

Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

On behalf of: **The Highland Council, Ward 12 & 22 elected members**

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

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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

☐

/

Group/Organisation

Please tick as

☒

- (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 X 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 **X** Yes ☐ No

Consultation Questions

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

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:

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

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:

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

Q27 comments:

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:

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:

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

Q32 comments: To meet the demands of the modern traveller, sleeper facilities need to include as a minimum:

- Access to an adequate number of modern good quality toilet and washing facilities ; regularly serviced to ensure toiletries are refreshed, areas kept clean etc.
- Access to good quality modern shower facilities on the train (preferably) or at the very least each end of the service.
- choice of single, double or 'family' cabins/berths as standard. People do not want to share with those they don't know.
- Disabled friendly facilities on all services
- Access to good quality (varied and interesting) catering including a substantial cooked breakfast.
- Connectivity access (wi-fi etc)
- More comfortable chairs (as a cheaper alternative to a berth option)

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: Connectivity is particularly important on longer journeys such as the sleeper service where travellers are potentially away from their business base, friends/family and need to keep communications lines open. More sockets (for charging phones, laptops etc both in the public and berth areas,) and reliable, consistent wi-fi access are cited as a must.

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: There are a significant number of customers who travel on the sleeper service as part of their holiday experience. Not being able to have an alcoholic beverage with a meal (or otherwise) may be perceived by some as a limitation and ultimately reduce the 'attractiveness' of iconic journey routes taken for pleasure & business purposes such as the Fort William sleeper service.

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

Q36 comments: See response to Q39.

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: It is acknowledged that the sleeper service currently requires financial subsidy however this position could be improved by increasing income through better more vigorous marketing, improving the booking service and upgrading some facilities to meet the needs of the modern day traveller.

If the service were operated on a purely commercial basis then it might be in danger of collapsing, this cannot be allowed to happen. Such action would have devastating consequences for the West Coast and beyond with the loss of social, economic and commercial benefits. The sleeper service must be specified.

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: There is evidence that change may be required as the service is not performing well in all aspects at present. To be successful any operator must have proven marketing/PR ability supported by advanced ICT and resources to support an effective and efficient booking system. Operators also need to recognise the uniqueness of this iconic rail route and be in a position to better develop relations with tourism partners such as the Mallaig steam train in order to maximise the appeal of the service and travellers. Having the ability to clearly understand and respond to the demands of the modern traveller is an essential requirement, research has indicated a mixed feeling on whether the sleeper service should be operated on a franchise basis - some see this as a means of widening the appeal and improving the service; others see this as a threat if an operator were unable to make the service commercially viable.

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:

The Caledonian sleeper service is unique. It provides an alternative to a difficult long road journey and 'shortens' it by providing an overnight travel experience. With the traveller becoming evermore environmentally aware there is also the 'greener' travel appeal of using the service.

The sleeper service provides a key means of accessing further a field places, this is especially important to tourism in remote and rural areas.

Accommodation and activity providers have broadly indicated that between 15-20% of visitors to their services are travelling to the Lochaber area by the sleeper service. The sleeper forms an essential part of the transport infrastructure which serves the Lochaber, wider West Coast and Inner hebrides, it is integral to our domestic, tourism and business sectors enabling them to flourish and grow.

Facilities:

Travellers demand facilities which are now regarded as the norm for any modern day traveller. (see response to Q32). Of those travellers locally surveyed during January 2012, 58% cited that facilities needed improving on the train. It was noted that this is a quieter time of year for travel and reduces the demands on the facilities.

Business travellers appeared to be willing/ more favourable to the idea of paying more for enhanced 'premium' facilities such as en-suite, business connectivity and premium catering.

Timings & Convenience:

When undertaking local research nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of travellers surveyed said they chose to travel by the sleeper because of the convenience with 44% citing it was their preferred method of transport. The vast majority are happy with the service timings, north and southbound.

Booking experience:

Booking face to face at the train station and by phone is indicated as a positive experience overall however, many people now chose to book on-line and customer feedback gathered locally gives a not so favourable view of the current on-line system. Comments noted include;

- *Not having the ability to book more than 12 weeks in advance* this is restrictive to travellers particularly those who may be planning travel as part of their holiday itinerary etc and need reassurance of their booking some time in advance. NB you can book most hotels a year in advance why can't you book your associated travel arrangements at the same time ?
- *You should be able to pre-book your selected seat/berth*, this would require an option as now more commonly given with airline bookings whereby you can chose your own seats.
- *The on-line booking service is not linked to any onward travel services* ie, local car hire, steam train experience, hotel services. People are indicating that want to book multiple means of transport at once and for their entire route.
- *The website is not clear and user friendly*. People are finding it difficult to navigate their way round the site and complete booking where the return travel is outside the 12 week period.

Promotion

There is a general lack of marketing material available for the sleeper service. Marketing needs to reflect the 'iconic' status of the route and also needs additional targeting at the 'train travel vacation' market.

There needs to be collaboration with commercial partners, marketing organisations and destination management organisations eg. Scotrail should be working in partnership with OCUK to promote the service.

There would be benefit in providing 'packaged' experiences, ie sleeper service - steam train - to island experience.

Robust, good quality, consistent marketing and promotional campaigns will increase business.

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: