

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

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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

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 dual focus franchise could lead to the increasing of fares in the economic routes because the operator “would be given freedom to change its operations in response to demand”. The demand for the economic routes is likely to be very high because the routes, which would fall into this category, e.g. inter-city and commuter networks, currently have a high demand. In many cases there is no viable alternative and people would be willing to pay the increase in fares on the economic routes. There appears to be little incentive or reward for operators to invest in the routes, which would be designated as social routes. It is therefore very likely that there would be discrepancies in service quality between the two operations.

One suggestion could be to split the franchise between the following:

- intercity and longer distance suburban
- shorter distance urban and other local services
- remoter rural lines

Instead of looking for lower cost the Scottish Government should specify annual amounts available to support each type within fare specifications and the successful bidder should then be the one offering best quality within these parameters.

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:

The goal should be to attract more people to use the railways so there should be some sort of reward for the franchisee to achieve this goal.

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

Q5 comments:

Greater third party/partner involvement can help improve services with high leisure/tourist content, can provide extra stations and provide better Sunday services.

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

Q6 comments:

We suggest that the outcome to which this and all transport strategy should be working is a modal shift towards the use of public transport and active travel (walking and cycling).

The achievement of this outcome would be to reduce the level of car usage, which would impact on the environment and health. Reducing the use of private road transport would reduce congestion on roads particularly at peak times which would mitigate climate change by reducing emissions of transport related greenhouse gases and reducing levels of health damaging air pollutants. Also providing the opportunity to walk and cycle to and from train stations could improve people's health.

Working to these outcomes would require:

- Encouraging people to use the rail system at all times of the day by increasing capacity where required and appropriately priced train tickets to encourage commuters and other people to switch to using trains
- Improving the accessibility of the system
- Improving network coverage
- Increasing usage by groups of people who are often excluded such as disabled people using trains

Rail should have an increasing role within co-ordinated public transport networks and fares.

The consultation document mentions sustainable travel and the environment, but there does not seem to be any focus on these issues or outcomes, which relate to sustainable transport and the environment. Instead the focus of this consultation document appears to be very much economic with little regard to the environment and health. There might seem to be an assumption that prices will need to rise to reduce demand for services.

Franchise should encourage the use of rail, but should also encourage rail net operating costs per passenger mile, which would be helped by increased usage.

Quality within fixed level of annual support rather than lowest possible bids should be considered.

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:

Incentivising good performance and penalising poor performance should be continued. Good performance could be measured both in current terms and in terms of attracting additional customers onto rail services on an annual basis.

Tougher penalties should be introduced, (allocated towards provision of more rolling stock), for overcrowding on longer distance services.

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:

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

Q11 comments:

Further research and consideration of views of current passengers and those who are currently unable to, or do not access the rail system.

There needs to be much more of a focus on passengers rather than trains.

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

Q12 comments:

Journey times are important to customers, both new and existing, but at the same time the reliability and consistency of train services are important, particularly where trains should be connecting with each other.

Total trip times and good arrangements for connections/emergency alternatives are more important than the train time part of trip.

If the question is whether journey times should include a contingency allowance to ensure performance targets are met, then please note that inflation of journey times not only discourages passengers but also affects multi-stage journey planning.

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:

Accessibility for people with mobility issues, amenities for wheel chair users, prams and buggies and cyclists. Perceived safety e.g. by lone women users.

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:

There is a need for passengers to be comfortable so should be considering increasing the capacity limit rather than increasing standing time. We do not agree with the idea of increasing prices to reduce demand and therefore discouraging people to use trains, particularly on busy services.

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:

Direct services are the more ideal solution, but where this is not appropriate increasing the number of services making use of interchange stations could be utilised. This would only work where passengers could be guaranteed, as far as possible, that just because their train was late and they failed to meet their connecting service they would not be left at a train station for long periods of time. There is therefore the requirement for improved and integrated timetabling so that passengers can complete their total journey in a reasonable time.

Performance measurement could include missed connections. Safeguards to popularise use could include specifications of alternative provision in case of missed connections, including risk of missed connections when the first train is announced late.

The facilities at interchange stations should be improved to make them safer and more attractive, for example accessible public toilets, attractive waiting areas with shops, kiosks, and facilities for hiring and storing bicycles.

Medium term aim of special train designs primarily for leisure/tourist routes.

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 set a level of minimum frequency and maximum journey time and then agree with franchisee on particulars based on customer demand.

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:

By incentivising modal shift towards rail transport.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

Fares policy should work towards the proposed outcome of encouraging more people to use trains and therefore working towards the proposed outcome of a enabling a modal shift towards rail travel in Scotland. To achieve this fares should be kept to a minimum.

Some differential is needed between peak and off-peak fares where there is overcrowding, but within 'maximum fare' ceilings.

Some funding should be provided for general support for bus network connecting well with local trains.

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:

There is a requirement to regulate peak period fares to control excess profits and moderate overcrowding, but also to release funds for additional rolling stock.

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:

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:

The ethos behind having peak and off-peak fares appears to be to discourage passengers, in particular commuters, to use trains out with peak times by offering cheaper off-peak tickets. The other idea is that lower off-peak fares can be important in filling a higher proportion of otherwise empty seats, which would increase usage and net income.

The majority of passengers, i.e. commuters, who use the trains at peak times have to use them at this time so if they want to use rail transport have to pay the additional charge and sometimes without a seat.

