

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

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

Surname

Forename

2. Postal Address

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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 x ☒ 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 The principle of the dual franchise is sound, particularly if there is profit sharing and a penalty/reward element involved. Another benefit should be a clearer identification of where the subsidies are incurred

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

Q2 the present arrangement seems about right

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

Q3 The operator should carry the risk on economic operations and the public purse the risk on the social rail element

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

Q4 A simple approach should be adopted to this alongside a simplified overall approach. Money flows across the government and other bodies creates a smoke and mirrors scenario. What is the point in monies going to and fro across governments/departments

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

Q5 The ownership and running costs of stations should be vested in the local authorities without exception as they are best placed to optimise their overall use in the best interests of the community and it is they that should meet the costs of uneconomic stations as they are kept for the benefit of their community charge payers. The local authorities would deal directly with the operators re leases etc

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

Q6 This should be considered in conjunction with 7 below. Performance should be measured on punctuality etc on a line by line basis and not just overall per operator with a formula that determines profit share/penalty levels

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

Q7 None. This just adds to the cost. The govt. should exercise good judgment in its franchise choices and be responsible for the costs of failure. This should be backed by triggers to bring about the termination of a failing franchise.:

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

Q8 see above

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 both

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 align with routes and service groups and overall using an appropriate formula. This will help to deter greater neglect in some areas at the expense of others

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

Q11 The absence of cancellations and few late arrivals should be the overriding matters

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

Q12 The journey times must be mutually agreed the operator and transport Scotland and performance should be measured to the nearest minute.

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 Stations management should be the responsibility of the local authorities

who should commit to performance levels. Aspects managed by the operators should be built into their performance measures. A defined process should be in place between all parties to measure overall station performance and issues management.

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 The whole focus should be upon preventing standing on safety and service grounds. This should be measured and included in operator performance outcomes

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 Absolutely not for long distance services within rail. Connections are anathema to the long distance traveller due to the risks added to a journey by connections and I am sure it has a negative impact upon travel choices.

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 There has to be a balance

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

Q18 Economic lines should be on a profit sharing/penalty basis related to performance. A formula designed to reduce subsidies on uneconomic lines could be used to share the benefits of lower subsidy costs with the operator

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

Q19 see above

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 railway costs and fares are both far too high and the latter too varied. The solutions must be complex but fare increases are like oil prices – they cause inflation and much of this is government invoked. The rationale has to be to move to less than inflation increases that drive efficiency, performance etc without a negative impact upon safety.

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 Type of journey. Economic fares should have a light touch applied. Social fares should have local authority commitment as well as the governments. Perhaps the government should pay a flat rate per route mile and the authority the balance less the fares collected or some similar arrangement that puts “their tax payers money where their mouth is”

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 See previous comments. Costs need to be driven down to make rail more affordable all round.

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 there is an overriding need to simplify fares. Generally people only travel at peak times when they have to and my assumption is that the impact of off peak fares on this group is marginal. The value of off peak fares is in encouraging the discretionary traveller to use spare capacity and improve income. The current ticket regime puts a lot of people off.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 there has to be some sensible minimum level below which closure is presumed unless there are exceptional local circumstances. Having a train station is not a right – as people in the Scottish Borders know as currently they do not have one. It is perverse that some there do not want one.

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 Significant. See previous reasons relating to buy in, responsibilities etc. This should be a given to encourage input with accountability and local involvement in outcomes/performance:

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 see previous comments:

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

Q27 see previous comments:

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

Q28 Guidelines should apply for local authorities but the final outcome should be theirs

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 Absolutely. Anything less will rank as a major failure that puts operator wishes before user needs and the benefits of long distance travel without changes to people north of Edinburgh. Cross border services have a disproportionate per capita benefit beyond Glasgow & Edinburgh that is essential to support rurally based economies and tourism. Only a very foolish politician would deny a direct service to a significant number of Scotland's

cities and their hinterlands. This issue must not be driven by Scotrail preferences and the current perversities of ticket income allocations across franchises. These perversities should be addressed eg All income goes to the operator identified on the ticket and the ticket must be used on that operator's services except in mutually agreed circumstances eg line closure

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 Certainly not. The use of the word opportunity is perverse in this context. There should be a new franchise Hq'd in Edinburgh for such services. Let's call it the Caledonian franchise. It could operate the existing sleeper services plus those parts of East Coast that provide the service to London from Inverness, Aberdeen and perhaps Glasgow via Edinburgh. All other existing East Coast services would terminate at Edinburgh. I see this as a means of relieving Scotrail of the sleeper service as it is not a good fit for them operationally. The Caledonian Service requires new rolling stock as does East Coast. This new franchise could be a start with dedicated up to date facilities and integrated 24 hour marketing to better promote business and tourist travel. I believe this could bring about a vast step change in Scotland's train service provision with significant economic benefits. The medium to long term aim should be to make this a fast/economic service perhaps with reducing subsidy input for the sleeper element.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 Unsure but the present arrangements seem to be a bit of a milk cow for the fortunate few. Alternatives need to be explored to reduce costs Perhaps fixed term leases should be in place where operator payments drop to a peppercorn rent at the end of the lease. If a new franchise takes over the lessor should be required to offer the new franchise the option to buy the stock in this secondary lease period and to take over the stock leases in their primary period with renegotiation in terms if appropriate.

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

Q32 clean toilets and wifi should be a given. Catering on all long distance trains. There should not be first class travel facilities on social train services and commuter services

Passengers – information, security and services

33. How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

Q33 On economic services first and only on social train services when the costs are minimal

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 See above. All first class tickets should be charged at the economic rate for a route where the service is a social one

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

Q35 There should not be a blanket ban. Operators/local authorities/transport police should have discretion to apply bans on specific trains at specific times

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

Q36 Better internet provision with links to tourist/travel sites. Clarity and simplification is needed.

Caledonian Sleeper

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

Q37 these must be specified. See above

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 Absolutely but not on their own – see above

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 See previous comments. Inverness and Aberdeen services are essential and should be developed to an economic level linked to certain day services currently operated by East Coast. Earlier services already exist but they cannot beat the clock because of the time involved.

Environmental issues

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

Q40 Agreed emission objectives