and rolling stock

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

Profits and salaries should be fixed to reasonable levels and related to service performance

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

Relate salaries and profits to performance and investment

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

No comment

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

Financial penalties

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

both

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

Performance targets will be harder to achieve on some routes – West highland line services being an example. Delays on these routes are less critical and so should not be penalised to the same degree as key commuter routes for example

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

Difficult as passengers will have a variety of demands and opinions as to what constitutes a good service – basing performance on passenger feedback surveys, for example, would be a can of worms that most companies would be reluctant to sign up to

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

Journey times should be realistic – it's pointless trying to set optimistic journey times which are rarely achieved due to reasonable circumstances. Also there is a large safety aspect relating to journey times which may be compromised if performance targets are set too high.

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?

There needs to be some link to profits and salaries of companies to service quality. People these days have little tolerance of companies making large profits and paying senior staff vast salaries and bonuses' even though service is poor. It should cover all aspects of the rail service

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

Independent checks

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?

10 minutes seems about right but train capacity should be increased on busy lines – maybe there needs to be more flexibility in train sizes – maybe carriages could be removed after key destinations to prevent empty rolling stock being run around the network – this seems an opportunity for better technology to make this more feasible.

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?

Difficult to answer this as there are so many variables and different locations have different demands and issues. You need both as it's important that smaller stations and communities have good links to key destinations but rapid journey times between key destinations are a major incentive for rail use. There seems to have been a move to reducing end to end journey times in recent years despite the majority of trips being between intermediate stations in many cases (Aberdeen to Edinburgh being a case in point). Plus you may need a different set up in peak times than off peak – i.e. in peak times direct services from local stations are more important than at off peak times

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?

Government and Local Authorities should have complete say on this but customer demands must be factored in

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

No comment

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

Franchisee's will only be motivated by profit so innovation must be related to

costs

Scottish rail fares

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

Getting more people to use rail over other 'unsustainable' modes of transport i.e. car and air travel

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)?

All fares should be regulated by government with input from local authorities being accommodated. Flexibility should be allowed in standard fares i.e. if passengers are buying tickets on the train or at departure points then these should have the highest cost with multi journey tickets, pre booked tickets and off peak fares being heavily discounted.

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?

Fare increase should be related to real cost increases and take cognizance of issues such as cost increase of other transport modes. If network sections have been enhanced then should these not therefore run more efficiently and therefore cheaper?

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?

The problem is most people have to travel during peak times so it is wrong to penalise them – they haven't the option to travel off peak as they need to get to work for certain times. Given the current climate of pay freezes / reductions and difficulties in finding any job, let alone jobs close to home it seems grossly unfair to force people into paying high travel costs on the basis that they have no choice. Similarly high peak fares will simply make people use other modes of transport such as air and car transport. As off peak services get used less then it's actually off peak fares that should be higher but this will also reduce rail usage. Note comments in 21 above re costs of pre booked and multi journey tickets versus tickets bought on the day of travel

Scottish stations

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

Usage and demand as well as potential to reduce reliance on private cars and connect remote communities with key destinations. For a true public service cost should be of a low priority for these decisions. Station costs could be massively reduced if Network rail were more tightly regulated and controlled

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?

Station locations become more demand lead and will be provided where required. This will greatly benefit local authorities planning housing and business development areas if they know that new station provision becomes a realistic proposition rather than a beauracritic, costly and time consuming nightmare. Obviously regulation and control is needed but this should be done at a strategic level by the Government.

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?

No – flexible approaches should be adopted and in many cases station infrastructure will be best managed by local authorities

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

By being encouraged to use the train services through regulation of fares and service provision. If they are using the services they will more likely be encouraged to also manage aspects of station provision

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

No need for elaborate stations at most locations – you just need to be able to get on the train safely. Most stations should be unstaffed

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?

Yes absolutely. It is crucial that we tempt more people away from domestic air travel and onto rail services. This will only happen if long distance services are direct, fast and cheap. Borders are notional concepts and have little impact on people's destinations. HS2 should be pushed into Scotland ahead of the government target of 2026 (or whatever) as this is the only way that emission hungry air travel can be reduced. Services should be specified through agreement with a focus on demand and service provision

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?

No absolutely not – you don't have to change planes for domestic flights so why change trains. Ultimately if you force people to make interchanges, you are increasing the inconvenience of that mode of travel and so they will use others.

Rolling stock

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

Better technology, fixed term renewal programmes, buying best quality rather than cheapest to reduce on going costs, government loans to companies to buy new stock or even provision of rolling stock by the government and leased to franchisees

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

Somewhere to sit, somewhere to put your bike and a loo – everything else is luxury. The current set up of tea trolleys on intercity routes seems to work well

Passengers – information, security and services

33. How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

Seems to be an expensive luxury with no benefits – most people have access to the internet via mobile phones in any case so don't really see the point of wi fi these days

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?

Scrap first class and make standard class of a high enough standard for this not to be a problem

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

Don't penalise the responsible drinkers – just have suitable security arrangements to prevent anti social behaviour. Most problems are caused by people who have already been drinking so banning alcohol on the trains will have little affect on anti social behaviour

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

I don't think it can - there are live info boards at all stations, what more is needed?

Caledonian Sleeper

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

You must consider the best way of providing a service that is competitive with air travel. Given the increase in speed of trains, overnight services would seem to be getting increasingly irrelevant – better to invest in Scottish HS2

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?

See comment above

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?

Relevant for end to end travellers (ie the south of England and the North of Scotland) but not for everybody else but still offer a viable alternative to air or car travel. London to Oban or Inverness would be better than London to Glasgow and Edinburgh. It must be cheaper than air travel however.

Environmental issues

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

None – specify rolling stock standards instead. More people using the train is better for emissions so this is the overriding priority