

Paul Harley

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: The merits are specified in the consultation!
Evening and Sunday services should be covered by the social rail element.

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

Q2 comments: 15-20 years. This might encourage the franchisee to commit to long term improvements, which would not be attractive on a 5-7 year franchise.

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

Q3 comments: None.

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

Q4 comments: Profits should be shared with passengers. I am particularly taken by the suggested Co-Operative franchise.

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

Q5 comments: Only as Open Access operators.

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

Q6 comments: Allow franchise extensions, if targets are met.

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

Q7 comments: Enough to cover the cost of re-tendering, should it become necessary.

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

Q8 comments: Fines and, ultimately, termination of franchise.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Only penalise poor performance.

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: Actual routes. Single line routes are far different from busy, suburban routes.

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

Q11 comments: Seek regular passenger feedback and re-prioritise targets as per the results.

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

Q12 comments: Performance should dominate. People would rather arrive on time, than shave a few minutes off a journey which then might run late.

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: The current one has worked well. It really depends on the terms of the new franchise.

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

Q14 comments: Mystery shopping.

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. An acceptable limit for standing is about 15 minutes.

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. The challenges would be to ensure the connections work for passengers!

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 direct it. Otherwise, some late night/early morning services would no longer run.

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

Q18 comments: Similar to the present one.

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

Q19 comments: No. Innovation could result in worse conditions for passengers.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: To encourage modal transfer from road and air to rail.

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: Open returns should be regulated, to ensure there is a maximum fare. My recommendation does not change by area or journey, apart from day Returns being substituted where appropriate.

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 aim should be 50/50. The “taxpayer” should be those who choose to use private cars i.e. it comes from fuel tax.

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: Off-peak should be at least a third cheaper. It will encourage some people to switch, although many are constrained by commercial working hours.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Base it on usage.

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 merit is that it is no longer dependent on the public purse.

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. There would be benefits (in some places) if local councils were able to manage their stations.

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

Q27 comments: By making it easy for them to lease buildings at the station, either existing or new build.

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

Q28 comments: Large, Medium and Small. The first two should be staffed, with toilet facilities.

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: Not necessarily - they don't go north of Glasgow! Cross border services help people to make through journeys without changing. The DfT should specify them, as the majority of the journey is in England.

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: Maybe they should. No benefits would accrue; it would simply make Waverley an even busier station than it is!

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Buying rather than leasing stock.

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

Q32 comments: Toilets, with trolley catering facilities on long 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: Highly. Business users are unlikely to be attracted onto trains without these facilities.

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: Don't. First Class wastes space; if the franchisee insists on providing it, they should purchase additional carriages to insert in trains for it.

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 number of convictions for drunkenness on trains (as recorded by BTP) against such incidents recorded off-trains by the local forces.

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

Q36 comments: Make real time bus information available at rail stations with a bus interchange.

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: Let it be a commercial matter.

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: Yes, they should.

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: Being able to travel overnight and get some sleep. However, I feel only the Edinburgh and Glasgow services have a future; other destinations can be reached by day services after arriving in Scotland. The present facilities are acceptable, although the need to sometimes share berths is very outdated.

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: Consumption of diesel per train mile operated.