

Response to RAIL 2014 – Public Consultation

Tom Hart

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This personal response is based on my experience of transport, economic and socio/environmental issues since the 1960s as a Lecturer in Economic History at Glasgow University, a founder member of the Scottish Transport Studies Group in 1984, a Vice President of the Scottish Association for Public Transport and an appointed member of the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)

Section 1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Rather than a narrow focus on the 40 questions in the consultation on a successor to the present ScotRail franchise, it is essential that successor arrangements should be placed in the context of the issues outlined below.

1.2 Franchise funding and specification, and related action on the framework applying within and between modes, should have the key objective of **an improved public transport network encouraging both modal shift from car use and equitable access within constraints on public spending**. There should be particular emphasis on accelerated carbon saving within the transport sector and a greater stimulus to sustainable economic revival.

1.3 This requires a better understanding of the nature of **present and future links between transport, the economy, energy and priorities for health and social access**. Account needs to be taken of the evidence for major change in linkages between transport, the economy and society. Movement by car is now unlikely to be EITHER an important stimulus to sustainable economic growth OR an outcome of growth in real incomes arising for other reasons. Patterns of individual and business spending are changing as part of shifting lifestyles, including preferences for a higher quality of life inadequately reflected in GDP data. The post-1950 phase when growth in road traffic had strong correlations with growth in the economy has ended. The key aim of government is now to aid the economy through shifts to low carbon, including significant progress towards low carbon in transport by 2020 and delivery of a very low carbon economy by 2050. This aim has major implications for:-

- cost-effective policy measures, including altering the level and structure of transport investment, charging and regulation to encourage low carbon
- linking revised forecasts of movement and mode share with radical change in the appraisal of links between transport and the economy

1.4 Future Movement and Mode Share Air travel to and from overseas destinations is still likely to grow (with added potential to boost in-tourism) but at a slower rate than in previous forecasts already downgraded as part of the UK aviation review. With respect to internal travel, there is robust evidence that joint economic and environmental gains will come from continuation of the recent overall stability, or decline, in road vehicle use per head of population. Current data also shows, not just absolute growth in surface public transport, but a rise in public transport mode share since 2000 expected to continue in coming decades. Rail, including Metro or tram expansion in leading cities as well as longer-distance and tourism/leisure opportunities, is set to play an increasing role encouraged by revised government policies for transport funding, charging and regulation. This has an important bearing on franchise specification and related policies for other modes.

1.5 Transport funding, charging and regulation Transport performance and consumer satisfaction continues to suffer from a disjointed transport framework which involves substantial and often excessive funding while failing to yield significant direct benefits and cuts in the external costs of movement. Each mode is regulated and funded in different ways, perpetuating poor levels of co-ordination and preventing the synergy and cost-saving coming from better use of resources. For better performance, the future emphasis should not be on modes (within which there are large differences in types of service) but on developing more systematic frameworks for funding and charging for four differing types of movement (external, domestic longer distance, city region and rural) with much improved co-ordination (covering fares, services and interchange) within each category together with quality interchange to and from other types of movement.

1.6 A successor franchise must be seen to take on board these issues – giving a higher profile to the overall transport, energy and access context and confirming differing aspects of rail as having an increased role in future and **better co-ordinated transport networks**. This co-ordination should not only be in terms of connectivity and fares but also highlighting the scope for improved operational and financial performance assisted by a larger shift from major trunk road and city road investment to rail, tram and bus in a revised framework recognising the value of co-ordinated yet innovative networks.

1.7 Arrangements for a successor to the present franchise require to be complemented by measures to prevent **an investment and innovatory hiatus** in the period to the end of the present franchise in November 2014. This should include an accelerated programme of lesser works, arrangements to secure additional rolling stock and a speeding up of the pace of Scottish rail electrification (now falling behind progress in England).

1.8 In line with the approach outlined above, the **finalised rail franchise specifications** must be closely linked with:-

- 'hiatus' minimising action
- a fundamental review of priorities within Scottish Strategy for Transport and Energy
- related modifications in Budget Strategy to 2020
- Scottish Government/ORR agreement on access charges and Network Rail projects for the 2014-20 Control Period
- arrangements for consultation and arbitration during the period of franchises, including an enlarged role for RTPs or equivalents and a Scottish Transport Users organisation

1.9 There is a need to address the specific issue of the reconciliation of franchise arrangements with future versions of **Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG)**

1.10 A final factor affecting arrangements for a successor franchise is the need to take account of **possible changes in transport governance** following either independence or increased devolution to and within Scotland. It is arguable that present arrangements for rail in Scotland are both over-complex (with no clear benefits) and inhibit innovation and practical partnership working. While Scotland (unlike many parts of England) has the advantage of a dominant franchisee working with Network Rail Scotland, **competition law** has hampered close relationships between bus companies and rail operations in Scotland. This situation needs attention and amended regulatory practices.

Section 2 Answers to Questions

Q1 The merits of a dual focus ScotRail franchise

Since economic and social elements are involved in all rail passenger services, no merit is seen in separate economic and social franchises within a franchise specification. It is of greater importance that the Scottish Government determine the annual finance available for the categories of rail passenger movement as listed in 1.5 with decisions on bids determined by the best quality on offer within minimum specifications. This would make it clear that competition would be based on quality, not the lowest financial cost.

However, to encourage the application of reforms as indicated in the McNulty Report, the annual finance available from 2014 should be lower in real terms than it is at present with bidders expected to receive annual support reducing in real terms over the period of the franchise. To encourage innovation and greater RTP involvement, at least 50% of savings on present franchise costs should be divided between direct payments for flexible use by RTPs and a newly created Innovation or Challenge Fund established by the Scottish Government.

In addition to external passenger rail services covered in separate franchising arrangements, three categories are suggested within franchise bids. These are:-

- 1) Inter-city and longer distance commuting services within Scotland
- 2) Shorter-distance city-region and other local services within Scotland
- 3) Rural routes comprising those - north and west of Inverness
 - the West Highland line to Oban and Mallaig
 - services from Kilmarnock via Ayr to Stranraer and from Kilmarnock to Carlisle via Dumfries

There should be a preference for these categories being part of a unified bid but subject to increments -e.g. extra stops by existing trains, extra stations, improved local services – negotiated with RTPs and other partners as part of annual reviews and consultation on significant changes in service patterns. However, there may be a case for some Glasgow-area local services e.g Cathcart Circle and related services to Neilston and Newton via Mount Florida - and some rural routes to be operated as separate franchises also incorporating some bus corridors and ferry routes subject to satisfactory arrangements for through ticketing, connections and publicity. Such measures would assist service co-ordination, cost-savings and patronage growth helped via local partnerships and devolved management.

An important issue to be resolved would be whether the initial annual payments set to encourage quality and innovative bids should **EITHER** be based on support for services and fares with track and signalling costs (including track enhancements) based on direct Scottish Government arrangements with Network Rail **OR** be based on franchisees receiving higher annual payments (still reducing in real terms over the franchise period) and reaching their own agreements with Network Rail on track maintenance and renewals plus minor enhancements (with larger schemes left to direct Scottish Government involvement in annual payments to support infrastructure maintenance and annual payments towards Network Rail borrowing costs for enhancements).

Table 2 on p 11 of the consultation suggests moves in the latter direction but this issue requires fuller consideration and evidence before final decisions. To encourage higher rail utilisation in a package including a lowering of fares, there is merit in a system reducing the track access charges paid by operators to a fuel levy similar to that paid by buses. This would leave track, signalling and network enhancement costs as primarily a matter for direct discussion between the Scottish Government, Network Rail and ORR. However, in the case of rural routes and distinct local rail services as in Glasgow, there may be a stronger case for track costs to be included in franchise specifications. This could permit accelerated introduction of measures to lower track and signalling costs while also improving service quality and patronage.

Q2 Length of future franchises

Due to potential governance changes and present financial volatility, a 5 or 7 year franchise seems preferable for most Scottish passenger services. This should be linked with residual value payments to operators who may lose out in a subsequent bidding but who have invested in assets requiring at least 10 years or longer for a reasonable return. It should be noted that rail infrastructure enhancements and some rolling stock acquisitions already incorporate longer-term financial arrangements. Conversely, on rural routes and with respect to local services in the immediate Glasgow area, a longer-term franchise may be a realistic option.

Q3 Risk support

Residual value arrangements should apply and annual payments to franchisees should decrease more slowly if GDP growth is sluggish but more rapidly if GDP growth is higher.

Q4 Profit-share mechanism

Not likely to be justifiable if franchise is short term and risk support mechanism is as suggested in Q3 answer. Level of profit will be influenced by fare specifications and by penalty/bonus arrangements as discussed later. Bids from non-profit distributing companies or trusts should be encouraged.

Q5 Third party involvement in passenger rail operations

What is meant by third party involvement? If it means actual involvement in train movement, only a limited role is seen for third party involvement – though this could be higher in areas with good prospects for ‘niche’ tourist/leisure trains. On a wider definition, greater involvement of third parties (including RTPs) in stations, management and publicity is seen as very desirable. Partnerships can be particularly important in improving rural and local services.

Q6 Incentivising outcomes while ensuring value for money

Value for money has to be defined in relation to delivery of key objectives, not as maximum cost-cutting (which can lead to significant disbenefits and increased external costs). The answer to Q1 is designed to meet key objectives though it should be read in conjunction with later comments on penalty and bonus payments.

Q7 Performance bonds

These should be kept low in the present financial climate

Q8 Sanctions if commitments not fulfilled

Commitments will be more flexible than in the past. Sanctions would be unlikely to be required given a preference for short franchises but the ultimate sanction of losing a franchise would remain.

