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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:

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

Q2 comments:

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?

Q4 comments:

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

Q5 comments:

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

Q6 comments:

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:

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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

Q18 comments:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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

Q32 comments:

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:

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:

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:

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 continue to be specified.

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:

Running the Sleepers as a separate franchise may be just what the service needs to give it a kick-start. It certainly needs to be better marketed; as it is at the moment there is virtually no indication at Euston that there are Sleeper services running to Scotland.

A dedicated Sleeper franchise would concentrate solely on providing Sleeper services and would have the incentive to improve the service. They are more likely to advertise and spread awareness of the benefits of Sleeper travel.

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 appeal for me is the ability to travel overnight, meaning that I have a full day at each end to use for either work or leisure time. I use the Highland Sleeper to Fort William or Inverness. Fort William is in a remote part of Scotland and travelling there from the south takes a full day's travelling. From London Euston there are only two trains a day with connections, departing at 0539 or 1230. This uses an entire day for travelling, and entails a change between stations in Glasgow. Travelling by Sleeper gets all the travelling done overnight.

I am happy with the timings of the Highland Sleeper, although if the Fort William portion were detached near Glasgow, rather than making a lengthy diversion via Edinburgh, I estimate that some 90 minutes could be taken off the journey time, giving an arrival at Fort William around 0820. There would then be a connection with the first Mallaig train, arriving at Mallaig at 10 am. Local commuters could also then use the service, increasing patronage.

I believe that Fort William is the correct destination but that opportunities are missed by poor connections to Mallaig (and from Mallaig on a Sunday night). I also believe that, given Oban has a similar footfall to Fort William, further opportunities are missed by the absence

of a good connection into and out of the Sleeper at Crianlarich. Perhaps under a new franchise, and with suitable rolling stock, a separate portion could detach at Crianlarich and run to Oban. Furthermore my observations are that intermediate stations at Bridge of Orchy, Rannoch and Corroul generate not insignificant patronage which would be lost if the train went entirely to Oban.

With regard to facilities, although ensuite cabins would be most welcome, this is not a priority for me so long as there are adequate showers and waiting facilities at the origin and destination stations. At the moment there are good shower facilities at Fort William but the cost of £3.50 for standard class customers, prior to a 12-hour journey, is excessive. At Euston, showers are only available to First Class ticket holders and Advance loyalty club members. This needs to improve and be accessible to all.

With regard to Sleeper cabins, I am not in favour of sharing with a stranger and will never do this. The provision of single cabins needs to be increased. Other factors are to keep noise to a minimum (including sound-proofing from adjacent cabins) and adequate temperature control. Also minimise loose fittings in the cabins that can rattle for the whole journey.

Regarding food provision, I already use the dinner and breakfast options available in the lounge car, but would ideally like to see freshly-prepared food (as opposed to microwaved pre-packed). I would purchase this if it were available. However the status quo is ok.

I wish to see the Sleeper continue to call at principle stations en route, namely Crewe and Preston, both of which I use frequently to board the Sleeper.

I would use the Lowland Sleeper from Carlisle to and from London but both the departure and arrival times (0141 dep and 0516 arr) are too late/early. If, with new rolling stock, a portion could be detached, or timings changed somehow, I would use it.

Overall I think the Sleeper provides an essential way of getting to and from the north of Scotland and without a doubt I would not travel there as often if the service were to be withdrawn. This would then impact wider on the use of train services once there, as well as local hotel accommodation and restaurants. It is vital that the service is maintained, improved and marketed.

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: