

## 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

#### Organisation Name

Glenfinnan Station Museum

Title Mr Ms Mrs Miss Dr *Please tick as appropriate*

#### Surname

Hege

#### Forename

Hernes

### 2. Postal Address

Glenfinnan Station

Glenfinnan

Inverness-shire

Postcode PH37 4LT

Phone

01397722295

Email

glenfinnanstn@btconnect.com

### 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 is imperative. Rural railway routes are a lifeline to Scotland's remote communities and the current service level must be maintained or improved. To make this economically viable, investment is required to bring the comfort and convenience of travel on rural railway lines up to a level which fulfills the requirements of a growing tourist market.

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

Q2 comments: The contract period needs to be long enough to encourage the franchisee to make commercially meaningful investment in rolling stock and stations, and to develop their service products. The contract period should be at least 15 years.

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: No comment

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

Q5 comments: Local community groups and businesses have a self-interest in attracting tourists to their area and could be involved in assisting with promotional initiatives, thereby also boosting the community's sense of affinity with their local railway line and therefore also the extent to which they use it.

Day-to-day operations should however remain solely within the remit of the train operator.

Dedicated heritage and luxury train operators should be welcomed, particularly to the Highlands. They provide a wealth of exposure and publicity for the whole network. On the Mallaig Line, tourists flock to the area not only to travel on the Jacobite steam train, but to watch it - choosing instead to travel by the normal service train. They also come to travel the routes all the year round.

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

Q6 comments: The franchise terms should include incentives for successful timetable integration with other public transport providers (buses / ferries). The provision of a fully integrated transport system with connecting services to all destinations would attract significant new custom from the local market as well as the tourist market.

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: A range of sanctions should be imposed, depending on the nature of the commitment which the operator has failed to fulfil, ranging from penalties to franchise termination.

### **Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

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

Q9 comments: Poor performance should be penalised. Good performance provides its own inherent financial reward. Government incentives should only be used where there are no such inherent financial reward - e.g. to achieve an integrated public transport service in cooperation with other providers for the benefit of the travelling public.

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 performance regime should allow for local variations. Priorities on rural lines with infrequent trains and vital connections are totally different to main lines with frequent services.

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

Q11 comments: The performance regime must not be overly complex, nor should it focus on measuring lateness to the nearest minute; a 5-minute regime is ample.

It is important to recognise that delays to rural / long-distance services can have devastating consequences for the passengers concerned, whether they miss their onward connection to England, the airport or the last ferry to a Scottish island. Many islands are serviced by ferries only two or three days a week. The impact of coming 10 minutes late to work because of a late-running commuter train is nothing compared to being stranded in Mallaig for two or three days.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times on the West Highland Line are already slow and punctuality is generally acceptable. It is essential that concerns over performance statistics are not allowed to provoke journey times to be further extended.

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 required for all aspects of station and service delivery.

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

Q14 comments: SQUIRE should be extended to areas which currently fall outwith the regime, such as train heating, comfortable seating, train cleanlines, good toilet facilities. SQUIRE would however benefit from a change to the basic box-ticking approach, allowing for intelligent discretionary assessment and the recording of concerns voiced by the public.

For instance, the lights on all Mallaig Line stations are set to be turned off 30 minutes after the scheduled departure of the last train at night. If a train is running late, passengers alight onto a pitch dark platform in remote villages with no street lights. There is no facility for a manual override by train staff, or

any motion sensors. The situation is obviously highly hazardous, but there is currently no way that the SQUIRE regime can pick up on this problem as the box-ticking inspectors are not present when the hazard occurs.

### **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: No standing should be acceptable for travel on the West Highland Line. The franchisee must be required to provide sufficient capacity for peak travel times and take appropriate action whenever trains are heavily pre-booked. The Line is a showpiece for the Scottish tourist industry, people come from all over the world to experience the journey. Travelling in cramped conditions with passengers standing generates negative publicity world-wide.

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: The number of interchange station should be kept at a minimum to avoid inconvenience to passengers. Passengers who travel on long-distance routes like the West Highland Line tend to carry significant amounts of luggage and the changing of trains is therefore particularly cumbersome. On the contrary, we consider there to be scope for the development of a new day-time "cross-border" service in addition to the current sleeper service.

There is however scope for providing more connecting services at Crianlarich. If this happens, the interchange facilities here would need to be improved.

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: The Government should set the requirements for frequency and journey time as particularly the winter service on the West Highland Line will tend to have a greater socio-economic than commercial benefit. The line needs at least four daily services each way, with the summer Sunday service extended to run all year.

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

franchise?

Q18 comments: The contract should clearly specify minimum service and performance level requirements but allow for sufficient flexibility for additional services to be added. All requirements must be measurable.

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

Q19 comments: The Government could set up an innovation fund to incentivise the franchisee to introduce additional services on an experimental basis. If successful, these would be incorporated in the franchise.

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20: The fares policy must ensure that the cost of rail travel is not prohibitive. The paramount benefits of West Highland Line rail services are of a socio-economic nature. It is therefore essential that rail travel is considered affordable and inclusive. An affordable ticket price will boost the use of the train (increasing the operator's commercial benefit), but will more importantly encourage a change from car to train, thus increasing travel safety while reducing road wear, congestion and the level of CO2 emissions

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: Rural fares, such as on the West Highland Line, should be regulated because the paramount benefit of the rail service is of a socio-economic rather than commercial nature. It is for instance important to safeguard successful initiatives such as the Highland Railcard and Club 55.

On lines where the commercial benefit outweighs the socio-economic benefit, government regulation may not be equally essential.

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: More efficient ways of running the train service will reduce the subsidy. The detailed cost level should be investigated and efficiency

savings considered.

There is additional revenue potential on the west Highland Line, which would be achievable by improving marketing and timetabling. A better integrated public transport system will attract more tourists as well as locals.

Fare rises above inflation is not a good idea on the West Highland Line, as journey times are uncompetitive. Increases in revenue should come from higher usage rather than higher fares.

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 is generally of relevance to congested commuter train services, of which there are none on the West Highland Line.

### **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments: Stations should be retained despite a low level of use if there are few other alternative means of public transport in the area. The cost of stopping trains on rural lines could be reduced by reducing standards, e.g. platform length, and allowing for only one or two doors to be opened. It is however important that stations change with changing patterns of habitation, so that new stations are built where new communities are emerging. This could be achieved through planning regulations.

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: It is important that third parties are encouraged to have a closer involvement with their local railway stations, in order to increase the community's sense of ownership, thereby reducing levels of vandalism and increasing security levels. This could be achieved through the leasing of premises to businesses or community groups, or by involving community groups in showcasing their local station. The health & safety issues involved would be addressed by strict induction training or clear rules and regulations.

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: The franchisee should have the overall responsibility for stations but should be free to subcontract maintenance jobs to local line support groups or to involve station lease-holders. Leaseholder investment in station premises must be subject to the franchisee's agreement and should be reflected by a reduction in rent.

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

Q27 comments: The 'Adopt a Station' scheme should be extended. It would also be good to use stations for local events, or to lease parts of the premises to encourage other activities that would attract local people, such as cafes, restaurants, bookshops etc.

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

Q28 comments:

The terminus stations on the West Highland Line (Fort William, Oban and Mallaig) currently have a good level of facilities provided. These need to be continually maintained and gradually improved.

Crianlarich already functions as an interchange station but requires immediate improvement to adequately fulfil its current role. The station provides a limited number of connectional services and serves a large hinterland. It has to cope with service disruptions which may require passengers to change trains and wait for long periods of time. Proper waiting facilities with adequate toilet provision are therefore urgently required. If the station's interchange function is further developed with more connections as part of an overall timetable improvement (e.g. a Sleeper connection from Oban), passenger facilities will need to be further enhanced.

Intermediate stations should provide basic shelter, help point, and basic local information as well as sufficient light for passengers to orient themselves whenever they arrive at the station, e.g. triggered by a motion sensor.

A separate "tourist" category appears unwarranted.

### **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: Cross-border services to Glasgow are essential in providing connections to the West Highlands from London, the Midlands and north



England. Otherwise, journeys to the West Highlands from these places would require two changes of train (in Edinburgh and Glasgow), which would be a disincentive to travel long distances by rail.

The case for introducing a direct daytime Anglo-Scottish train service to the West Highland Lines should be investigated and - if merited - should be specified jointly by the Scottish Ministers and DoT. Such a service would open up significant new markets both in and out of the Highlands by eliminating the inconvenience of changing stations in Glasgow as part of a long distance journey.

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: For the West Highlands, an Edinburgh Hub would be of nil benefit.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: Rolling stock should be placed in the hands of a dedicated publically owned organisation.  
Seasonal variations on the West Highland Line are pronounced, and there is a need to be able to hire in suitable additional coaches as required without incurring prohibitive charges.

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

Q32 comments: Trains should be suitable for the type of line they serve. Facilities on West Highland Line trains need to match those on main line routes due to the length of the journey times involved. Extra comfort is required, such as reclining seats, foot rests, appropriate heating, a catering facility, adequate toilets, laptop plug-in points, ample leg room and adequate customised storage for luggage, skis and bicycles. A rubbish recycling point would also be appropriate.

On the West Highland Line passengers expect to be able to enjoy the view. It is therefore important that all seats are appropriately aligned with a window.

## **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: On the West Highland Line it is more important to be able to plug in a laptop by your seat than to maintain internet connection. Laptops are essential for locals to be able to work en-route, and this would be a big incentive to leave your car and travel by train. While a Wi-Fi connection would be good, the cost involved appears unreasonable.

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: First Class seating should be available on all trains, to encourage local business travel and meet tourism expectations. There is a need for more flexibility in train lengths to cope with demands for additional seating, ref. Q31.

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

Q35 comments: An outright ban would reduce the viability of the catering trolley and the Sleeper lounge car, both essential services for the West Highland Line's long-distance journeys. A ban on the consumption of alcohol other than that sold on board, may be a more viable option.

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

Q36 comments: Printed and internet timetable information is generally good. There is room for improvement with respect to clear information about forward connections with buses and ferries both on trains and in stations.

### **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 need to be specified in the new franchise. This is an essential long distance service, of particular importance to the West Highlands because of the area's lack of high speed lines and air 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: The Sleeper services should be part of the overall franchise.

They need to be utilised as part of the normal daytime service on their routes through the Highlands. On the West Highland Line it should be possible to use it as the first train to Fort William in the morning and the last one back to Glasgow in the evening. Connections to Oban should be included in the specification.

A separate Sleeper franchise could be seen as an asset ripe for development by a specialist operator with innovative ideas, particularly since major investment in the coaching stock is about to take place. However, we feel strongly that it needs to be fully integrated into the domestic services to complement the inevitably sparse services along the West Highland Line in particular. If it were to be treated as a separate franchise, very strict conditions would need to be attached.

39. We would be interested in your views in the level and type of service that the Caledonian Sleeper Services should provide. Including:

- 1 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?
- 2 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?
- 3 What facilities should the sleeper services provide and would you pay more for better facilities?

Q39 comments: The appeal of the Caledonian Sleeper is (i) the ability to "save" travel days by travelling overnight, (ii) the direct route it provides between remote Highland locations to the centre of London, and (iii) the relative comfort of the lounge car, (iv) early arrival at the destination, and (v) for the northbound Fort William Sleeper: a chance to wake up and have breakfast whilst enjoying the views of Rannoch Moor.

The service would be even more appealing if it provided (i) a calling point in the Birmingham area, (ii) a motorail facility, (iii) a greater variety of accommodation ranging from en-suite to reclining seats (comfort is worth more to some than others), and (iv) the Fort William seated section did not involve having to change trains in Edinburgh, and called at Glasgow en route.

To save costs and increase efficiency, consideration should be given to the merging of the Highland and Lowland Sleepers - an East Coast Train could then serve Edinburgh and the Inverness and Aberdeen Lines, with a West Coast Train serving Glasgow and the West Highland Line with connections to Oban and Mallaig. Motorail to a single Highland terminal at Fort William, where full facilities still exist, could also be an option.

Both trains should incorporate additional seating capacity for local traffic along the routes they serve so that they form an integral part of the domestic 'national' service as well as performing the 'international' role. On the West Highland line the sleeper package should include onward connections at no extra cost to the Mallaig and Oban lines. A good connection to Oban at Crianlarich is essential.

### **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: No comment