To achieve a modal shift to rail transport need to encourage more people to use the railways at all times and especially to encourage commuters to use trains instead of private transport at peak times. To enable this to happen should reduce peak fares and improve the capacity of the system to meet the extra demand at peak times.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

In determining what rail stations are required and which should be closed a full assessment should be made of the alternatives, future demand, approaches to improving station use and a full health and inequalities impact assessment should be undertaken. Much more consultation and research should be undertaken with both existing and potential new passengers.

There should be a shift in emphasis from a few isolated closures to significant rise in total number of stations and some relocations to better sites.

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:

In theory the merits of a third party such as a local authority or local business or local community being able to propose, promote and fund a local station or service seems good because it would be beneficial for the community by providing civic pride to the local community and very much adheres to the asset based management approach for local communities.

If third parties have been suggested as a good idea then the opportunities for RTPs, local authorities and other third parties to become more involved in the provision of extra stations should be emphasised. The base offer of franchise bidders should be partly based on improving services. There is a need for transparent information and regular consultation on such issues.

There are issues, though, such as some communities would welcome the opportunity to promote the station etc and others would not want to be involved. In addition some communities would have relevant experience and knowledge in managing a station, customer service and of health and safety etc, but some other communities would not have the same experience. This means that there would be a great disparity between stations and services operated and little consistency in terms of quality and health and safety.

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:

There are concerns that having multiple organisations managing and maintaining stations could lead to confusion and would lead to increased complexity in the system. This would make ensuring quality and health and safety systems are consistently in place and are appropriately maintained more difficult. We therefore suggest that there should be no increase in the number of organisations which currently manage and maintain stations.

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

Q27 comments:

Local communities could support their local station by encouraging the use of rail transport as a modal shift in transport use.

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:

The focus of stopping cross-border services at Edinburgh seems economic, (by increasing the revenues available to the Scottish franchisee) rather than for the benefit of people. If the Scottish government are aiming for a modal shift to use rail transport then this is not likely to happen because if it makes it more inconvenient for people, i.e. having to change trains, waiting for connections, having to buy new tickets, then less likely to use trains.

Cross border services may have a particular role in supporting a sense of economic connectedness, which is attractive to investors.

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:

We are concerned that if cross-border services terminate at Edinburgh Waverley and passengers wanted to go to other places in Scotland they would have the inconvenience of changing trains and perhaps waiting at Edinburgh for a connection with other Scottish trains. There would need to be good co-ordination between cross-border services and Scottish services and perhaps increasing the number of trains provided in Scotland to meet the cross-border services.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:

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

Q32 comments:

All trains should have facilities to allow accessibility for wheel chairs, prams and buggies.

All trains should have amenities to allow the carriage of bicycles and the number of bicycles which can be carried should be greater for those routes which go to tourist destinations.

Bike hire should be available at principal stations, and bike parking and bike hire should be available at a growing range of mainly tourist/leisure stations.

Bikes takes up space otherwise available for seating or standing passengers in crowded conditions so could consider extra trailers/amended train designs facilitating more bike carriage in tourist areas.

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:

Improving the accessibility of rail transport to encourage more people to use trains by reducing train ticket prices, increasing the capacity of the rail system, increasing punctuality and reliability and improving connections between trains should be prioritised above investment of the above.

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 only be offered if commercially viable and this should be indicated by the usage of first-class, but this should be balanced with the need for additional seating capacity. Numerous occasions where first-class services are empty and people are standing for long periods of time in standard class, which should not be happening.

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 Healthy Environment Network is concerned with the impact of the environment on people's health so anything which can affect the environment negatively should be reduced or removed from the environment. If alcohol is sold and drunk on trains this can sometimes lead to drunken behaviour amongst some passengers, which can lead to unpleasant environments for other passengers. For this reason existing measures, which include alcohol bans on some trains at critical times, should be more rigorously enforced. Alcohol free coaches should be provided on longer distance trains and lengthening these trains to accommodate alcohol free coaches.

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

Q36 comments:

Information should be improved and information on alternative arrangements in cases of late running or other emergencies should be provided (please see response to Q12).

For example up to date travel information should always be provided and easily accessible and easy to understand. The format of the information should always be considered from the point of view of passengers rather than train companies. The information should continue to be provided by different methods such as the internet, twitter etc.

The train fare or train ticket system still appears to be confusing even though it was recently updated to make it less confusing.

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:

Yes we should continue to specify sleeper services.

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:

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:

Sleeper services should be reshaped rather than abandoned.

Sleeper appeal to passengers includes: a full day's work either side of the journey, plus a city evening out, avoidance of hotel bookings, and arrival early enough to get to work (not always the case in Scotland unless you work in the centre of Edinburgh or Glasgow).

Some of the facilities should be updated and modernised. It is doubtful if people would pay more for better facilities on sleeper services because the prices are fairly high already unless tickets are purchased well in advance of travelling. Updates and upgrades do not need to achieve luxury. The competing frills free domestic flights are neither comfortable nor enjoyable.

There is the possibility that if more early and late trains were provided then the appeal of the sleeper services may change, but further research would have to be undertaken to see if this is the case.

Further research would have to be undertaken to investigate if Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen are the correct destinations for sleeper services rather than Oban.

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:

Modal shift towards train travel.

Train load factors should be improved, which would lower energy costs per passenger mile and electrification adding the bonus of a greater shift away from oil dependency and car/diesel bus use.

A shift away from using diesel rolling stock.