Q9 Should good performance be incentivised or only poor performance penalised

Modest extra payments should be available if a smaller number of targets set within the franchise are exceeded while use of **Challenge or Innovation Funding** could increase income. However, the main emphasis should be on a rising scale of penalties if passengers have to stand for more than 15 minutes – see also Q13. Present levels of overcrowding on some longer-distance services are unacceptable with a need arising for additional rolling stock. Penalties should be channelled into a fund allowing acceleration of rolling stock provision. The existing Passenger Focus and Passenger View consumer groups in Scotland should be combined and given a higher profile, including RTP involvement, regular consultation on service changes and the setting of targets and monitoring. – see also Q11. The remit should cover all public transport and might be associated with an amended role for the Traffic Commissioner – see also answer to Q40.

Q10 Should performance regime be aligned with actual routes or services or be a unified system.

It should be aligned with the types of services listed in 1.5 and embrace issues of bus, rail, ferry, DRT co-ordination. Transparent data on each individual service should be available.

Q11 How can performance regime be more aligned with passenger issues

See answer to Q9 The regime also needs alteration to focus on total trip times, not just the rail element. There should be much improved arrangements for the handling of emergencies and for ensuring reasonable connections or alternative arrangements are made of trains or and other public transport modes have suffered unavoidable delays. See also answer to Q36

Q12 What should be the balance between journey times and performance

See reference to total trip times in answer to Q11. Operators should not be encouraged to extend journey times in order to avoid performance penalties.

Q13 Is a Service Quality Incentive Regime required.

Simplified SQUIRE regimes should apply to all public transport - see also answer to Q9

Q14 What other mechanisms could be used to address train and station quality

See answers to Q9 & 11– emphasis should be on overall trip quality. Improved quality on the ‘train’ part of trips is of limited value if other parts of a trip are poor. Rail franchise holders should be expected to show an interest, and use part of their funding, to improve connections and the handling of emergencies and late-running

Q15 Can better use be made of existing train capacity

Better use of existing train capacity can be delivered by:-

- adjusting timetables and train lengths to improve load factors
- adjusting fares to encourage shifts from overcrowded to less well-loaded services e.g. between Edinburgh and Glasgow - and by deterring short-distance passengers from the busy ends of longer-distance trips by fare supplements and/or requirements to use local services
- by altering guidance so that no passenger should be forced to stand for more than 15 minutes on short-distance services in association with internal train layout re-design to facilitate standing.

In the medium-term, purpose-built urban Metro trains with higher standing capacity should be introduced in parallel with increases in the total seated capacity of longer-distance rolling stock though the provision of extra coaches, NOT by the introduction of more cramped seating

Q16 Should the number of services making use of interchange stations be increased to reduce the number of direct services

Service quality and income would be adversely affected by any reduction in the number of direct rail services into city centres. The principal focus should lie on increased capacity for such services. This can be achieved by a combination of increased train lengths and enlarged station capacity in Glasgow and Edinburgh – preferably provided in ways facilitating interchange to other rail services, buses and developing Urban Metro or tram networks e.g. in Glasgow, there are opportunities for increased utilisation of the east-west tunnels through Queen St and Central low level stations; shorter-distance South Side services operating at a higher frequency could divert from Central High Level station to a linked interchange (including the Glasgow Subway in the St Enoch area; in Edinburgh, platforms constraints could be eased by operating more services through Waverley (rather than terminating there) and by making greater use of the tram facility on Princes St.

However, under the scenario of increasing rail usage, greater co-ordination and higher-quality city centres, there are opportunities for new direct rail services avoiding existing stations e.g. Glasgow Crossrail services utilising the St Enoch Bridge but including good opportunities for interchange with the Subway (at West St) and other bus and rail services plus strategic park and ride. Similarly, the development of high-frequency Metro or tram services could provide extra opportunities for shifts from car use and for a reshaping of urban bus services to reduce the number of buses crossing city centres. This approach would involve smart multi-modal fares and high quality interchange from bus and car to Metro at suitable locations further from city centres.

It has to be recognised that most trips are multi-modal and require interchange but the policy aim should be to minimise such requirements and ensure high-quality interchange. In some cases, it is sensible not to operate through services over long-distances where interchange is already convenient or could be made so. For example, Far North and Kyle services terminate at Inverness while at termination of Stranraer services at Ayr, connecting with frequent onward electric services, deserves consideration.

