

Stewart Cameron Lackie

## 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 economy of the North of Scotland relies heavily on the transport infrastructure. A dual focus will recognise the importance of the rail network in supporting and sustaining economic and social cohesion.

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

Q2 comments: No view

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

Q3 comments: No view

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

Q4 comments: No view

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

Q5 comments: No view

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

Q6 comments: No view

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

Q7 comments: No view

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

Q8 comments: No view

### **Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

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

Q9 comments: Both incentivise and penalise.

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: It should be aligned with actual routes and weightings agreed based on the importance of the route in terms of size, passenger numbers, alternatives available, length of route, quality, safety, punctuality, etc.

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

Q11 comments: No view

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

Q12 comments: The levels of performance, quality of stock and customer service between Scotrail and East Coast is marked with East Coast the preferred method of travel between Inverness and the Central belt. Despite the availability of an earlier Scotrail train, large numbers of people in the Highlands prefer to catch the 0755 East Coast train to Edinburgh whenever possible. Journey times are important and reducing the number of stops between Inverness and Edinburgh for selected trains would help, as well as more overtaking places.

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: No view

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

Q14 comments: No view

### **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: Yes, up to 20 minutes in the norm on Southern England commuter services. Not necessarily desirable but acceptable. Longer trains and platforms in the North would also be beneficial and increase commuter take-up on already popular new routes.

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: More fast trains between Inverness and the Central Belt would be highly desirable for business travel and divert passengers away from taking cars. It is still difficult to understand why driving to Edinburgh from Inverness is faster than the train.

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: No view

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

Q18 comments: No view

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

Q19 comments: No view

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments: No view

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: No view

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: No view

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: There should be a significant reduction for off-peak fares and increased availability of upgrades to first class to encourage more business travellers onto trains.

### **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments: No view

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: No view

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: No view

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

Q27 comments: No view

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

Q28 comments: No view

### **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: As a regular business traveller to London it is essential that the train remains a viable option and compares favourably with flying in terms of fares, travel time, quality and frequency of service.

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: Changing trains in Edinburgh would be disastrous for the train as an option for travel between London and Inverness as it would add time, stress in the event of missed connections, lost working time through having to pack up and leave one train then find somewhere to work on the next. It is essential for business in the Highlands that Inverness (and Highland towns on the same route) retains its direct link to London and does not become an eventual destination reached only via changes of train in Glasgow or Edinburgh.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: No view

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

Q32 comments: Toilets as a minimum on commuter and short distance routes. Refreshments trolley on longer routes. Business or first class is still the best place to work although too expensive, particularly when booking at short notice. Quiet coaches work well and are often the busiest. The higher standards of catering facilities on the East Coast mainline train are good and appear well used.

## **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: Essential on the link to London which works generally quite well. Response times from the supplier are very good although they don't work late enough in the evenings to cover the full route to Inverness.

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: It depends on how much the option of first class is seen as providing services to business and therefore supporting the economy more widely. The cost of the provision is only one aspect of a wider question.

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 should not be banned. The vast majority of those who drink on trains cause no issues. Inappropriate behaviour should be dealt with by the police in the same way as it is elsewhere.

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

Q36 comments: There does not seem to be a box for **general comments** so I'm putting mine here. As one of those who was stuck on a train in a snowdrift near Tomatin for about 8 hours two years ago I am not easily put off travelling by train. It provides an essential and viable alternative to flying between London and Inverness. Business in the Highlands depends on good rail links within and without the area. Trains to Aberdeen are generally slow and of poor quality. Inverness continues to grow – that growth could be stifled if rail links are not improved as an outcome from the inevitable changes required to services. More competition between operators would be helpful as Scotrail services, despite recent improvements, remain disappointing in comparison to those offered by East Coast mainline. Competition to services throughout England and into Southern Scotland has led to long overdue improvements in rolling stock, better services on trains and faster travel times. This does not seem to be the case in most of Scotland.

### **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: Yes, it should be specified. The sleeper is another important service which acts in support of business in the Highlands. There must be more effective and efficient methods of operating the service thereby bringing down costs to the operator and the customer. If it is viewed as a purely commercial matter during the tender process then it could be one of the first to face cuts or reductions owing to the amount of work required to make it more efficient. The quality needs to be improved before marketing it more widely or re-launching.

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: I see no reason why both options couldn't be included to enable the widest field of bidders.

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 times work well for me. The value to Inverness and surrounding areas is difficult to assess but probably quite high. Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Inverness Chambers of Commerce and others may have views. There are a number of regular users who are staunch supporters of retaining it as an option, including myself. The facilities available now are not worth the high cost of tickets when compared to flights to London. The service needs to be looked at in far more detail to identify efficiency savings and performance improvements. It has the feel of an undervalued, under-invested poor relation which the operator would like to see quietly disappear.

### **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: No view