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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: Potentially greater use - economic should be

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

Q2 comments: 10 years plus - tied in with regular performance reviews - longer franchise would encourage investment.

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

Q3 comments: performance indications - punctuality, cleanliness, etc.

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

Q4 comments: none

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

Q5 comments: Safety and commitment to regular audits of performance levels

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

Q6 comments: Deferred bonus structure for exceeding agreed performance levels.

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

Q7 comments: Holdback (on quarterly basis ??) of performance bonus.

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

Q8 comments: Penalties to be agreed - sliding scale depending on how far short they fall of agreed performance levels.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: 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?

Q10 comments: Probably former - at least would need to take some recognition of different geography and weather throughout the country

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

Q11 comments: Likely passenger issues are punctuality, cleanliness and service - these must be taken into account

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

Q12 comments: Different performance goals may relate to shorter journeys, but payment model should be the same for all

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 Yes

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: Permitted standing time limit is often exceeded at present -

this should become another KPI on which the services are assessed.

Standing should be minimised as matter of safety and current target of 10 minutes should not be exceeded - train capacity may be expanded by using additional rolling stock or looking at reduced seat pitch for journeys of less than c. 30 minutes

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: No - would not be generally acceptable. Outcomes would probably be increased use of private transport

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: Probably the latter, but would have to have clear consultation process

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: Scheduling may be one of the performance measures.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Maximise utilisation

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: Social fares (age, geographical areas, etc.) should be regulated - others may be subject to market forces, but must take into account geographical factors.

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: Subsidy should vary by region, so would be difficult to implement common strategy across network, Fare increases should be linked to a national index (RPI or CPI), to be agreed at start of franchise. Higher fares for upgraded lines would have to be matched with improved service levels.

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 c. 50% of peak ?? - it should help to encourage switch but might also be worth thinking about higher peak fares for shorter time windows to encourage off-peak travel.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Population demographics

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: May be some safety issues, and may result in different service levels at some stations. Would have to have clear set of specifications about safety standards and service levels to be provided,

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: This question would require further consideration.

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

Q27 comments: Community groups should be given opportunity to participate in / comment on any proposals relating to their local station

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: Yes - most definitely. Current cross-border services are an acceptable alternative to flying if travelling from north of central belt to London. This would be much less attractive if one had to change in Edinburgh or Glasgow. Cross border services supplement Scotrail, reducing resources required. Specification of services to be offered should be joint decision between Westminster and Holyrood.

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 - definitely not - and none, except the EARL was built.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Leasing ?? Longer franchise with periodic refurbishment of stock ??

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

Q32 comments: Toilets, WiFi, Catering on any journeys over one hour. Toilets on any journey of less than one hour

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: Both are increasingly imperatives - particularly where journey exceeds one hour. Consistency of service also important - there are many "shadow" areas within present network.

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: Could think about dual purpose seating with moveable dividers and / or different service offerings for first class passengers. There is always likely to be some demand for first class accommodation, particularly on longer journeys.

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

Q35 comments: Present policy of allowing alcohol on "normal" journeys but banning where additional risks may be present seems to work OK

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

Q36 comments: More information on screens at stations, Option for text messages to customer telephones if requested.

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: Should continue to be specified in some form, with requirement to replace / refurbish existing rolling stock.

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: Separate contract would be interesting - perhaps should be subject of separate invitation to tender to elicit what interest other operators might show in running this service.

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: Appeal of the service is that one can relax on joining the train, the ambience on board is good and one can arrive at one's destination refreshed and ready for work - particularly if using the lounges at Euston or Aberdeen

Aberdeen and Inverness should continue to be served by sleeper.

Oban may be a better destination than FW - but this service does support a lot of stations which would otherwise be difficult to access, so some alternative - split train at Tyndrum ?? - should at least be considered.

WiFi - En-Suite facilities (could be shared between 2 cabins - shower facilities on board ?? - and yes, would consider paying for improved facilities.

As noted above rolling stock does require replacement / refurbishment.

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: Fuel consumption / passenger mile, CO2 emissions, waste recycling