Q17 Should government direct aspects of service provision or leave this to customer demand

A highly specified service provision is not desirable and could inhibit both innovative management and partnership working. However, the following broad outcomes should be specified:-

- *departure times* of first and last trains Mondays to Fridays
- *minimum service frequency* - rural routes (as defined in answer to Q1)
 - 4 or 5 services per day Mondays to Saturdays (but rising to at least 8 for Ayr-Girvan and Kilmarnock-Dumfries sections of route and hourly between Dumfries and Carlisle)
- Scottish inter-city and longer-distance commuting – minimum hourly Monday to Saturday service rising to half-hourly on Aberdeen to Central Belt links and quarter-hourly (in main daytime period) between Glasgow and Edinburgh
- shorter-distance city-region services – minimum quarter-hourly frequency (higher where some routes join on approaches to city centres)
- *Sunday services* to be not less than half Monday to Saturday frequency
- *strong preferences for services to run at even intervals*, facilitating connections with other trains, buses and ferries
- *a requirement to consult at least yearly on all significant timetable changes*, including similar requirement for bus and ferry – see answer to Q9

Q18 What level of contract specification should be used

See answer to Q17 plus revised overcrowding guidelines – see answer to Q9 and later answers to Q19 & 20 on fares and regulation.

Q19 How should the contract incentivise innovation?

Main incentive would be a less rigid specification linked with a cut in track access charges conditional on lowered maximum fares (see Answer to Q1), rising penalties for overcrowding on longer-distance services, a requirement for annual support payments from Scottish Government reducing in real terms and the ability to work in partnership to secure Challenge or Innovation Funding. It should be easier to introduce trial service changes and to relax present standards applying to lower speed and/or more lightly used services.

Q20 What should be the rationale of fares policy?

The fundamental aim should be fare levels and structures which encourage modal shift from cars, greater utilisation of the rail network, including usage ensuring wider economic and social benefits than a net rise in revenue, and an approach which in terms of work and social access is fair for those without easy access to cars (and often on lower incomes).

Fares should normally be sufficient to yield income covering direct operational and rolling stock costs plus a fuel levy or small percentage levy on ticket sales producing an increasing contribution to track, signalling and network enhancement costs with increasing usage. Pending reform in present approaches to road charging (where users make no direct contribution to external costs or face extra charges for the use of enhanced infrastructure (such as the urban M74 in Glasgow and the additional Forth crossing), fares should optimise rather than maximise contributions to track costs with any resulting loss of fares income being funded from a mix of general and road fuel tax proceeds, part of the net income from direct road charging and/or cuts in spending on major road projects.

To ensure equity in the treatment of those over state pension age and other categories of concession travel, the franchise should specify an extension of free (or low flat-fare) concession travel to include local travel by any form of public transport. Local travel could be defined as being within zones some 10 to 15 miles across in the more urbanised areas of Scotland, rising to 20 to 50 miles in deep rural areas with much lower levels of public transport provision. This concession should be fundable through the restriction of free bus travel to such zones and by the age qualification for free travel rising with the state pension age. If necessary to prevent a worsening of overcrowding, the rail free travel concession should not be available for travel to city centres where arrival times would be between 8am and 9am on working weekdays. Further data on the cost of such changes, or variants, should be published in advance of bidding invitations for successor franchise arrangements.

Q21 What fares should be regulated

For non-local travel, maximum standard fares throughout Scotland should be no higher than the marginal running costs of an average car with a single occupant plus additions to take account of parking costs and levels of road congestion i.e. higher fares would apply at commuting peaks and possibly also at some holiday, week-end and event peaks. Discounts should continue to be required for season ticket travel or multiple ticket booklets.

For local travel (up to 10/20 miles), the franchise should specify maximum flat fares (with a peak differential) with the option for operators to apply lower fares under partnership agreements or if considered commercially attractive. Such fares should be multi-modal and compatible with smart and phone-based ticketing (including a 'cap' on maximum payments in any one day)

These maximum fares should be adjusted yearly in line with changes in average car running costs and, where appropriate, changes in parking charges or other forms of direct road charging. The concession fare/free travel arrangements should also be reviewed yearly.

A preference should be expressed for bidders linking standard fares for longer-distance travel with the inclusion of 'local zone' travel in such fares or available for a small addition to the standard fare.

'Niche' market fares, first-class fares and any reductions on regulated fares should be free of regulation but a preference should be expressed for simpler fare structures. The setting of lower maximum fares would establish a cap on some walk-on fares currently above car-use costs and make return trips on days other than day of purchase cheaper than at present (in line with car running costs which do not vary with dates of return)

Operators should have the freedom to apply for additional peak supplements if there was no other means of easing severe overcrowding but with the proceeds of such fares earmarked for accelerated acquisition of additional rolling stock.

Q22 How should a balance be achieved between taxpayer funding and fares income

See answer to Q21. The same question could be asked of road users, road taxation and road costs (including the external costs arising from certain types of road use rather than only a consideration of road benefits). Higher fares should NOT be applied to sections of the rail network recently enhanced unless this practice was also introduced for road users. Rather than rail use and modal shift being discouraged by efforts to maximise rail net revenue, any 'deficit' on the rail infrastructure account should be met by shared contributions from general taxation and taxes and charges for road use. Further data and conclusions on these issues should be published in advance of bidding for a successor to the present franchise.

