

## 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

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Falkirk Council

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### 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*

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?

#### Q1 comments:

A dual focus franchise does have some merits as it not only looks at those areas that currently benefit from good service provision, but will also look at areas for social reason which will benefit from improvements or completely new service provision. Social inclusion should be welcomed and included in the franchise as it forms a cornerstone of national, regional and local transport policy. However, it is unclear how a dual franchise will be managed.

#### Economic Rail

The current central belt commuter routes and routes to other main cities would be best suited to the economic rail franchise element. Care should be taken, as the financial risk is borne by the operator, that it's not only the popular services (e.g. Edinburgh / Glasgow) that benefit and that there is no overall reduction in service provision for the less commercially viable services. A minimum level of service must be included if this franchise model is taken forward.

#### Social Rail

Services which will promote social inclusion and for areas that will depend on rail as a viable form of public transport. A clear ticket price strategy should be established given that this type of franchise is by management fee only.

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

#### Q2 comments:

Shorter franchise periods give greater control to the Scottish Government, but do not necessarily represent good value for money. Going through a new franchise consultation / process is a lengthy process and doing this more frequently will increase the costs. Also, there will be reduced incentive for the operators to introduce new and upgrade existing rolling stock if shorter length franchises are introduced.

The current 10 year franchise allows greater investment but there should be regular review dates and allowance for any operator to walk away from the franchise. Any operator must be obliged to operate the franchise for a minimum period (say 5 years).

Specific service franchise contracts e.g. the Sleeper service will have the same issues in terms of investment in rolling stock and should be of the same duration as any main franchise.

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

Q3 comments:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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

Q4 comments:

An agreed level of profit for the franchisee should be agreed and set at a reasonable level. Profit sharing could be of use but it may be better to link any profit above an agreed level to the level of subsidy being provided. More profit less subsidy.

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

Q5 comments:

The use of third parties should be restricted as this will lead to confusion for passengers. It may affect ticket pricing on similar routes and may lead to third parties being relegated to the less popular and hence more expensive (to provide) routes.

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

Q6 comments:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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

Q7 comments:

Performance bonds / parent company guarantees should be set at a reasonable level to avoid potential risk to the taxpayer but also not at such a high level that will discourage companies from bidding for the franchise.

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

Q8 comments:

Fines and possible removal as franchisee should be available to the Scottish Government to ensure that franchise commitments are met.

**Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

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

Q9 comments:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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 be measured against actual routes rather than service groups. The regime should be for the whole of Scotland so that all routes can be measured on the same basis regardless of location and time of day of the services and routes being measured.

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

Q11 comments:

By measuring delays as a percentage of journey time and compensating passengers for delays in excess of 15 minutes. The regime must also take account of passenger comfort including overcrowding of peak time commuter services and not just focus on cleanliness and graffiti of the trains.

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

Q12 comments:

Journey times and performance should have equal status as they are intrinsically linked. Both have an effect on rail patronage, good reliability and journey times with better rolling stock may encourage greater use of the rail network.

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:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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

Q14 comments:

The use of a self monitoring system is welcomed, however any results should be available for scrutiny and audit as well as spot checks by the Scottish Government to ensure that the information collected is a true representation of the train and station quality. In assessing train quality consideration should be given to passenger comfort in respect to overcrowding on peak time commuter services and not focus solely on cleanliness, graffiti etc.

### **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:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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:

Increasing the number of rail to rail and rail to other mode interchange stations will be very reliant on the available track capacity and whether integrated timetabling or high frequencies can be achieved. If waiting times for connections at these interchanges is excessive they will be unsuccessful. There is also the knock on effect to national routes north and south should these interchanges be introduced. Stations currently on the west and east coast mainlines that could be used as interchanges will use up track capacity if these other shorter services are introduced. This will affect freight movements as well as passenger movements.

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:

A combination of both would perhaps be the best method. The Government should set out minimum criteria to be met but allow the Franchisee the opportunity to explore other options to maximise use of the passenger network, ultimately the Franchisee should demonstrate to the Government what level of service provision they see being introduced over and above the minimum level.

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

Q18 comments:

A targeted specification setting out minimum criteria should form the next ScotRail franchise. This will allow any Franchisee some freedom to be creative in providing services over and above this level. Any criteria proposed by the Franchisee above the minimum level must be agreed by the Government prior to implementation.

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

Q19 comments:

If there is a need to incentivise innovative provision, it should be up to the Franchisee to come up with any innovations in provision without having to reward them for doing so.

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments:

The rationale and purpose of fares will be to provide a fair pricing structure and regulated fares throughout the whole rail network. Currently Strathclyde

benefits from cheaper tickets due to subsidy from SPT. This makes rail travel more attractive in the west than in the east.

