

Angus Fox

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: Separating the Sleeper from other services would allow for more competition.

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

Q2 comments: Eight years. The pace of change is such that these things need regular competitive focus.

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

Q3 comments: No comment

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

Q4 comments: The franchise should be able to be provided profitably.

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

Q5 comments: As commercial operations

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

Q6 comments: Make it profitable, open it up to competitive operators running multiple services, to multiple destinations.

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

Q7 comments: No comment

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

Q8 comments: They should go bust if they do not make it a commercially viable operation.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Performance according to what? Let the market decide how frequently the services should run.

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: No comment

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

Q11 comments: No comment

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

Q12 comments: No comment

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: Stations should be encouraged to allow private competitive service delivery – shops, restaurants, facilities, work areas, lounges etc. Like airport terminals.

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 is not acceptable to stand. Find a better solution like double

deck trains.

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. Absolutely not. Direct trains are critical. One reason they are critical is to get the cheaper advance fares it is necessary to use the same operator for the through journey. Another reason they are necessary is for those less able to deal with the complexity of changing trains.

There is only one direct train to Dundee from Inverness for example (at 0451 in the morning – who is it for, not for passengers – just a quirk of the schedule). There are far too few direct trains from Inverness to London, (one East Coast, one Sleeper, no Scotrail daytime services) and none from stations further north.

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: Customer demand.

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

Q18 comments: No comment

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

Q19 comments: Allow innovation in services, freedom of timetabling.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Maximise the use of the lines. Get people off the roads, especially the A9

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: None should be regulated. They should be allowed to more closely be market driven like air fares.

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: The rail network should be enhanced for the 21st century as a part of government infrastructure. Fares should be decreased on areas which are not significantly upgraded.

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: This should be market driven. Peak and off-peak is an outmoded term in the 21st century anyway.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Market demand. For example Inveness Airport needs a station. It is ludicrous that the line goes to the end of the boundary but not to the terminal.

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: A lot of merit should be given to initiatives that promote new stations or services since they must have a lot of support to get that far.

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: No comment

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

Q27 comments: One way would be to make them more important in terms of workplace drop-in/meeting places offices with Internet connectivity. Another way would be to encourage shops of other local activities at stations.

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

Q28 comments: No comment

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 of course. It staggers me that it would even be considered to stop highland direct Services from England. There should be many more services not less into the highlands. They are a vital artery for people, tourists, workers, commercial travel, goods and therefore money, and commerce.

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: No. No. No. And Waverley is next to useless as a hub anyway since it is not the Airport.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: New rolling stock should be introduced that reflects the requirements and needs of the 21st century. In Finland the trains have board rooms for rental for example. In The Netherlands they have two decks. In the US the coastal starlight has sleeping card, libraries, parlours, video games, and a restaurant. New services could be made profitable experiences for the discerning travelling public who do not wish to travel by air.

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

Q32 comments:

Sleeping facilities, with ensuite family rooms, for sleeper trains
Restaurants with proper service, on trains of more than 2 hours
Internet Access on all trains
Laptop and mobile phone power on all trains
Comfortable higher quality seating on all trains
Heating and lighting that works on all trains
Toilet facilities that work on all trains
Checked baggage on inter city trains
Seat reservations that work on all but commuter trains

Note. The current trolley service is woefully inadequate.

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: It's a basic requirement for the 21st century to have wifi, mobile, and power.

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: Let the market decide. First class is vital. Additional business

class should also be possible.

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

Q35 comments: No comment

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

Q36 comments: Existing live information could be augmented with better information at stations about facilities available in real-time

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: It should be a commercial matter. Ideally competing commercial companies should be able to offer competing services.

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 should be able to be competed for by any train operating company, as a separate service. Ideally multiple competing services just as there are multiple competing airlines on the same routes.

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 pricing is all wrong.

The sleeper has a lot of potential appeal because it saves a hotel night and allows business to continue during the days rather than being on trains or in

the air.

There is clear value in the Sleeper, but the current fares structure is not competitive with flying, or even driving. The only fares that are competitive are the bargain berths.

Inverness, Fort William and Aberdeen are obvious Sleeper destinations. Commercial operators might want to add more. Why stop them? Smaller sleeper trains operated by more nimble operators ought to be allowed.

Personally I would like to see two sleepers per night from each current destination, provided by competitor train operators, plus some smaller niche market sleeper trains from Wick, Kyle of Lochalsh and other super local markets.

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: Ratio of deaths and serious injury on rail compared to road travel per passenger should be a KPI. Rail travel is much safer than the A9.