At some future date, it may be appropriate to allow higher maximum fares on train services with an average speed in excess of 70mph but this is not considered relevant at present.

Q23 What should be the difference between peak and off-peak fares

With respect to the maximum regulated peak and off-peak fares in the answer to Q21, a difference of the order of 30% would seem necessary to deliver significant modal shift away from peaks. Under the commercial freedom applying to fares below stated maxima, a differential higher than 30% is likely to prove attractive for commercial and local partnership reasons i.e. encouraging traffic generation where spare seats are available rather than delivering direct shifts from peak to off-peak travel.

The suggestion that Edinburgh-Glasgow peak overcrowding could be eased by lower fares on alternative routes to the present principal route via Falkirk High is welcomed and could be further encouraged by the proposal in the answer to Q9 suggesting higher penalties for overcrowding on longer-distance services. This could be done now rather than await a new franchise.

Q24 How to determine what stations are required and where a station might be closed

This is an unbalanced question as, under conditions of rising usage and an expanding network, it is realistic to expect an increase in the total number of stations by 2020 with further additions following. In a very few cases, closures may be justified but often on the basis of relocation to a more suitable site.

Any successor franchise or franchises needs a close link with the **Network Rail Control Period to 2020** identifying sites with strong prospects for opening or relocation with further land safeguards and electrification modifications applied for stations likely to be added between 2021 and 2030. Franchise bidding should therefore take place after publication of the Network Rail Control Period programme to 2020. This programme should identify sites considered to have a top priority for relocation or for new opening with bidders expected to state whether they could serve such sites either on a net revenue neutral basis or only as part of wider partnership agreements.

The need for stations will vary by category of service. On present evidence and future usage and land use planning projections, it seems that the number of stations by 2020 may rise by:-

3/8 on the rural routes listed in the answer to Q1 but also including extra halts on main-line routes where people may be 10 miles or more from a convenient railhead

15/25 on inter-city and longer-distance commuting routes (in addition to the West Edinburgh (Gogar) interchange and 7 stations already included in the Central Borders rail scheme)

25/40 on shorter-distance city-region services (exclusive of Edinburgh tram stops)

The bidding document, after consultation with RTPs and other interested parties, should identify priorities for relocation, other additions to station numbers and proposed service changes. Some suggestions for priorities for relocated and new stations are contained in the APPENDIX. Responses are invited to these suggestions.

Most new stations by 2020 are likely to be on existing passenger route or on freight route but some limited new construction (in addition to Borders Rail) may be justifiable. The Garngad chord in Glasgow is a particular example which may merit higher priority than the planned south Dalmeny chord from Winchburgh to south of Dalmeny (giving access to Gogar interchange from west)

Freight routes on which passenger services might be added include:-

Glasgow Crossrail (Shields Road to Bellgrove)

Thornton-Levenmouth

Falkirk-Grangemouth

Alloa-Clackmannan-Dunfermline

Any station closure proposals should be referred to a strengthened consumer body for Scottish public transport (see answer to Q 9) with public representations invited

Q25 Should third parties be involved in promoting stations and services

There is a strong case for this within the approach outlined in the answer to Q24. RTPs and other interested parties (including tourism bodies and local groups) should have a prominent role in the promotion of additional stations and beneficial relocations. Consideration should also be given to a transfer of many smaller stations to RTPs or other partnerships, either on a nominal long lease or a full ownership transfer for a nominal amount subject to specified standards for maintenance suited to levels of usage and the speed and frequency of trains. Maintenance could be integrated with existing RTP and local authority functions relating to bus stops, bus shelters, street lighting and local information provision.

Q26 Should only one organisation be involved in station management

-see answer to Q25

Q27 How can local communities be encouraged to support their local station

- see answer to Q25

Q28 What categories of station and levels of facility should be designated

Six categories for stations are proposed at p 48 of the consultation – these being *Principal*, *Commuter*, *Interchange*, *Destination*, *Tourist* and *Other*. It is suggested that the categories would be better related to types of rail service and levels of usage. The following alternative is proposed:-

- *Major Interchanges* (including interchange with bus, tram, taxi and some limited car parking)
- *Other Principal Stations* on inter-city and longer-distance commuting routes (including both strategic park and ride/bus/DRT interchange and destination stations close to substantial facilities such as universities, ferry terminals, hospitals and shopping/leisure/event centres)
- *Short-distance city-region Metro stations*
- *Other local stations* (including those with a larger tourism/leisure role)

The first two categories above would have a larger range of specified facilities but facilities would be more restricted in the latter two categories – with toilets, cycle hire, heated shelter provision and expanded information only being provided at local stations with higher usage (including tourism and leisure usage). RTP or partnership ownership/ long leases are also seen as more desirable for the latter two categories though it may be appropriate for some rail/ferry and Metro/bus interchanges.

The reference at 7.30 to toilets not being necessary at commuter stations if trains are frequent and have toilets is puzzling. Such a standard is not appropriate or normal for short-distance Metro routes. While major Metro interchanges with other services should have toilets, toilets are not required either on Metro trains or at the majority of Metro stations (many being unstaffed). Substantial cost savings, passed on to passengers in lower fares than might otherwise apply, are possible if Metro trains are designed without toilets and with a much higher standing capacity than longer-distance commuter trains. Metro routes also offer potential for modification to give level access from platform to train or alternative low-floor provision as on Edinburgh trams.

Q29 & 30 Should cross-border daytime services continue to go north of Edinburgh alongside ScotRail services or should they terminate at an Edinburgh hub

As mentioned in the answer to Q16, many passengers making long-distance trips within Britain – often with luggage and children – have a preference for the minimum of interchange, located if possible close to the start and end of trips. They want once or twice-daily well-timed through longer-distance services rather than excessive interchange. Business and individual travellers may be more willing to interchange yet, if working on a train trip, they also prefer minimal interchange. From an operating point of view, the higher-capacity Anglo-Scottish trains also make them capable of easing overcrowding within Scotland at times when a Scottish franchise holder would otherwise have to provide additional coaches.

Any ScotRail franchise specification should therefore include arrangements for:-

- continued provision outwith the franchise of at least 4 daytime through trains from Aberdeen to south of Edinburgh plus 1 daytime Anglo-Scottish service to Inverness as at present (via East Coast Main Line)
- an option within the new franchise EITHER to provide a service from Inverness to Perth, Stirling and Motherwell for interchange with West Coast Main Line services OR provision outwith the franchise of a through daytime service from Birmingham to Inverness.
- an arbitration procedure via ORR to ensure that the new Scottish franchise holder suffers no net disadvantage from the operation of through services north of the Scottish Central Belt.

It should be further noted that platform slot problems at Edinburgh Waverley would be eased if more services operated through the station. Gains can also come from raising the frequency of Anglo-Scottish trains running north of Newcastle via Edinburgh to Glasgow Central to hourly. The bulk of these trains could start from 'middle' England rather than London and offer improved services from Berwick and Dunbar – possibly obviating the need for a ScotRail franchise to include an hourly service from Edinburgh to Dunbar.

Another option worth investigation would be adjustment of Nithsdale services to permit 3 or 4 through semi-express trains per day from Leeds to Glasgow via Carlisle and Dumfries. Though these trains would be slower than electric services using the Glasgow-Leeds route via Edinburgh, they could provide an improved facility for principal stations on the scenic route via Carlisle – including a faster service from Dumfries and Auchinleck to Glasgow.

Q31 What mechanisms could be used to reduce the cost of rolling stock provision

Lower-cost cascades of diesel stock to and within Scotland should be possible as electrification gathers pace in both Scotland and England. Orders for new stock should have costs reduced by greater stability and standardisation within ordering and a move to lighter-weight and more fuel-efficient trains – especially those for urban Metro services and some expansion of stopping or skip-stop trains on other services.

Partnerships, notably on tourist-related route, may offer opportunities through direct purchase of new stock and leaseback to operators. Though the electrification programmes have led to a reluctance to order new diesel trains, most of the scenic routes in Scotland will not be electrified in the foreseeable future and could benefit from a more specialist design (using European expertise) of rail vehicle for Scotland's outstanding scenic routes. This could use diesel power, hybrids (as already on order for short-ferry crossings) or hydrogen produced using electricity from renewable sources.

Q32 What facilities should be present on trains

All except Metro trains should have toilets and a strong emphasis on longer-distance passengers being seated with ample leg space, luggage space and most seats aligned with windows. Buffet facilities and other catering could be left to the discretion of operators though with potential for enhancements under partnership agreements (including the expansion of station catering and other facilities). First-class provision should be required on all inter-city routes in Scotland, including at least one principal route between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Cycle and buggy facilities are a difficult issue but there are opportunities to be explored in the flexible use of wheelchair and cycle space. It is suggested that one wheelchair space be provided for every 26 normal seats with designs arranged to allow occupation by cycles or fold-down seats unless a wheelchair space was pre-booked. Provided that there was a reasonable charge for cycle space, inter-city services should be capable of accommodating at least 2 cycles in the area of extra space now found around toilets able to be used by the disabled. On tourist routes, provision for cycles, rucksacks and sports equipment should be higher.

More emphasis should be placed on provision for cycle hire at stations, not only on tourist routes but also at all principal stations. Provision for secure cycle parking at outer stations should also be increased. These measures would help reduce the problems and costs of accommodating both passengers and cyclists. In some cases, it may be possible to attach cycle trailers or underfloor space to tourist rolling-stock or provide for the alternative transfer of cycles in road vans.

Q33 Mobile phone and wi-fi provision

This should be a standard but phased requirement on inter-city services – otherwise a matter for operator discretion and agreements with partners.

Q34 Should first-class be eliminated to ensure extra seats for standard passengers

Retention of first-class on inter-city services should be specified in the franchise –see also Q32.

Q35 Alcohol on trains

There are serious concerns about alcohol abuse often linked with intimidating behaviour and excessive noise on some trains, exacerbated by overcrowding. These problems should be tackled by:-

- a continued alcohol ban, as in present practice, on certain trains associated with an increased staff and police presence to ensure enforcement
- lengthening of longer-distance trains where abuse occurs from 2/3 coaches to 4/7 coaches including an increased police presence and introducing at least one alcohol free (apart from trolley service) and quiet coach per train. Intrusive mobile phones or other music-making equipment should not be permitted in quiet coaches.

Q36 How can provision of travel information be improved

The principal improvement should be that of earlier information on late-running trains and other emergencies affecting normal travel backed up by timeous information on alternative arrangements to minimise inconvenience to existing passengers and those otherwise about to travel. Fuller use should be made of mobile technology - see also answer to Q11

Q37, 38 & 39 Future arrangements for Anglo-Scottish sleeper and overnight services.

Bids for such services should be sought as a separate franchise, encouraging innovation in service provision by firms with experience in hotel management and in the marketing of overnight services, including easy connections with daytime European services and the possibility of through overnight services on links between the European continent and Scotland.

Given the commitments of £50m each by the UK and Scottish governments towards the capital costs of new or upgraded rolling stock and improved connections or through services to Europe, it is anticipated that services considered appropriate to meet Scottish requirements would require only modest initial financial support with break-even possible in four years. Bidders should be required to provide a minimum of 1 overnight service splitting into 2 or more sections to provide through links to origins and destinations north of the Central Belt. Bidders should have freedom to provide additional commercial services for part or all of the year.

Bids should be assisted by provision of fuller information on the costs, usage and revenue of existing services. There should be a requirement for services running north of the Central Belt to include provision for seated accommodations for internal Scottish passengers on early morning and late evening services.

Pending fuller information, Fort William rather than Oban is preferred as the continuing terminus for a West Highland overnight service – though with Oban and related ferries having train connections to through overnight services at Crianlarich.

Bidders should consider the provision of en suite accommodation at premium prices in addition to lower-cost sleeping arrangements and some reclining seats if considered commercially attractive. These could be in a coach also including light buffet facilities, partly or fully automated.

Q40 Key environmental performance indicators

This question raises wider issues of performance and appraisal which are covered in a **Supplementary Question** on relations being STAG and franchise specifications. A response to this is required before the bidding process starts. Within a narrower interpretation of environmental performance, the franchise should include arrangements for monitoring progress on:-

- use of new designs and rolling stock refurbishment to reduce internal train noise and the level of external noise (normally lower and more spaced out than noise from high volumes of road traffic moving at, or above, maximum permitted speeds)
- use of new designs and electrification to reduce carbon emissions per unit of passenger carrying capacity (with scope for further reductions through improved load factors)
- changes in train design and internal layout to introduce opportunities for forward and rear views for train passengers, especially in scenic areas. At present, there are no such opportunities in Scotland though they are found on the continent and on certain types of tram/ Metro services.
- measures to change lineside landscaping (mainly through selective tree removal) to improve viewing opportunities on scenic routes

A strengthened **Scottish Public Transport Users Committee** and other interested parties should be involved in these issues – see also answer to Q9

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION What should the relationships be between the franchising process and Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

It is surprising that the franchise consultation makes no reference to this issue. STAG and SEA, which both require some revision, are concerned with bringing together the wider economic, energy, safety and environmental benefits and disbenefits of projects and programmes prior to transparent debate and political decisions. These procedures have been criticised as over-complex, formulaic, over-reliant on dubious evaluations of time-saving and out-dated forecasts of movement and modal share and often divorced from budget realities. Yet they have potential value in shedding light on wider economic benefits, the level of contribution to low carbon and the ranking of other environmental gains. They can also evaluate the benefits and losses of options for fiscal, pricing and regulatory changes.

Revised STAG and SEA procedures therefore form an important part of assessing the ability of passenger rail services (and of freight) to:-

- encourage shifts in mode share enabling larger reductions in localised congestion and improved reliability in road travel
- encourage accelerated cuts in greenhouse emissions from transport - including the impact of both extended rail electrification and improved energy efficiency within the rail sector and the added gains arising in shifts in mode share away of road vehicle miles (where high levels of electrification or of other uses of low carbon fuels are harder and more costly to deliver than in the case of rail).
- offer higher national and more localised benefits for economic revival and regeneration
- offer the added economic and environmental benefits of reductions in road traffic levels and speeds in city and town centres and in leading scenic and active recreation areas plus increases in walking or cycling to and from stations.

