

(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?

1 Q1 comments: I believe that the entire Scottish rail network (including the assets of TOCs and Network Rail) should be in national control and ownership; the country's size would be ideal, and I fail to understand why this option appears not to receive consideration. The alternative would be to operate an all-Scotland, privatised or semi-privatised management franchise. The most potent improvements in service will be achieved by increased integration, much reduced fragmentation, and by running the railways as a genuine public service uncomplicated by layers of conflicting service agreements between unnecessary service companies and subsidiaries.

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

Q2 comments:

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

Q3 comments:

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

Q4 comments:

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

Q5 comments:

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

Q6 comments:

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

Q7 comments:

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

Q8 comments:

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Franchise agreements should penalise rather than incentivise. (See 19 below).

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: Performance should be aligned across Scotland, but be capable of regional or group comparison. Lateness should be assessed at all stops, not only at terminal stops.

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

Q11 comments:

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

Q12 comments:

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:

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

Q14 comments:

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: To plan for a deliberate increase in standing passengers is unacceptable.

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: Allowing franchisees to use interconnectivity (eg the use of interchange stations to enable reduction in frequency and range of direct services) will be against passenger interests. Interconnectivity between different (and competing) transport modes should be improved and consistently monitored. In parallel, Oyster-style smart-ticketing across all modes and operators should be introduced ASAP. (See also the answer to Q36).

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:

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

Q18 comments:

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

Q19 comments: Franchisees should be incentivised simply by holding the contract!

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

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: All fares should be regulated – consistent, simplified and free from anomaly.

In 2008, following protracted correspondence concerning wildly different fares charged for the same journey, on the same day, on the same train to different individuals travelling together, I had a reply from the then Deputy Managing Director of Scotrail, Steve Montgomery, in which he said, inter alia: *"As a retailer, we are not obliged to advise passengers of any cheaper combination fare, but once the customer is aware of such a fare we can sell them, but only if specifically asked."* This quasi-masonic nonsense suggests a deliberate intention to keep passengers in the dark, and appears to me to be a business practice that ought to be illegal. For that and other reasons, it is imperative that complaints relating to rail fares be actionable by Trading Standards officers. Passenger Focus was interested in my complaint, but was unable to do anything about it. Copying the correspondence widely within government circles was equally pointless.

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 balance of fares should NOT be moved from taxpayer to passenger. The entire network should be seen as a social, public resource with the balance of financial provision substantially coming from public funds.

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:

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: There should be a presumption that NO station closures take place.

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:

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: See answer to Q1

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

Q27 comments: Redundant station accommodation (of which there appears to be an abundance) should be refurbished and made available for community/commercial uses.

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

Q28 comments:

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 SHOULD continue north of Edinburgh. Presumably, some sharing of costs would be necessary with southern operators.

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:

Rolling stock

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

- Q31 comments: ROSCOs should be eliminated as an unnecessary cost-inflating imposition. We surely need MORE integration and LESS duplication. Why lease via an external profit-making company?

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

Q32 comments:

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: This needs careful thought. It should not automatically be assumed that mobile phone and high-band Wifi are necessary. There is little worse for the ordinary passenger than being engulfed by noisy, incessant business chatter by people who regard the railway coach as their office. Perhaps the business class and their gadgets should be in separate 'business class'.

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:

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

Q35 comments: Consumption of alcohol – whether purchased on board trains or carried aboard – should only be permitted where

train/security staff are available and authorised to supervise effectively.

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

Q36 comments: Information must – critically – be up-to-date; especially where the information concerns changes to journey conditions or times, hold-ups or other unexpected events. Use of live, 'real-time' information at all stations, information points and internet applications should be improved and increased.

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 should be a standard provision, not exposed to the commercial whim of an operator.

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: Within the main franchise.

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: Different marketing strategies should apply to different passenger groups – business, tourist and 'everyday'. The attraction of

the sleeper service has always seemed to me to be far more civilised (in terms of 'a business day in London') than the feeble boasting that goes on about having been 'on the redeye this morning'. Tourism should always be a good market for sleeper services; and it is worth thinking more imaginatively about final destinations – but always in the context of interconnection with other transport modes. I believe that most people would willingly pay more for better service; and where food (at any level) is being considered, NEVER sink to reliance on the microwave.

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: Consider requiring analysis of fuel sourcing, for traction and other principal purposes, against cost and output; and sources and outputs of fuels used on board trains, eg for heating and in dining cars.