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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: do any services within scotrail make money? I suspect not, in that case the dual franchise plan is a no goer. There are a number of peak service that are heavily over subscribe that could make money with efficiency savings, better/longer trains, better located train stations, better network integration and increased frequency.

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

Q2 comments: as the rail operating companies only rent the vehicles, surely the length of contract should have minimal real impact on encouraging service development

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

Q3 comments: if a profit based company is bidding for a franchise with decent disclosure of economic information, then the Scottish Government should not be taking on additional risk. East coast has "failed" twice in private hands and is now thriving under DOR control.

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

Q4 comments: a not for profit model would be my preference for the next franchise

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

Q5 comments: Easier open access agreements should be put in place, so that a group (charity or SPT type group etc) should be able to start new services quickly and at reduced cost. Any option to increase passenger services should be actively encouraged.

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

Q6 comments: Due to the geographical spread of the current scotrail network, revenue share on busy route and frequency on social routes. Increase in passenger numbers and capacity (per line) should be a measured and rewarded factor

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?

Q8 comments: easy removal of the franchise should be written into the contract, so that DOR type control can occur if the private company is failing to run Scottish trains to decent standard.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: what is performance? The Glasgow –Falkirk- Edinburgh line is now time tabled slower than it was in the 80 and 90's even though the line is faster and the rolling stock better. But if it is time tabled slower the train is never late...Or even if it is, it just gets cancelled to get round being classed as late. I think the companies should be judged against what they should be able to run not what the publish they can. Cancels should count as "lates" as well. My feeling is also that they TOC should be able to keep more of the fair revenue if they are on time, reducing the later it is, switching to fines when they get later than a % of total journey with a cut off of x number of minutes. Also whole journey effect should be considered (eg if I miss a connection due to a late running earlier service, or have to wait hours for the next connection)

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: Different lines have different issues, It is more important trains reach Inverness on time for a connection as they're so few trains north, compared to trains into Waverley or Glasgow central.

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

Q11 comments:

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

Q12 comments: If rail track make a line capable of 100miles an hour, why are we letting scotrail run 75mph trains along it? Scotrail loves Clock face departures, yet this does not utilise the rails that well. We all want more trains

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: SQUIRE is needed, I think we can see the difficulty of self regulation in many other markets.

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: it seems to me that the pricing needs to be changed. All morning services between Glasgow and Edinburgh are peak even the pre 0715 trains, I occasionally take the 0600 train, I'm usually the only person on it yet it is still classed as peak! There is four lines between Glasgow and Edinburgh yet they are all the same price and the Bathgate trains are half full whilst the Falkirk line is packed. I'm sure a price differential or reward scheme would help to spread passengers. There are two other obvious line issue on this route. 1) sort out the Carstairs cord to let that line run quicker competitive connection times 2) open the Edinburgh south suburban line back up to passengers, so that a glasgow service can serve south Edinburgh, eg run the shots line route south round Edinburgh coming into Waverly from the east end rather than the congested west, so you let west slots be filled with faster services and give the south suburban line passenger access and a better revenue stream. Edinburgh park can become an interchange station for these services so that "shots" passengers needing to get into Waverley quickly can change onto one of the other services.

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: for some services this may be fine (eg EDI to FTW changing at partick rather than GLC/GLQ) but having to change in Perth or stiling for INV or ABD form Glasgow or Edinburgh is a chore. This question is obviously about diverting services out of terminal main stations platforms onto through

platforms (eg GLQ high level to low) due to congestion. In Glasgow central another solution is available. The city union line which is still open to freight, could easily return to its original passenger roll, it could remove paisley canal service from GLC high level an interchange could be provided if old gallowgate and Glasgow cross were reopened/connected (for GLC). At bellgrove GLQ services. These paisley canal services could run onto to give a connection in the south /west or north. This is sort of the SPT cross rail project, but a much simpler/cheaper option, rather than expensive electrification and multiple reversing yards.

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 profit company will want a packed infrequent train, passengers want a frequent quiet train, the Scottish government needs to put frequency and journey time in its bid details, for these so called "social" lines and a decent financial package in for the busy lines.

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

Q18 comments: targeted

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

Q19 comments: Incentivising passenger growth (within a frame work to monitor and reprimand overcrowding), empty midday and evening trains should be priced lowered, packed weekend services (EDI to Stirling) should have more cars put on.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: there is a dichotomy in your argument regarding below capacity trains. You're suggesting increasing fares by RPI +3% on all tickets, yet the most effective tool you have at your disposal in moving passengers to off peak is pricing. Surely as you have demonstrated a price differential effect in increasing off peak passenger volume, a price drop would generate more revenue and social benefits? If you are paying to run and staff an empty train, which is timetabled. The marginal cost of each extra passenger is negligible, yet revenue and social benefit generating.

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: SPT has done fantastically in generating great local transport system even in the face of government interference (bus deregulation, which has not been a positive policy in Glasgow). Why does Transport Scotland and the government want to mess with it? Surely intervening in Edinburgh trams sooner would have been a more effective use of the Scottish governments' and Transports Scotland's time?

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: In Germany for many years, you could buy a ticket from A to B, which got you on the normal train, if you wanted the ICE line you had to buy a supplement. The planned EGI works could be supplemented in this way, it would also move people to the slower less crowded lines

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: with smart ticketing, multiple price layers from 150% for high peak, to say 40% for empty trains is achievable

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

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: any new large housing scheme along a rail path should be allowed/encouraged petition for a station

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:

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

Q27 comments:

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: I use the train a fair bit and the cross boarder operators, us nicer trains, I frequently alter my journeys to get one of these instead. You are more likely to get a seat as it's a bigger train, usually space for the bike, etc I think I would be upset if East coast and cross country got removed from Scotland. I'm know that Scotrail operate from a different stand point, (speed and masses) rather than long distance, but I think Scotrail needs to up its game rather than just suggest getting rid of the competition. Maybe getting ORCATS changed is a better solution. Where is Scotrail going to get the rolling stock capacity to replace the longer trains of EC and CC?

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 services should not terminate in Edinburgh.

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?

Q32 comments: on longer rural route with no food provision, why is Scotrail not pushing station with catering eg carinlarick some sort of phone ahead service? There are station on the far north and lochalsh, that could offer the same.

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: seems very simple, transport Scotland specifies it for the new contract and it has to happen

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: Longer trains = more seats = more space = you get to keep your high revenue customers....

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

Q35 comments:

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

Q36 comments: better mobile phone apps

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: minimum should be stipulated, otherwise the company should be allowed to push sales

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: It is currently not being sold well, so maybe an individual company could push it better.

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: I would be more likely to take it if the train was quieter. I've used it 6 times this year and it is really under utilised. I think possibly because it does not compete well with flying.

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: