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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:I am amenable to the ScotRail franchise having a commercial element, though some profits should be reinvested. At present our roads network is provided as a public service (funded by the tax-payer) and there is no reason other than historical why the railway network should be treated differently. In fact, there are two reasons for public investment in the railway network: reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase productivity in the economy and community (faster travel; people can work on trains, but not in cars). Fares for travel should then focus on funding or part funding the costs of rolling stock and its operation.

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

Q2 comments: No strong opinion.

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

Q3 comments:No strong opinion.

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

Q4 comments: Franchise profits should be shared, but I cannot offer an opinion to the mechanism. The railway network should not be run for profit but treated as a public service.

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

Q5 comments:Only for running non-core services, such as sales of refreshments and WiFi networks.

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

Q6 comments:The incentives and ensuring value for money are not in conflict

(as implied by the question) if the railway network is viewed as a public and the franchise shares some of its profits for reinvestment. Over the last 4 decades rail usage has grown in usage despite customers facing a cost for using it that **has exceeded** the cost of car travel in that same period.

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

Q7 comments: This question is not sufficiently well defined for me to provide an answer.

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

Q8 comments: This question is not sufficiently well defined for me to provide an answer.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Incentives for good performance.

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 former.

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

Q11 comments: Ticket inspectors on the train have direct contact with passengers and their views should be given special attention.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times are secondary to a) provision of a service, e.g. EGIP should not compromise train services in north Glasgow b) reliability of the service, as measured by frequency of cancellations or severe delays or overcrowded carriages.

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. It must cover all aspects.

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

Q14 comments:Asking passengers whilst they are travelling on the train itself.

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:A standing time of 10 min is appropriate.

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:This is a too broad a question to answer here, but in general direct services are important and should be prioritised over those requiring a change.

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:The Scottish Executive and local authorities should direct these because the railway network should be treated as a public service.

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

Q18 comments:Question is not clear.

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

Q19 comments:Allow services to be run for short experimental runs, e.g. assessing demand on the Glasgow Queen St High Level to Anniesland service on a Sunday could be tested.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: See Q21.

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: Journeys by train, bus and car should be compared. The needs of an urban community are clearly different for those that are rural and so the two should be treated differently. Incentives should be made to make public transport more attractive than private transport. These incentives should focus on convenience and service provision rather than on fares.

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: Do we subsidise the road networks? The railway network should be treated as a tax-payer funded public service for reasons of reducing greenhouse gases and other pollution together with investment in the economy (people can work on trains more than buses or cars). Profits can possibly be made in charging rolling stock operators but this should be reinvested in the network itself with a view to making the service as frequent and reliable as possible and with a view to opening new lines. This is in no way in conflict with profit-making if handled correctly with the network+service as a whole needing to be in front, rather than any particular line or service. In fact, investment in the railways should be viewed as an investment in the local economy, community and environment.

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: This should be decided on a line-by-line basis.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: **No stations should be closed.** Too many were closed in the 1950s and 1960s and the fact that many have been reopened since then should make this obvious.

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 is to be welcomed as it would direct services to where they are needed at a local level.

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: Investment should be seen as in the environment and community as well as in capital. Residents and local authorities should be given a strong say on how their stations are run. For that reason a single, Scotland-wide organisation is undesirable.

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

Q27 comments: First of all – **DO NOT CLOSE ANY STATIONS OR REDUCE SERVICES BELOW THEIR CURRENT LEVELS.** Stations should be regarded as a significant public space for their community. Residents should be encouraged to sponsor benches, flower boxes/beds and other features at the station. If this is done then some people will ensure that these are maintained providing for an attractive as well a useful public space.

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

Q28 comments: Unmanned stations, manned stations with no facilities (e.g. shops) and stations with facilities provided for traders. Car parking should be provided wherever possible for suburban train stations.

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, of course. This is a very strangely worded question, why north of Edinburgh when most central belt residents do not live at Edinburgh? These services clearly need collaboration between Westminster and Holyrood ministers.

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: Again, this is a ridiculous question. I live in Glasgow as do the group of people on whose behalf I am filling in this form. Interchange stations should be provided at **BOTH of these Scottish cities**, not just at the smaller of the two and perhaps even in the central belt between them, if feasible.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: This is a hard question to answer without specialist knowledge, but the focus should not be on the cost, but on the most efficient way of using available funds to improve quality of the service.

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, sufficient seating should be provided on all but the shortest of lines. Third party traders could provide other services such as refreshments and wifi as these are not core to the train service.

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: Essential for long journeys, say 30 min or more, less crucial for shorter, urban journeys.

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: No strong opinion.

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

Q35 comments: Alcohol is not the cause of antisocial behaviour although it is correlated with it. This should be left at the discretion of the police recommendations as is done for match days.

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

Q36 comments: This is generally good at the moment.

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: Absolutely yes. It is **NOT** a matter just for profit, but a vital public service. If done correctly, it could generate a profit which could be reinvested in the network as a whole.

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 strong opinion, other than it should not be left to pure commercial interests but be treated as a public 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: The sleeper service needs investment in general and should be seen as a vital and time-saving link with the SE of England and London in particular. Sleeper services should be considered for all long distance UK routes. The sleeper service **cannot** be adequately replaced by early and late train services.

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: Increasing passenger numbers. As trains are the most environmentally efficient mode of transport in almost every scenario, increasing passenger numbers by improving services is key.