The difficulty lies in establishing a link between such evaluation and the actual practice of franchisees who will seek profit within the case which has been made for greater flexibility in franchise specifications as an incentive for innovation and partnership funding. It is suggested that this difficulty could be overcome by:-

- an emphasis on bids focused on the best quality offered within total annual payments from Government reducing in real terms over the franchise period
- a focus of bids on operational issues with separate arrangement for the evaluation of payments towards track and signalling maintenance, renewals and network enhancements (with the latter being subject to specific STAG and Business Case evaluations)
- STAG appraisals of particular franchise specifications prior to invitations for bids – in particular the specifications affecting fares, penalties and carefully defined incentives
- the introduction of a **Challenge or Innovation Fund** (including extra funding for RTPs) to encourage partnership bids for projects (including new stations) which a franchisee otherwise saw as offering no net financial benefit (with disputes on this issue subject to an arbitration procedure influenced by the availability of STAG reports) – see also answer to Q9

There is already a precedent for Challenge/Innovation funding in the recent promise by the UK and Scottish Governments of £50m each towards Anglo-Scottish sleeper services. These promises are welcome but there is a need to question why there should have been a rushed announcement on the continuation and reshaping of sleeper services when there was no action to establish a Challenge Fund to accelerate rail (and other public transport) projects in Scotland not likely to be commercially attractive within franchise specifications yet offering significant area regeneration and passenger benefits. Funding of some £50m a year should be considered in parallel with new franchising arrangements and with provision for further rises funded in part from savings in rail operating costs per passenger mile and in rail infrastructure and procurement costs.

APPENDIX Suggestions for Station Relocations and other New Openings to be evaluated

Those in **bold** type may have the best prospects for opening by, or before, 2020

RELOCATIONS

Glasgow area Duke St to new location on Airdrie line east of Bellgrove
Bellgrove to new location in Gallowgate area
Barnhill to a new location at **Petershill/Germiston**
Cumbernauld to a new more accessible location 400 yards to north-east
East Kilbride to a town centre location
Carfin and Holytown to intermediate point where railway crosses main distributor road – possibly named as **Ravenscraig** or **Lanarkshire Gateway**
Neilston to a location east of present road bridge (releasing space for additional housing or other developments)
Jordanhill to location west of Crow Road
Hillington East and West to a new location astride Hillington Road
Coatbridge Central replaced by improved interchange at Coatbridge Sunnyside

Rest of Scotland Invergowrie to a new **Dundee West** location (giving better access to housing, employment and Ninewells Hospital)
Stranraer Harbour to location closer to town and bus/taxi interchange
Georgemas Junction replaced by Halkirk

OTHER NEW STATIONS or HALTS

Exclusive of existing plans for West Edinburgh Gateway and Central Borders rail

<u>On rural routes</u>	Conon Bridge	Mauchline	Thornhill	Eastriggs	Dunragit/Glenluce
<u>Extra halts on rural sections of main lines</u>	House of Bruar			Bridge of Earn	Newburgh
	Blackford			East Linton	Reston
	Carnwath			Symington	Beattock

On inter-city and longer-distance commuting routes

Dalcross (Inverness Airport)	Inverness South-east	Kintore
Levenmouth	Windygates	Kirkcaldy North
Livingston Parkway	Newbridge/Ratho	Winchburgh
Stirling South	Greenhill/Bonnybridge	Cambus
Melrose	Newtown StBoswells	Hawick
Kilmarnock West	Kilmarnock South	Grangemouth
Glasgow Airport	Ardrossan North	Ayr South
Glasgow (West St) – for interchange to Subway and other services		
SECC North/Kelvinhaugh -to improve access to SECC/Riverside Museum		

On shorter-distance services

Halbeath	Ferrytoll	Burntisland West	Abbeyhill
Portobello	St Andrews	Clackmannan	Kincardine
Culross	Torryburn	Mid-Dunfermline	Mossend
Paisley Gallowhill	Ibrox	Parkhead	Robroyston
Paisley (Barrhead Rd)	Glasgow St Enoch	Wishaw East	
Westerhill	Woodilee	Queensway West (East Kilbride)	
Kirkintilloch	Milton of Campsie	Lennoxton	
Brookfield	Bridge of Weir	Kilmacolm	

Also a further 12/15 stations on expanding Metro services for Greater Glasgow plus an increasing number of tram stops in Edinburgh as network extends to Leith and into south-east of city. There are opportunities for additional halts in the Aberdeen area between Dyce and Stonehaven possibly extending into lower Deeside and similarly between Dundee-St Andrews and Perth-Dundee-Arbroath. Depending on the outcome of detailed studies, less than half of the above stations are likely to be deliverable by 2020. Some other stations may rise up the priority list, influenced by actual new developments.

As well as extra stations, there should be high priority for **significant interchange improvements at existing stations** giving improved connectivity with ferries, buses and DRT in association with though fares at attractive prices.