

## Consultation Questions

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### 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: Dual focus would allow maximum benefits from most profitable routes, allowing more investment for all routes and encourage the operator to deliver as good a service as possible. Inter-city and the most used commuter routes should be considered economic. Rural areas should be considered in a social element.

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

Q2 comments: Maximum of 10 years depending on performance – performance review every 5 years. Unsatisfactory performance should mean termination of franchise. Concerned about lack of competition and incentive to improve current railway network with such long terms.

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

Q3 comments: Performance bonds should be used – these appear to be more secure and offer the best deal for rail passengers.

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

Q4 comments: Customers should receive discounts on fares according to the level of company profits.

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

Q5 comments: Third parties should only be involved in limited areas, e.g. on-board catering and catering facilities at stations initially. Following a review and passenger consultation, third parties may be given greater responsibilities such as operating stations.

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

Q6 comments: Current model where operator must leave station as it was given to them should remain with an added bonus for any improvements made to the station.

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

Q7 comments: Performance bond/parent company guarantee should be set fairly low but not too low as to severely endanger the taxpayer.

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

Q8 comments: Fines and a ban on bidding for new franchises for unsatisfactory performance.

### **Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

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

Q9 comments: Good performance should be incentivised as well as poor performance penalised.

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: Performance should reflect routes/service groups – Scotland has hugely varied rail network with different needs in different areas.

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

Q11 comments: Inviting passengers to complete short surveys online or at staffed stations when purchasing tickets.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times should always be as short as possible – there is no justification at all for increasing journey times.

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, all aspects should be assessed.

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

Q14 comments: Inviting local passengers to give feedback on their stations.

### **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: Standing time limit could be increased. Concerned over moves to increase the capacity limit if this would not involve more seats. Different standing time limits should be assigned to different routes although an absolute maximum of 30 minutes should be in place.

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, direct services are preferable to greater use of interchange stations. Opportunities only for the operator, cannot see benefits to passengers.

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: Government should direct service provision – franchisee would most likely focus solely on profits which could be very damaging to rural areas where rail services are a lifeline.

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

Q18 comments: Targeted specification.

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: Fares should allow best value for money for passengers but ensure company is not operating at a loss on majority of routes. Some routes

may have to incur a loss, e.g. Far North line and so should receive a larger subsidy.

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: Only inter-city fares should be unregulated but government should still ensure these are not too inflated. Suburban routes should be regulated to protect wide range of passengers, some of which will likely be on a limited budget. Should not be considered on a geographical basis; too many variations within areas such as Strathclyde.

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: Contribution should be split equally between taxpayer and passenger. Fare increases should be kept at current level of RPI + 1%. Do not agree with proposal to apply higher increases to newly enhanced areas – fare increases should be applied equally across the whole network.

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: Difference should be between 10-20%. May encourage some people to switch but others will have no choice but to travel at peak times – this should be taken into account.

## **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments: Take passenger usage numbers into account but also assess essential services nearby, e.g. schools, hospitals, etc. Consider if a town/city has several stations close by and walking distance between each would not exceed 15 minutes.

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: Huge variations in service quality could occur – measures should be taken to ensure minimum standards are met however healthy competition could be achieved.

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: Management and maintenance of stations should be left to Network Rail, not the franchisee.

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

Q27 comments: Benefits of supporting stations should be emphasised; awards could be given to local clubs for good work.

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

Q28 comments: Categories in the report are satisfactory. Toilets should be provided at stations with services less frequent than every 15 minutes. All stations should have disabled access and taxi phone numbers displayed.

## **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, these provide a vital link to communities and create competition and increased choice for passengers however services should be terminated at Dundee instead of Edinburgh. Scottish Ministers should specify

cross-border services.

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:

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: Increased use of electric trains; sourcing cheapest possible company to make trains.

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

Q32 comments: Every train should have a toilet and CCTV on board. Two toilets should be provided on busiest trains.

## **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: WiFi should be concentrated initially on inter-city services and ones which serve airports.

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: First-class seating should be withdrawn; 0.6% of ticket sales and 5% of revenue are unlikely to have a significant effect.

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

Q35 comments: Scotland's alcohol problem should be considered enough evidence to ban alcohol on all trains at all times except alcohol purchased on board on inter-city services.

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

Q36 comments: @ScotRail twitter account should be displayed in stations to advise customers of latest developments. On-board staff should have access to an information system which will allow them to keep passengers informed.

## **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: Sleeper services should become fully commercial.

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: They should be separated from the main 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: Sleeper train allows people to get the most out of their time as valuable day time is not spent travelling. Inverness and Aberdeen are correct destinations however Oban could be considered instead of Fort William.

### **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: Level of carbon dioxide emissions, recycling rates.