

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

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS BRANCH OF THE SCOTTISH GREEN PARTY

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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

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: We have no specific views on the mechanisms for procuring rail services, including franchising. But any system-selection criteria must, at its heart, be based on the notion that the service is run for the benefit of passengers, and not, for example, to satisfy a system for the allocation of ticket revenue to train operators.

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: The number of passing sections on the rail routes from Inverness (ie N,S,E and W) should be increased

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: On the Chieftain service, *wifi* access should be made available free of charge, and cycle accommodation increased significantly.

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: We are very supportive of some operators' carnets ticketing schemes. We would like these to be made more widely available, and recommend that their mandatory provision be called for and regulated by the Government

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: We call for the creation of a rail halt at the new Beechwood campus and business park - two miles outside Inverness - and an associated passenger rail shuttle service into Inverness (the existing Inverness-Perth rail line runs directly through the campus site). These would offer very obvious benefits. Students and business-park employees would jump at the chance of a quick a rail journey into town, which would also boost much-needed trade in the town centre. The campus would be an ideal site for one of The Highland Council's proposed 'Park and Ride' car parks. Car drivers and their families would have a relaxing, congestion-free journey into town, and save on city-centre parking fees in the process. We suggest that, because of the incline on the existing track at Beechwood, a separate halt be built off the main line. Such a development provides a golden opportunity to demonstrate the wider practical benefits of 'going green', by making public transport more accessible and helping tackle climate change in the process.

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: We are dismayed by the spectre of a cessation of the cross-border services terminating at Edinburgh. The whole point of a through service – and indeed, its fundamental attraction to business and leisure users alike - derives from the assurance from knowing that, once aboard, one can relax and enjoy the entirety of the journey, right through to one's final destination. Breaking the journey, and having to change trains, instantly and completely removes this appeal, and conversely may well generate considerable anxiety that a connection may be missed at Edinburgh. For climate change reasons, it makes no sense to lessen the competitiveness of rail, which would be the immediate and very obvious, damaging effect of withdrawing this service. The London-Inverness journey already takes over eight hours – a long time. Having to change trains at Edinburgh would necessarily significantly increase the duration of the journey. As it is, the train service struggles to compete with the air lines. Axing the through service will drive many business, as well as leisure, customers onto planes, because they could not risk missing their connections and being late for scheduled meetings, whether in Inverness or London.

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:

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:

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:

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

Q36 comments:

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: We are dismayed by the possible threat to the sleeper service. Anyone familiar with the sleeper service to Inverness knows its all-year-round popularity. Tourism is fundamental to the economy of the Highlands, and directly and indirectly influences the lives of many of us. Axing or even downgrading the service will seriously affect levels of tourism. Similarly, many family members visiting each other make much use of the service, and would be seriously inconvenienced if the service were lost. And the sleeper is far more attractive than the plane, particularly as travelling comfortably by night avoids wasting much of the day waiting at airports. From the environmental perspective, and as the consultation paper recognises, "Rail travel is considered as one of the greener forms of travel". We share this view: travelling by plane can generate four or more times more carbon dioxide emissions than the train. The Scottish Government should therefore be investing in the sleeper service. As the consultation paper also says, authoritative research shows that "improvements in on-train facilities making them more attractive, could lead to an increase in demand for the Sleeper Services". Such investment should be the Government's priority for the sleeper service, not threatening its existence. We therefore welcome the suggestions contained in the consultation document for upgrading the rolling stock (para 11.10). We also call for the cessation of the requirement that a single passenger may be required to share a cabin with a stranger (albeit of the same gender).

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:

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: We call for the creation of a freight shuttle-service between Perth/the central belt and Inverness. We welcome the existing daily 'Tesco/Stobart' freight train into Inverness, but we consider a discrete shuttle service (for cars as well as lorries) would have major environmental, economic and social benefits, particularly in removing many lorries from the A9 (and so save unnecessary expenditure on dualling the Perth-Inverness section of the A9).