

## 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

TOM HARRIS MP

Title Mr ☒ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Please tick as appropriate

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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?

The railways are a service industry, and although the government must consider value for money, the railways are primarily there to meet a social need, not to turn a profit.

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

Longer franchises of between 15 and 20 years would allow the franchisee to make long-term decisions that would benefit passengers and give security to staff. However, the government should make sure that "break points" are clearly identified so that failing franchisees can be held to account for their performance during the term of the franchise.

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

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

Any arrangement should make sure that innovation and good management by a train operating company should be appropriately rewarded, while returning some of the excess profits to the tax payer and, if possible, to the fare-payer.

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

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

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

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

The ultimate deterrence of poor performance is a firm commitment to end the franchise if performance falls below an acceptable level and is not timeously addressed by the train operating company.

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

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

Both.

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

Performance targets should be set for types of journey, rather than actual routes. For example, there should be a single target for inter-city services and a separate one for commuter services.

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

Passenger Focus should be involved both during the franchise process and afterwards during Transport Scotland's monitoring of the franchisee's performance.

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

Passengers value reliability over journey times; if a journey is advertised as lasting a certain amount of time, that is preferable to offering a shorter journey time that isn't achievable.

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?

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

### **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?

Train capacity can be better used, but this would require a shrinking of the peak hours, to incentivise travel outwith busier peak times. An extension of the permitted standing times to 20 minutes seems reasonable.

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?

Rail services become less attractive when inter-modal changes are introduced. The key to modal shift is to offer a seamless railway journey wherever possible.

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?

Such judgments should be left to the industry, with the government ready to intervene to guarantee minimum service levels.

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

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

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Rail fares must be affordable and encourage, as far as possible, cheap

transportation to allow mobility of the workforce. This is even more important today in a climate of sluggish economic growth. However, ministers have to perform a difficult balancing act, and make sure that the tax-payer (most of whom do not use rail services directly but do, arguably, benefit indirectly from the existence of the national network) gets a fair deal.

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)?

Season tickets and peak-time fares should be regulated.

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?

I hope the Scottish Government will be able to avoid the punitive RPI+3% fares increases being planned by the UK government for next year.

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?

Shifts from peak to off-peak can only happen if the peak hours do not extend too far into the morning. For example, most full-time workers cannot delay their morning journey until 10.00 am. The price incentive must also be significant to encourage such a change in behaviour.

## Scottish stations

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

- A policy of no station or line closures must be adopted. At a time when more people are using the railways than ever before, such a policy would be self-defeating and short termist.

On the issue of the future of Kennishead station in Glasgow South, local residents made the following points:

- Is the criteria for Kennishead and the other threatened stations the fact that they are in working class areas. Many other stations less than a mile apart have not been threatened.
- There is Sunday service at Kennishead and footfall would improve if this were to change.
- Services from Kennishead are particularly valuable in wintry conditions when bus services cannot operate.
- One local resident uses the train from Kennishead for life saving treatment, and cannot walk to the nearest alternative station.
- 12 minutes Kennishead-Central, bus takes at least 30 minutes.
- A local wheelchair user would be stuck if station closed; her wheelchair is too wide for the bus.
- No pavement on 'country road' to next station (Darnley), also a busy and dangerous road junction would have to be crossed.
- There is no park and ride facility at the nearest alternative station, Darnley.
- If Darnley is alternative, then as it means going back a stop, journeys to and from Central will cost more and last longer.
- If Kennishead closes, will this ultimately threaten the viability of the line, due to inevitable reduction in passenger numbers?

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?

Where the alternative would be no service at all, then alternative funding of services should be welcomed.

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?

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

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

### **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?

The status quo can only be opposed on dogmatic grounds; there is no reason why the existing East Coast services should not continue as at present. The obsession with “cross-border” services is one that has no resonance with ordinary Scots who see travel to other parts of the UK as a normal part of life.

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?

It would be offensive for the Scottish Government to start to discriminate against rail services on the basis of whether a franchise was let in England or in Scotland. My constituents want to travel on clean, punctual, efficient trains. They have no interest in whether that train is one that was procured by the DfT or the Scottish Government.

## **Rolling stock**

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

There is little appetite among Train Operating Companies or their owners for a move away from rolling stock being provided by the Rolling Stock Companies (Roscos). The Scottish Government should liaise with the Welsh Assembly Government and the DfT to explore how future procurement at the best price for the tax-payer can be achieved through economies of scale.

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

## **Passengers – information, security and services**

33. How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

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?

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

The views of passengers – through Passenger Focus – and the British Transport Police (BTP) should be considered carefully before making any decision.

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

## **Caledonian Sleeper**

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

The Sleeper service is an important link that must be maintained, irrespective



of commercial viability.

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?

That should be a decision for ministers, subject to service maintenance and value for money for fare- and tax-payers.

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?

A later direct service from Euston to Glasgow would attract my custom before the Sleeper. A mains supply and wi-fi would be a useful addition to existing services.

### **Environmental issues**

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

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