

Susan Horsman

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:

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: Not unless this increases the number of services. Direct

trains are always more convenient than having to make connections.

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: I think the government should have a say in this. Otherwise services will be unrealistically infrequent in less populated areas, meaning that they are not a viable option for passengers to use.

18. What level of contract specification should we use 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: Train fares should offer an attractive alternative to the costs of driving. From an environmental perspective, fares should not be so cheap that people are encouraged to travel more than necessary, but low enough that it is financially viable to take the train rather than driving.

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: The government should ensure that train fares are based more on distance than on area. For example, at present commuting from Fife north is more expensive than commuting south to Edinburgh, even if you don't travel as far.

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: Tax payer subsidies should be sufficient to ensure that the

cost of getting the train is cheaper than driving. This revenue can be raised by raising fuel tax, road tax, etc.

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 think the difference in fare between peak and off-peak fares should be minimal. The majority of people only travel on busier, on-peak trains because they need to for work, and have no choice. I don't think that the difference in fares encourages people to travel at different times – I think it simply penalises commuters.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: The need for rail stations should be determined by the population that that area would serve. Stations should only be closed where the station is not used at all, or there is no viable alternative. Closing stations should always be a last resort.

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: All stations should be provided with real-time information about services, be this through displays or customer announcements.

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 think that cross-border services should continue to go north of Edinburgh. Cross-border services make journeys easier, meaning that you can settle down more on the train (getting longer to concentrate on what you're doing – e.g. working). More importantly, it means that with one fewer change needed, there is one fewer connection that you might miss if the earlier train is delayed.

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: On various occasions, I have experienced problems with the electric doors on trains. This has included toilet doors that will not stay closed (therefore rendering the toilet out of order), and doors at the end of carriages that continually open and close very noisily. If these doors have to be electric (and I prefer it if they're not), I think that measures should be taken to improve their reliability.

I also think that train temperature is very important on all trains. As long as the air conditioning isn't broken, I think that the temperature on trains is great, and would like to congratulate the train providers on this.

I think it would be helpful for luggage racks above seats to allow for larger rucksacks. This is possible on some trains at present, but not all of them. This would reduce the demand on the luggage racks at the end of the carriages.

I think that announcements about delays are very important.

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: I would imagine that this is most useful for commuters, so commuter services should be prioritised.

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: I have never noticed a first class section that is full, and they frequently appear to be deserted or almost deserted. I would suggest specifying that standard class customers should be allowed to sit in first class if there are no seats remaining in standard class.

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: My experience of stations and trains is that the facilities currently exist to give passengers the information that they need, through the overhead displays and through passenger announcements. The problem appears to be poor communication between staff, with staff not sure what was happening, not having been informed.

For example, during the recent storms, we were attempting to get from Haymarket to Cupar, but the train was cancelled as the Tay Bridge was closed. We were advised to get a train from Haymarket to Kirkcaldy, and get a bus replacement service to Cupar. On the train, we were advised to change at Inverkeithing. When we got off, the station staff did not know anything about this, and no one had arranged a bus replacement service.

It also appears to be ScotRail policy that replacement bus services will not be provided if one train is cancelled. Instead, they seem to leave passengers hanging around for half an hour before making an announcement, before providing taxis, appearing to be trying to reduce their costs by waiting until most customers have given up and found alternatives. This happened on numerous occasions when I was commuting north from Kirkcaldy a few years ago – frequently enough for me to think that this practice was intentional. (I do not know if this practice has since improved.)

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:

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 FortWilliam, 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: The carbon savings arising from people taking the train rather than driving.