The fares policy should try to encourage more use of the rail network particularly in the off peak where running costs per passenger are higher than in the peak.

The current ATCO/COSLA National Blind Travel Scheme should be abolished and free travel for blind people should be included in the Franchise.

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:

All fares should be regulated where possible so that all routes benefit from affordability, social inclusion, leisure and wider socio/economic objectives. Strathclyde currently benefits from more highly subsidised fares than other regions. All areas should be treated equally regardless of location or type of service provided.

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:

Fares should be set at a reasonable level and subsidised where necessary. There is the danger of overpricing tickets to reduce subsidy but this may result in loss of passenger numbers. The current mechanism for increasing regulated fares seems reasonable at present, however it may need to be reviewed if the economic climate changes further.

The current EGIP project was identified by the Scottish Government it would somewhat unfair to pass this cost directly onto the user (i.e. passengers) when you consider the recent motorway upgrades that have been completed whilst no cost has been passed directly to the vehicles now using them.

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:

Most off-peak journeys are for off-peak pursuits like shopping. The majority of commuters using the train for their journey to work have no option but to travel in the peak time so these people will not benefit from any switch unless there is a review of when the peak periods are. More should be done to make the public aware of the reduced price of off peak travel for non commuter purposes.

## Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

A full appraisal should be carried out to determine the need for a new railway station by the Scottish Government. This must take account of existing provision in the vicinity of the communities as well as any projection of future use of the station should it be introduced. The appraisal must take account of the impact on existing provision and timetabling.

Existing railway stations should be preserved as they serve existing communities. It be more prudent to, where stations are short distances apart, review whether all trains should stop at the stations, changes to the timetable may be a more practical solution.

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:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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

Q27 comments:

Local communities should be encouraged through local advertising and awareness raising so that they can utilise any spare facilities with the station buildings.

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

Q28 comments:

The list in table 6 seems adequate. A minimum level of provision at all types of station should be specified. This should include passenger information, cycle parking and toilets.

## 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. You would need to create storage capacity in the vicinity of the station as these trains would now terminate at Waverly. Passengers benefit from having a choice of route, operator and fares if there are alternatives provided by cross-border services. All cross-border services should be specified by Westminster in consultation as they are national (i.e. UK) 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:

The attraction of using cross country rail services is the direct nature of the service with as few changes as possible. Where there are no changes at present on the cross-country routes, introducing them may discourage future passengers.

**Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make on this question.

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

Q32 comments:

A minimum provision for passenger comfort and safety should be incorporated on all services and routes in the new franchise. This will include toilets, adequate seating and standing areas, adequate and reserved seating for disabled passengers, adequate storage areas for luggage and bicycles, and good quality information systems for passengers. For longer inter-city services Wi-Fi, buffet / tea trolley facilities should also be available.

**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:

Wi-Fi should be available on all inter-city services and the longer commuter services (Edinburgh to Glasgow). The use of Wi-Fi by passengers on short commuter journeys is less likely and the need is therefore reduced. Investment in mobile phone technology should be less of a priority. Mobile technology continues to advance that would make it difficult for the Franchisee to keep up with if there was to be provision for mobile phones. As mentioned in the consultation document mobile phone coverage at present is



governed by the supplier of the networks and where they located their telecommunication masts. With so many different networks it would be an expensive exercise to have a system in place that would allow full coverage of all these networks on the rail network in Scotland. The public in general have come to accept there are black spots on the mobile phone network where coverage is poor or non-existent. Ultimately it should be up to the mobile phone networks to improve network coverage.

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:

There should be no real need for 1<sup>st</sup> Class services on the urban commuter network. There should still be a need for this facility on the inter-city network. Like air travel the 1<sup>st</sup> Class compartment should have seats for those passengers travelling 1<sup>st</sup> Class. All other seats within the compartment should be available at standard class; this would allow full utilisation of the seating available.

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

Q35 comments:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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

Q36 comments:

On-board displays and audible announcements should be available on all trains as part of the franchise. Touch screen technology should be rolled out and be available at all stations to allow passengers to access timetable information aid journey planning, the information should be able to be updated regularly to take account of delays, cancellations and any works which require replacement bus services.

### **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:

The Caledonian Sleeper service provides a viable alternative to car and plane for journeys to London. They should still be specified and subsidised as necessary.

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:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

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:

Falkirk Council has no comments to make.

**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:

Key performance indicators must take account of the three themes and be measurable against baseline figures that should be established. Scotland as a whole has set environmental targets and the ScotRail franchise should play its part in delivering these.