

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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N/A

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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: Rail transport is of considerable strategic importance. A 50/50 focus is appropriate.

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

Q2 comments: 15 years – otherwise the economics of any investment by service-providers do not stack up. Too short a contract and providers will attempt make their returns in shorter time at higher unit cost than if the same returns were accumulated over a longer period of time.

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

Q3 comments: No view.

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

Q4 comments: Profits should be apportioned in the same ratio as the respective investments.

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

Q5 comments: If rail (or any public) transport is perceived as of strategic importance then it is a matter for government to manage, directly if it has the necessary competencies or through a rail provider agency set up on normal commercial principles.

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

Q6 comments: VFM means getting as much as you can for as little cost as you can get away with. An analysis of travel patterns and the requirements of freight transport must be done and rail services designed to meet those requirements. Whether funds from the public purse are involved is a purely political judgement and would depend on the perception that political capital might thereby accrue.

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

Q7 comments: No view

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

Q8 comments: The threat of prison for non-performance although the crime of non-performance would first have to be created by primary legislation.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Better the former. To penalise poor performance by expropriating money from the provider only leaches funds from the provider to the exchequer at no overall benefit to users.

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: The system must be designed on the basis of an analysis of country-wide transport patterns and requirements. Piecemeal will not do – it leads to lack of coordination and the resulting poor economics.

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

Q11 comments: Find out what the passenger needs are and plan around them. Make proper overnight accommodation arrangements for railway staff, particularly train crew, when duty requires the working day ends when they are distant from home, as with long-distance or late-night services.

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

Q12 comments: 'Performance' presumably means that all trains run as per timetable, that passenger trains are clean and with enough seating capacity to accommodate the requirement, and that freight facilities are up to the task. This assumes that passenger trains are prioritised and that freight is moved at hours when passenger demand is slack.

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, and should cover all aspects of passenger railway operations taking its cue (as far as is appropriate) from airport facilities, as rail passengers aren't subject to the security delays attending air travel.

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

Q14 comments: Such as best/cleanest/most helpful staff station competition with passenger facilities (vandal-proof) available at normal service times.

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: Add coaches to trains. Where train lengths exceed platform length trains could draw up twice (as used to happen prior to Beeching). So long as timetabling is realistic then passenger expectations will not be disappointed.

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: Yes. Every opportunity to improve access to the railway by those living at a distance from a station must be taken – a common situation in rural Scotland. Re-opening stations on existing routes must be considered and free car-parking provided for rail users.

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: Proper analysis should drive decisions about service frequency whether conducted by a franchisee or by government.

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

Q18 comments: What does this mean, exactly?

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

Q19 comments: By the promise of improved returns on the investment and a reduction of corporation tax.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: The only rationale for determining the cost of fares should be the average cost of running all passenger trains in the franchise territory divided by the total number of journeys and the passenger-miles averages likely to be taken, based on previous patterns. This way a unit cost can be derived and applied to ticket prices. Ticket prices can then be calculated as distance x unit cost and applied across the board. Political decisions about concessionary fares (children, seniors etc) can then be taken on the basis of likely political benefit. Limitations as to which train may be used should be abandoned as should restrictions on breaking one's journey en route. The fares policy may include for the provision of free car-parking (say) where this need is identified, but must not be used as yet another device to fleece car-users for whom alternative means of accessing the railway is not available.

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: Fares should all be set on a commercial basis – if the system is to be operated as a franchise – or, if the system is to be run by the government and taxpayers' money applied to it then fare regulation will have to be a political decision, taking into account the usual desire for 'green' ie less polluting methods of transport and of course improving the chances of the government for the time being being returned to power.

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: Compare the costs to users of Scotland's rail system with the comparable costs in countries of similar physical size and population and decide accordingly. But this is a political question to which the answer is necessarily political in nature.

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: There should be no difference; to fleece those who must perforce travel regularly at particular hours of the day and night is not

acceptable and if the basis for setting fares is rational there should be no need for a fares differential. Current travel patterns are based on historical and cultural legacies – such as that most people are active during daylight hours and abed for part at least of the hours of darkness.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Survey to assess demand, especially in rural areas where transport interchange nodes are thin on the ground.

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: The interference of political agendas in matters that ought to depend only on need and commercial judgement.

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 – station operation should be available for local franchise within an overall policy framework for, say, opening times. But if passenger trains are to operate 24 hours per day then it follows that stations must also be open to correspond.

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

Q27 comments: By ensuring easy and cost-free access – as train users – and no doubt by amending the legislation governing the operation of a railway to widen the categories of people eligible to participate.

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

Q28 comments: Take the cue from the airports (minus security and border controls) and offer passengers comparable facilities albeit at reduced scale.

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: Absolutely yes. To curtail communications in this day and age is madness. It is essential to maximise the opportunities offered by good communications. Inter-UK air travel is available but attracts the usual raft of tiresome inconveniences absent, thankfully, from rail travel. And not everyone

cares to fly. Since rail stations are usually in town and city centres the hassle of travelling to an airport (almost always inconveniently sited well away from centres of activity) is avoided.

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: They must continue northwards. Why should passengers be inconvenienced and be turfed out of trains at Waverley at around 0415 hours (when the present sleeper service from Euston arrives) and have to await connections most of which aren't available until after 0500 hours? The onward journeys to Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen are all lengthy (especially the first) and the day trains to these places not well provisioned to provide sleepy travellers with an agreeable onward trip.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: In the first instance seek tenders for rolling-stock and train maintenance from UK/Scotland based companies. If no capacity exists then engineering companies must be encouraged and assisted to set up to meet this demand – more so as only now is it being realized that economics and paper-shuffling is founded upon things being made, things that people want to and need to use, and that shuffling bits of paper and ticking promissory boxes doesn't put food on tables.

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

Q32 comments: Clean and comfortable and enough seats, adequate sanitation, power supplies for small business machines – laptop computer and mobile phone – at least a snack-bar for middle-distance services.

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: Essential on the daytime and overnight services between Scotland and London. Possibly provide coaches dedicated for the use of business people.

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: It should be possible to add coaches one-at-a-time to suit the demand.

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

Q35 comments: The issues are: public order problems and empty alcohol containers and drinking vessels. Otherwise ban alcohol altogether in trains with the possible exception of alcohol consumed at a restaurant car meal where more control can be exercised.

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

Q36 comments: A comprehensive and oriented version of the Scotland-wide rail timetables should be easily available as used to be the case. It should include ALL services including those across the border. The Caledonian sleeper is not shown on the regular timetables for trains between Inverness, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow although the service uses these routes.

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: If Scotland is to be supported as an economically viable entity then all communications methods must be supported.

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: Better within the main franchise. If not, then better it is franchised separately to the main franchisee – and for a reasonable length of time.

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 principal appeal is that it avoids the disagreeable UK airport experience and, on arrival in Scotland, the tediousness of changing one's mode of transport to reach those places far from an airport. Like it or not, many people from the south find Scotland an agreeable place to visit and extensive business and economic contacts exist. For the general benefit they can only be fostered by ensuring good communications.

What is the unit cost of this service? Unless this is known it is hard to comment on costs.

Perhaps an improvement would be to lengthen the sleeper service's journey time to afford a longer sleep for passengers – particularly if it is eventually and unwisely decided that this service stops at Edinburgh. Waverley is unattractive at 0400 hrs at the best of times.

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: Increase the loading gauge to Berne gauge. While this is a massive undertaking it would make it possible to run two-decker passenger trains and carry the current maximum size of road freight vehicles on suitable flat-wagons. If all infrastructure programs, however piecemeal, were from now on required to adopt Berne gauge, and station platforms still built to today's standard but capable of easy conversion, the whole transformation could be achieved for rather less pain than were the entire system to be converted as a single project.

With hydro-electricity readily available in Scotland (something never mentioned in the current froth about green energy) the entire rail system could and should be electrified. Yes, there will always be idiots who try to touch the live wire in spite of all precautions to prevent it. But this simply demonstrates the truth of Darwin's thesis of the survival of the fittest.