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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: A dual focus allows assessment of the social value of economic services and of the economic importance of social rail services, for example in rural areas. Both foci are necessary and important.

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

Franchises are better pitched at 10-15 years with break points rather than for shorter periods because of the demands of investment in eg rolling stock contracts and the need to have a sufficiently long time frame to merit investment.

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

Q3 comments:

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

Franchisees will want to make a return on their investment, and a reasonable rate of return should be allowed for. Above this figure, profits should be shared in the same proportion that investment costs are shared.

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

On the Hull Trains model, but only where there are sufficient paths that franchised services should not be disadvantaged.

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

By rewarding excellent service as well as penalising poor service

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

Q7 comments:

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

There should always be the possibility of Government's walking away from a franchisee at a contract break point for a specified level of failure to meet franchise obligations, which should include standards of service output measures.

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

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

Definitely incentivise both - see 6 above.

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

With actual routes or service groups, otherwise a good Edinburgh-Glasgow service could eclipse awful rural services throughout the rest of the country.

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

By designing good standard of service criteria in conjunction with Passenger Focus and taking regular surveys on trains, online and through focus groups.

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

Journey time is important, and there should be a ratio extension to the advertised time to take account of minor delay factors so that trains should always arrive within [say]102% of the time allowed for the journey. Adding an automatic 5 minutes to a 30 minutes' journey and saying it is on time is much more annoying than adding the same 5 minutes to a 2 hour journey.

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; covering all aspects of the services provided.

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

Regular inspection of station and train toilets.

### **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: Straphanging for even 10 minutes requires straps to hang from! As someone who has regularly stood from Haymarket to Polmont or Falkirk, I regard the 10 minute rule as a fiction and would like to see it paid attention to, rather than relaxed.

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: Some passengers would immediately change transport mode if interchange services are imposed on them - these are a minor hazard for the fit and able but are often too much for infirm, elderly, disabled passengers and for those travelling with children under 5 or with heavy luggage. Where an interchange is essential it should be on the level, ideally as for example Eurostar to TGV at Lille, with trains on neighbouring lines.

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 should frame the range within which the franchisee should provide services, for example, 'services at least once an hour, with a journey time maximum of xx minutes, and clockface departures'.

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

One which holds the balance between passenger expectation [more, faster, cheaper] and the reality of line and rollingstock limitations, yet allows some room for innovation!

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

Q19 comments: By encouraging thinking 'out of the box' rather than 'but that's the way it's always been done . . . '

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments: To keep the transport mode viable and affordable, with support both from Government and the fares box. If all support is sought from the fares box, the railway will be priced out of existence - an interesting example here is the incentive given to older potential passengers to move from rail to bus by the provision of the bus pass.

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)?

The current mix, with some regulated standard fares, some franchisee controlled special tickets and some local authority subsidy schemes [these are very patchy] is almost too complex. Some fares need to be regulated by Government to set a framework; the journey type then has more attraction to me than the journey area. Peak and off peak should be determined in the morning by time of arrival in the city location and by time of departure from it in late afternoon.

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?

see 20 above

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: see 21 above and comment about bus passes at 20 above

## Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: rationalise station facilities to one station in a locality and allow others to remain open as access points. Loss of access points does puts potential passengers off.

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?

These depend on the location!

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?

Yes, but probably not the franchisee, which has an incentive to reduce staffing of ticket offices, as I understand that ticket revenue derived from offices goes into the rail settlement plan, with only a proportion coming to the company involved, while that from tickets sold on trains goes directly and in full to the company selling the ticket.

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

Q27 comments: What about linkage with initiatives like transition towns or sustainability campaigns?

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

Q28 comments: Access point [unstaffed, ticket machine, fewer than 100 passengers/day], staffed with minimum services [as above plus toilets, disabled access, bike storage for those with under 1000 passengers/day] staffed with more facilities [as above plus proper waiting facilities, possibly cafe, car hire facilities and commercial outlets] for larger 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?

Yes! They only stop in Glasgow Central because it's a terminus. Please see comments at Q16 above. Cross border services benefit passengers and taxpayers by allowing through journeys. They are a poorly exploited potential asset to tourism. They should be specified by agreement.

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: More benefits would accrue if Waverley were a Transport Hub rather than simply a Rail Hub - there is no rail link to the airport and the bus station is some distance away, making it easier for passengers who have to use these modes for part of their journey to opt for services other than rail.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments:

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

Toilets, luggage storage, space for wheelchairs, bikes and buggies [not one space for all three], catering trolley for journeys of 60 minutes+, wifi internet access, quiet area.

## **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: see list order above.

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?

One help would be to have a wheelchair space in First Class where it exists.

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

Many passengers are very uncomfortable on trains hours after major sporting events because of passengers who were drunk at the time of boarding. BTP needs to address the right of staff to refuse access to severely drunk people.

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

This has improved markedly. Announcements need to be made, if not at every station, at predictable intervals.

## **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: Continue to specify, at least for the Highlander

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?

Option within the main franchise would be preferable to a stand alone 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?

The importance of the Highlander service to centres without airports is inestimable and it offers an alternative for those who cannot fly, or prefer not to. Early and late services from Edinburgh and Glasgow must place a question over the Lowlander service, but only as regards passengers who live in these cities - even from Dunblane these do not allow early arrival in London as there are few early connections, and Oban is currently connected via the Lowlander from Glasgow.

### **Environmental issues**

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

Passenger questionnaires should ask what other mode passengers would have considered and estimate the difference in emissions.