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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: The service should be run as a total unit with profitable elements subsidising the non profitable. Socially important services such as the Far North and West Highland lines should be made to pay as much as possible but via diversification of revenues as opposed to rationalisation or fare rises.

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

Q2 comment: There should not be a franchise per se

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: All profits should be reinvested bar pre-agreed payments.

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

Q5 comments: There should be a non profit arms length rail company which is owned by its users on a cooperative model. Communities and local authorities should perhaps be given a role in running services in tandem with local buses and metro services.

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

Q6 comments: Scotrail should be run as a company in which the state has a fifty one per cent shareholding. It will be encouraged to break even in operational terms but the state share of the company should reinvest any profit. There should also be encouragement for individuals to act as shareholders instead of large companies.

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

Q7 comments: There should be a guarantee that any year the railway is in profit a certain amount should be ring fenced for reinvestment.

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

Q8 comments: Passengers should be able to vote to end franchising early.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: penalise poor

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: One system for all of the country

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

Q11 comments: Passenger groups should be given a casting vote

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

Q12 comments: As currently, but passengers arriving more than an hour late should be entitled to a full refund.

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: All

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

Q14 comments: Environmental impact, cost and journey time

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: fifteen minutes on commuter routes, never on intercity trains

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: No. Performance might improve but significant custom would be lost if through connections vanish. This could also harm the Scottish economy.

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: A combination. The government should emphasise the social role played by railways and not allow franchisees to only run profitable services.

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

Q18 comments: Very high level, including community value, environment and value for money

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

Q19 comments: It should demand that the franchisee look to expand Scotland's rail network and recognise the gain of significantly reduced fares to working people.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: To provide uncomplicated and reasonably priced travel across Scotland. No single standard class ticket between the central belt and Inverness/Dundee/Aberdeen should cost more than twenty five pounds.

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 government regulated, and there should be incentives for cross border rail travel over air.

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: It is unfair to penalise people for projects on which they did not vote. All of Scotland has a right to high quality rail services, though improvements do of course have to come in line with funding.

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: Very little. A few pounds at most and off peak fares should be slashed.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: By asking local people if they use it and whether it would help the community to have rail access.

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: It gives people agency in their own public transport and avoids central government. It should however be carried out in cooperation with experienced people at the helm.

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: Network rail should manage stations.

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

Q27 comments: By lowering fares so people use it

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

Q28 comments: Hub (Waverley, Glasgow C, Queen Street, Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth, Inverness), Main (Stirling, Falkirk, Oban, Kirkcaldy, Livingston) and Minor (Drem, Dunkeld, Tulloch) Hub stations should have passenger lounges, toilets, refreshment areas and automatic displays. Main stations should be manned all service hours and have a functioning ticket counter and waiting room with toilets, whilst Minor stations should have basic shelter facilities, journey information and some kind of direction to toilets and refreshments. They should also be staffed during appropriate hours.

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: Edinburgh to London and Glasgow to London services should be taken over by Scotrail and run in the same manner as the

Caledonian Sleeper.

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: None.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: There should be an end to train leasing and rolling stock should be owned by transport Scotland in the same manner as Calmac ferries.

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 with journeys longer than 30 minutes should have toilets and these should be checked before each departure. Intercity services should have light catering facilities and wireless internet as well as reasonable leg room.

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: Wifi should be implemented on Scotrail's fleet of 170s, specifically the pool allocated to central belt – Highland/ North East Services and on the Far North line and West Highland.

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: Purchase extra coaches for some services and look into the possibility of extra 'engine and coaches' services during the summer and peak hours. This has been successfully tried on the Chiltern line in England between London and Birmingham and allows extra coaches to be shunted into formations at peak times.

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

Q35 comments: Alcohol on trains should be limited and guards should be given the power to remove alcohol from passengers if deemed appropriate. On certain days it should also be forbidden entirely (Old Firm Matches and before 12 for instance)

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

Q36 comments: Given the widespread use of smartphones trains should enable access to real time information via wireless, whilst unmanned stations could benefit from similar initiatives.

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 are vitally important in providing an alternative to air transport within Britain and have a trickle-down effect on the Highland economy. If anything the sleeper services should be encouraged to expand and serious thought should be given to night trains to South West England, France and Belgium in order to reduce emissions.

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: The Sleeper services should remain integrated but like the rest of Scotrail form part of a not for profit public interest company.

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: The sleeper service is an invaluable resource for Scotland's northern towns and cities which I have used hundreds of times. Aberdeen, Fort William and Inverness are appropriate destinations but some thought should be given to integrating the service with Calmac ferries from Oban in order to offer direct connections to people from Mull, Colonsay, Barra, Lismore and South Uist. There is no reason why the Fort William and Oban trains cannot be joined and uncoupled at Crianlarich.

A sleeper from Scotland to South West England, which has previously existed, should also be given some thought. In the long term the current Mk3 coaching stock should undergo a comprehensive refurbishment to bring it up to the standards required for through services to continental Europe, including

the fitting of automatic doors and fire safety doors, and multiple top and tail operation (this can be achieved using through wiring and class 92 locomotives which are certified to run in the UK, France and Belgium). This would be a significant step toward Scotland's eventual integration with the European High Speed Network and could qualify for European Union funding under the EU directives on transport.

The sleepers themselves should have their interior design changed to make better use of space, including airline style fully reclining seats in standard class and single beds either side of a central gangway or European style compartments with three bunks on either side which can turn into a six person compartment during the day.

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: There should be a demand that, where possible, Scotland's trains use renewable energy and that attempts are constantly made to keep carbon impact below equivalent journeys by road and air