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Consultation Questions

The answer boxes will expand as you type.

Procuring rail passenger services

1. What are the merits of offering the ScotRail franchise as a dual focus franchise and what services should be covered by the economic rail element, and what by the social rail element?

Q1 comments: if a rail service has an important social value but cannot be run economically I believe it is the states responsibility to help provide this service. However, if a line is profitable then I see no problems with it being open to many competitors to try and increase competition to maximise the benefits for passengers. Perhaps some revenue from the profit making line can be taxed by the state and transferred to the social lines

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

Q2 comments: I don't feel qualified to state an exact length but I think 5-10 years is probably beneficial as it reduces the possibility of a short termism attitude from a franchisee wanting to make a quick buck but it also means the franchisee has to keep on top of its game so it doesn't loose out

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

Q3 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q4 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q5 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q6 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q7 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q8 comments: fines seem useless however, capping share holder dividends if there is misbehaviour or a failing to fulfil commitments seems appropriate

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: i strongly believe in positive incentives as I think its easy for a franchisee to get into the mindset of "i don't have to do this improvement as i'll just pay a bit of a fine" where as a much more positive situation is one of "im going to make these improvements to get that reward"

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: positive rewards should be linked to each individual route/service to avoid favouritism for one service

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

Q11 comments: make performance better.....

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

Q12 comments: both should be perfect.....

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: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q14 comments: public shaming of share holders involved with franchisees who underperform – banning of organisations rebidding for nay Scottish government contract for 5 years if they fail in a franchise

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: standing times depend on the individual but in a perfect world (which we should always aim for even if we won't reach it...) no one should stand

16. Should the number of services making use of interchange stations (both rail to rail and rail to other modes) be increased to reduce the number of direct services? What would be the opportunities and challenges of this?

Q16 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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: depends on the line – for loss-making lines the state should dictate for other lines the state should do everything it can to promote integrated transport while simultaneously allowing some freedom to innovate timetabling

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

Q18 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q19 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: make train fares realistically affordable for all

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: government should introduce an absolute fair cap so we don't end up with the current ridiculous fares (especially in 1st class) however, markets should probably dictate other fares

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: I do not feel qualified to answer however, I would think annual fare rise should ideally never be more than 3% above inflation

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: i personally often choose off-peak fares due to the cost so i guess it works!

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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: I do not feel qualified to answer

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: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q27 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q28 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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:

I want to strongly oppose any move by the Scottish Government to force services coming from England to stop at Edinburgh. I live in Aberdeen and regularly use the East Coast services to travel to York (where I have family) and Peterborough and London (for work). By having a direct line service from Aberdeen to England this not only saves on my journey time but drastically increases the comfort of my journey as changing trains is irritating when carrying luggage and is inconvenient when I wish to work undisturbed on the train. The stress of my journey is also much reduced as I do not have to worry about making my connection – something ScotRail trains from

Aberdeen often struggle to achieve.

If cross border services north of Edinburgh were stopped I can confidently say that my work productivity would be considerably reduced and I would also be forced into flying for many journeys. Something I do not wish to do due to the environmental impact of flying

Quite frankly stopping services north of Edinburgh would make a mockery of Scotland's environmental (especially climate change) credentials and destroy any notion of integrated transport within Scotland.

I am at a total loss to see any benefits from such a suggestion and I know that many professionals in Aberdeen who have contacts in England will be very inconvenienced by such a decision and that can only negatively impact the Scottish economy.

Finally I would like to say that when I have an early morning meeting in Edinburgh I regularly opt to take the morning East Coast Service as not only is it quicker but it is also far more comfortable than ScotRail trains and the first class facilities (complimentary cooked breakfast and free WiFi) are far superior to anything ScotRail offers. A brilliant demonstration of competition on the line helping the consumer.

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: absolutely none – see response to q 29

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q32 comments: Aberdeen to Edinburgh takes 3 hours with essentially no catering other than crisps and biscuits. I think this needs changing to make this route more attractive and convenient. Also the lack of WiFi in this day and age on Scottish trains is an embarrassment to Scotland. Thank god the East Coast services have reliable (and free in 1st class) WiFi

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: all trains should have WiFi – this would surely benefit the Scottish economy

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 with room to work with a laptop is essential. However, scotrail first class currently doesn't provide this and should be upgraded accordingly. Ultimately more carriages are needed (especially on Aberdeen to ed/Glasgow routes) which would allow for more standard class seating (urgently needed) and a better first class – less urgently needed but still a priority

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

Q35 comments: I do not feel qualified to answer

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

Q36 comments: its pretty good to be honest

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:

As a fairly frequent user of sleeper services I cannot praise sleeper trains enough. I live in Aberdeen and if I have to be in London for a 9am meeting then the sleeper is invaluable as it means I am only away from Aberdeen for a day. Instead of having to get hotels for two nights or having to get carbon intensive flights in the dead of night I can simply hop on the train in Aberdeen in the evening, spend a day in London and be back at work the next day. Quite frankly it's amazing I can be in London for a meeting and only spend a day away from the office all without flying, paying for hotels, and the hassle of racing around London to one of its far flung airports.

It's a brilliantly stress free affair and an incredibly environmentally friendly option. I also think it must be great for the Scottish economy and our nations cultural identity as I am forever meeting fascinating artists, powerful business men and leading academics in the lounge bar.

The Scottish Government must retain the service as I am sure the Scottish nation would find itself at a disadvantage without it.

I believe a lot more people would use it as well; however, its poorly advertised and not "sexed" up enough. A lot of people don't realise it exists or dismiss it as outdated and not a viable option without even trying it.

If the Scottish government is serious about its green credentials it could do well to buy a new fleet of carriages – they are starting to show their age - and rebrand the whole service. The glamour of the lounge bar would be a huge draw if nothing else!!!

I have travelled on Swedish sleeper trains before and they had en-suite showers and an on board cinema – can Scotland not look to our Nordic neighbours for inspiration?

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: whatever is needed to retain the service at, if nothing else, its current form and hopefully improve it

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:

Appeal – see response in q37

Would it increase with more services at different times – yes flexibility is always a positive

Value to various destinations – i only use Aberdeen and for me it is extremely valuable

I think showers are a must (even if there's just more of them of a better quality in destination stations) and a larger lounge bar with improved food

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: I do not feel qualified to answer