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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: Don't know.

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

Q2 comments: Don't know

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

Q3 comments: Don't know

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

Q4 comments: Don't know

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

Q5 comments: Third parties should be able to form strategic partnerships if they provide added value elements to the sleeper proposition e.g. catering company

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

Q6 comments: Combination of financial and non-financial measures.

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

Q7 comments: Don't know

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

Q8 comments: Don't know

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Yes, incentivise good performance also if performance includes non-financial measures

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: My comments focus on sleeper specific service as I don't use other services much.

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

Q11 comments: Include non-financial measures like customer satisfaction, reliability, breadth of coverage etc

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

Q12 comments: Don't know

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: Don't know

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

Q14 comments: Don't know

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: Don't know

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: I prefer number of direct services to be increased/maintained, but with more stopping points

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 for the next ScotRail franchise?

Q18 comments: Don't know

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

Q19 comments: Don't know

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Needs to be more customer focussed. There should be greater use of cost/benefit trade off market research techniques like conjoint analysis

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: Don't know

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: Don't know

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: Needs to more customer focussed. There should be greater use of cost/benefit trade off market research techniques like conjoint analysis

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Don't know

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: Very good idea. A remote/underused station could be directly funded by businesses and communities that benefit from it. In return for certainty of its continuation and promotional/social opportunities.

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: Don't know

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

Q27 comments: Don't know

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

Q28 comments: Don't know

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. Benefits are assessed as if this is conventional travel, whereas I feel a completely different set of factors are involved in a customer deciding to take a long distance train or sleeper. It should be Ministers as they may be able to take a broader view of this premise for evaluation.

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: Definitely not. This proposal fundamentally misunderstands

the attraction of long distance train travel. If I had to change at Edinburgh to go to Fort William from London I would fly or drive.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Don't know

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

Q32 comments: Improved catering is a huge missed opportunity for revenue enhancing and increasing appeal of sleepers/cross border trains if the right partner and franchise culture is established.

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: Don't know

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 should always be retained with a true added value differentiation (i.e. comfort and space, not just freebies). First class customers are more price inelastic than standard class and standard class do not resent first class facilities, they realise they keep the cost of their fare down.

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

Q35 comments: Alcohol is OK, anti social behaviour is not. There should be more intervention by rail police (not the guard) to stop this

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

Q36 comments: Don't know

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: Should be specified. They have economic and tourist benefits

far beyond their own P&L.

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: Contracted separately. The Caledonian Sleeper service should be a separate service as it has completely different market dynamics, target audiences and customer motivation to purchase compared to normal rail and air travel. A separate franchise would have the corporate culture, skill set and focus to address these different needs.

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 is not about cheapest/easiest way to get from A to B, but is about a unique, memorable experience especially for one off users.

Current timetable is optimal.

The current destinations are the best ones.

There should be improved catering with an option of a traditional dining car experience especially in the summer. Not being able to have a traditional train breakfast or even a bowl of porridge in the morning is inexcusable.

Opening up adjoining carriages is not space efficient. Other railways do this better and have in-cabin tables for example with the same cabin footprint.

Get rid of lounge car sofas. They look good in the brochure but are uncomfortable, impractical and very space inefficient

Same gender sharing with a stranger is no longer acceptable

No need for ensuite facilities.

Current staffing levels seem high. Staff are very conscientious but have little to do except for a short time before and after the train leaves. Better customer education could make workload at these peak times reduce/flatten.

No one seems able to take a holistic view of improving facilities. For example cutting down trees that block west highland line views would improve customer experience and would generate huge positive publicity worth

millions of pounds. But because Railtrack's charter means they can only cut down trees for operational or safety reasons, not for aesthetics, this obvious good idea cannot be implemented.

Booking system is a barrier to usage. Accepting that timetables cannot be finalised more than three months in advance because of engineering planning, it should still be possible to book to destination with the same leadtimes as flights. This means tourists do not have to gamble on availability or take the certainty of a plane booking if planning a holiday more than three months in advance. It would also be a fairer way to access lower fares.

Prices are across too wide a range. You can buy a bargain berth for £19 but a family of four travelling in the summer to Fort William would be lucky to get their return tickets for under £800.

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: Don't know