Respondent Information Form and Questions

<u>Please Note</u> this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

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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 ☐

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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:

Single franchise with appropriate/necessary elements of local control/management will serve Scotland best.

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

Q2 comments:

Ten years seems optimal franchise period with appropriate penalty/reward structures for poor/good performance. Penalties could include termination of franchise. Reward provision could offer the possibility of franchise extension.

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

Q3 comments:

The risk support mechanism should be designed to ensure that the franchisee delivers a very good rail service for Scotland and fully meets/exceeds the franchise specification as determined by the Scottish Ministers.

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

Q4 comments:

Obviously a profit share mechanism, if used, would reward/encourage the franchisee with a higher share of profits if they deliver a 'better' rail service than the 'basic' franchise specification. Performance levels/profit share percentages/service levels etc would be determined by 'the decision makers' – Transport Scotland/Scottish Ministers.

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

Q5 comments:

Third parties should be involved where they can supplement/enhance the rail services/facilities provided by the 'basic' franchise.

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

Q6 comments:

Penalty/reward system for under/over performance re franchise specification.

Value for money determination would involve, along other factors obviously, benefit/disbenefit assessment /comparison with appropriate/similar Scottish/UK/world-wide contexts.

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

Q7 comments:

Reasonable/realistic/realisable/sensible/achievable – take your pick! Too high a level of performance bond/company guarantees may/will/should discourage sensible franchise bids.

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

Q8 comments:

The existing SQUIRE set-up with additional powers to terminate the franchise for major failure(s)/underperformance would provide the basis of a sanction system.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments:

Good performance is something that should be delivered as a matter of course by the franchisee and should not need to be incentivised! Realistically, however, there should be some sort of sliding scale reward system to encourage franchisees to deliver performance levels substantially above the basic franchise specification. Likewise 'poor' performance should be penalised with franchise termination for major failure(s).

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:

Since the characteristics of routes/services can vary significantly it probably would be unwise to have a single performance regime for the whole of Scotland.

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

Q11 comments:

The performance regime should be such that not only can it reflect passenger

issues/align with passenger issues but can have the commitment/power to resolve any reasonable complaints, defects and failures.

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

Q12 comments:

Overall journey times should be as short as realistically possible within the constraints of vehicle/train types, route infrastructure, available paths, interchange considerations etc. Journey times should not be padded out to achieve higher on-time performance scores and should be 'competitive' with other transport modes.

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:

Yes. Should cover as many aspects/areas as possible within the fragmented structures that rail transport operates. May need greater cooperation among the various stakeholders in the rail system. May need to be developed/extended/adapted to cope with the ever changing rail environment.

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

Q14 comments:

Are additional assessment mechanisms necessary? For the most part, network, train and station defects and failings are well known and recognised. What is needed is a much more robust commitment by TOCs, Network Rail, RFCs, Transport Scotland et al to deal effectively with these defects and failings.

If it is thought that further mechanisms are needed then these could include for example, a much greater, more critical role for Passenger Focus, new passenger forums, better much more visible and more responsive channels to enable passenger complaints and concerns etc to be communicated to rail authorities. The latter may make much greater use of modern digital /electronic media like e-mail, twitter etc so that a much wider range of rail passengers would communicate their concerns and opinions on rail service to the various organisations that are responsible for rail services in Scotland

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:

Undoubtedly yes! For example, there is possibly scope for further adjustment of train length/size to better match no of passengers to be carried – basically

some trains too short, some too long. For various reasons though, I feel this is probably less of a problem in Scotland than in parts of England and Wales. Issues/concerns such as standing time limits, standing capacity, train capacity, expectation of a seat, are complex and difficult to resolve in a very diffuse rail network with a variety of routes typified by often very different peak/off-peak, urban/rural, passenger/freight demands and characteristics. Some thoughts on standing time limits.

Often, for various reasons and often for 'long' periods, passengers will stand, particularly on urban/short journeys, even when many seats are available. We should accept this not just for urban/commuter trains/journeys but also for regional/long distance trains and design trains accordingly (and obviously within the wider context of vehicle design, comfort, ambiance, luggage capacity, seating design layouts etc) to accommodate safely /efficiently the standing (voluntary or otherwise) passenger. I do not advocate a London Overground type 378 underground-type seating arrangement but good quality, spacious and comfortable 2+2 seating mostly in an airline-style layout and with   plenty of safe standing areas accommodation incorporating appropriate hand rail/tip up and or perch style seating provision. The standing areas would be located mainly at vestibule ends/doorway areas. 3+2 style seating should be phased out and consideration given to much greater use of spacious 2+1 seating arrangements where possible.

In the Scottish rail context the latest 380 units seem in general a very good compromise for the regional/urban routes they presently are used on. Though better than those in most UK standard class vehicles - including those in Pendolinos, Voyagers and East Coast 225s - the seats in the 380s could still be a bit more comfortable/better designed.

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:

For the first part of the question, in the Scottish rail context the simple answer is no. The present level of direct Aberdeen/Inverness to London should be retained. Furthermore, there are good arguments for further direct services both within Scotland and to/from destinations in England/Wales. Interchange stations and coordination with rail/other transport modes have significant merit but direct trains have very great value in encouraging/retaining rail travel without the often severe problems inherent in change(s) of train(s). Industry studies have shown that even one train change in a journey can lose up to 30% of existing/potential passengers.

Furthermore and leaving aside the direct train issues, there are strong arguments for increasing the number of trains using interchange stations/recasting time tables to improve and expand the existing interchange patterns/coordination possibilities both with existing rail services and other transport modes.

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:

'Government' should set the broad service specification (franchise specification?) and guarantee minimum service levels particularly for social reasons. Micro management of the franchise is the task of the franchisee; it is not the job of Government/DfT/Transport Scotland.

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

Q18 comments:

Obviously a high level specification is required but with appropriate inbuilt flexibility/adaptability/incentive/sanction elements to address possible changes during the franchise period so as to ensure as far as possible optimal franchisee performance during the life of the franchise.

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

Q19 comments:

By a combination of financial rewards and franchise extension possibilities.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

Essentially a question that only government can fully answer because they can incorporate into any rationale and policy a whole range of economic, political, social, financial and environmental considerations and agendas. Notwithstanding the above, the rationale/purpose/policy answer would involve optimising a balance of the usual 'fare policy' suspects some of which include:

- Simple easily understood fare structures
- Maximisation of train usage
- Reasonable walk-on fares
- Fares/fare structure to be perceived by passengers to be sensible/rational/fair
- Sensible fare differentials/structures to encourage off-peak and out of season travel, increased usage of rural, marginal and lightly-trafficked lines
- Minimisation of excessive costs and subsidies
- Fares should be 'competitive' with other modes especially car/bus/coach
- Fares should be reasonably in-line with other comparable EU countries

A major consideration when attempting to develop a fares policy especially in the Scottish context is the significant modal split distortions that result from the National Concessionary Travel Scheme (NCTS). The scheme makes bus/coach travel the preferred mode for a large proportion of the travelling public. A sensible fares policy from the Scottish Government should amend/abolish the NCTS so that rail and bus/coach travel can operate in a more level footing. This could be done without any additional cost to government and, indeed, could save substantial amounts if the NCTS was altered/reduced in scope/abolished.

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:

Really for government to decide within the context /objectives of a sensible fares policy. Could vary from 0% to 100% or anything in between. Obviously needs to have flexibility. The 'policy' may need to vary by route(s)/area/time/type of journey to meet various economic/social/political/financial/environmental objectives and situations.

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:

Again really for government to decide in the contexts mention in several previous answers. However until fairly recently the overall 'balance' for the industry has been around 50:50 fares contribution: 'subsidy' and this ratio or better seems reasonable/acceptable in historical terms/in comparison to other similar EU/developed countries etc. The recent fall to an ~ 25:75 level gives cause for concern but I feel is accounted for by greatly inflated costs inherent in the privatised industry structure and in maintaining and operating the network Driving down these costs to more realistic levels is the key to improving the ratio rather than hugely increased fares.
Fares should not rise by more than the annual rate of inflation + 2-3%max.

Simple answer to last question posed in Q22, for a wide range of fairly obvious reasons, is not feasible/sensible/acceptable. How do we define enhanced? The 'enhanced' WCML has some of the worst trains eg Pendolinos and most delays/cancellations etc. Again do cars/buses/coaches/trucks pay extra to use new and/or vastly improved road schemes such as the M74/M77/M80 / Kincardine Bridge 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:

Fares policy and its subset debate on peak/off-peak fares are so complex and wide ranging that they merit separate consultations/studies of their own and it is extremely difficult to address the consultation question satisfactorily in a few lines.

However these few points may be noted:

- Peak fares seem excessively high in general and penalise users who have no option but to travel in the peak periods.
- Off-peak fares seem reasonable but not generally low enough to encourage substantial growth in off peak/discretionary/leisure travel.
- Off-peak periods are often ill-defined/confusing for many ticket types/ areas/TOCs.
- NCTS noted above severely distorts growth in off-peak travel possibilities for the Scottish rail network.
- Peak/off-peak issues continue to be bedevilled by society/government/industry/commerce/retail/education continuing and possibly increasing emphasis on a 9-5/8-6 work day.
- Morning peak restrictions should be standardised as finishing at 0900.
- The evening restriction should be scrapped give the much more variable travel patterns in the late afternoon/early evening.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

A substantially improved STAG evaluation or similar that takes into account a much wider range of factors than the present STAG assessment could provide the basis for new station determination. With regard to suggested new station sites, in addition to their own inputs/suggestions, the rail industry/TS should be prepared to accept and evaluate inputs/station suggestions from a wide range of other concerned groups/organisations/individuals.

Referring to possible locations for new stations there are numerous good proposals for new/reopened stations both in rural and urban areas including some on lines proposed for reopening. Many of these stations would have wide 'rationales' including supporting economic development/regeneration, improving connectivity/job opportunities, traffic congestion relief.
Two of the most important outwith the Borders rail scheme, I believe, are Methil/Levenmouth (on a reopened line) and Parkhead Forge on the North electric line.

With regard to possible station closures it is very unlikely that over the 2014 franchise period that any passenger rail lines or routes will close so why do we need to close stations on routes that trains are running? Since most stations that the decision makers would like to close are probably relatively minimal in facilities and probably very cheap to maintain why bother closing? It is far cheaper to retain than close and reopen at very high cost. Unfortunately small intermediate stations conflict with the present rail thinking

that favours running services between major stations with few intermediate stops.

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:

There is general acceptance that there is huge merit from third party involvement in proposing promoting and funding new stations and services. However, third party involvement is invariably difficult, frustrated and discouraged because of numerous barriers to entry. These include:

- Hugely inflated costs inherent in the privatised fragmented rail industry structure.
- Generally non-cooperative attitude of rail industry 'authorities'.
- Very high costs of building even a basic station.
- Very high risk costs to be borne by third parties/new entries.
- Lack of rail skills/knowledge/expertise independent of Network Rail and its circle of contractors.
- Excessive and vastly over the top Health and Safety structures/rail operating standards and requirements.

26. Or 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:

The present ScotRail/Network Rail split of station ownership/management/maintenance seems to be working reasonably well within the constraints of the privatised/fragmented structures that the present Scottish rail network operates within. I do not believe it is a major issue for the franchise. In general, Scotrail stations seem to be the best kept in Britain. There is, however, a continuing problem of litter/rubbish/ weeds within many station track areas and Network Rail needs to make a much greater effort to tidy up these station track areas (and indeed most of the trackside throughout the network) which I presume are their responsibility.

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

Q27 comments:

The approaches and initiatives taken by the various Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) and voluntary rail groups such as The Friends of the Settle and Carlisle line in England and the Friends of the West Highland Lines, Friends of the Far North Lines in Scotland provide very useful template/guidance for local communities in Scotland who may wish to support their local lines and stations. It is well worth considering the introduction of the CRP initiative or variant thereof in Scotland for the next franchise period.

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

Q28 comments:

No real merit in such categorisation. Generally speaking the range and types of facilities in Scottish stations are reasonably acceptable and what you would realistically expect for the size/location/importance of each individual station. This is not to say that there is not room for continuing upgrading/enhancement/modernisation of stations and their facilities.

Some very brief examples to illustrate this include:

Need for (pay) toilet provision at Partick Interchange
Extra parking requirement at Motherwell
Modernisation of Dundee station
(Some of the above, I believe, are to start sometime in the near future)

I do not perceive categorisation to be a major issue for the Scottish Franchise renewal.

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:
1. Present cross border services/level of cross border services north of Edinburgh must continue and possibly could even be extended/expanded.
2. Passengers benefit from more convenient, less hassle journeys, faster end to end journey times etc Taxpayers benefit from much greater use of Scottish rail network. Many cross border travellers going north of the Central Belt would not travel by train if there was need for interchange at Edinburgh – up to 30% in some industry estimates. Again many potential travellers/tourists may decide not to come to Scotland/go north of Central Belt if there are no through services to the North.
3. Both.

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:
Edinburgh already serves as a 'hub' for many internal Scottish services and also for a range of terminating/non-terminating cross border services. The through cross border services are supplementary/complementary to this existing hub function and cater by and large for a niche market additional to those catered for by the existing hub function services. Ideally for the

Aberdeen-Dundee/ Inverness routes two direct daytime services each way should be part of the 2014 franchise specification.

Rather than having benefits, the proposal to terminate cross border services at Edinburgh (would this proposal include Cross Country/East Coast services to Glasgow ?) would undoubtedly give rise to extra operating and train costs/passenger inconvenience/extended journey times/coordination problems etc etc.

New more spacious/comfortable/better equipped - especially in toilet and luggage provision - trains for the Scottish intercity/regional part of the journey would be required. Also there would be the need for very high levels of punctuality and cross platform transfer efficiency. Would the new franchisee be able to deliver on these?

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:

Difficult to give a brief answer as rolling stock issues - design, financing, ROSCO based leasing ownership arrangements, electric vs diesel, new vs rebuild, accessibility legislation requirements, extra costs as a result of need to adapt designs to fit restricted UK loading gauge, rolling stock now invariably made out with UK etc etc - are exceptionally complex.
However, the following should be considered for the next franchise period:

- As electric units are generally cheaper to build, maintain, operate and have usually longer useful lives and better long term reliability and ROSCOs are more likely to finance them, a strategy of extensive electrification/infill electrification of the central belt and the main Scottish intercity lines should be pursued. The EGIP proposals are a good start and we should aim for the main routes to be upgraded and electrified by 2025 say. This also relates with renewable (electric) energy/sustainability issues.
- Given the age, condition, reliability, design and suitability of the present diesel fleet it is undoubtedly the best and cheaper option to buy new rather than refurbish the existing diesel fleet/units. This gives the franchisee the opportunity to have a fleet with differing designs, capabilities, layouts, performances, low emission engines etc etc. which could be much better tailored to the differing demands and requirement of the Scottish rail network than a refurbished fleet.
- Consideration should be given to the use of loco hauled stock, use of bi-modal trains - eg converted Voyager trains or IEP bi-modal variants- while the main routes are being electrified.
- Innovative low cost design/build/maintenance contracts/deals should be sought from various EU/Japanese/Chinese train manufacturers.

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

Q32 comments:

Leaving aside the extreme difficulty of defining what is meant here by 'facilities', everyone has their own ideas/opinions/preferences as to what they think should be incorporated into the physical structure of the 'train' vehicles to help towards making the journey experience as good as possible. I would like to think there is a reasonable degree of consensus as to what constitutes a core list of desirable facilities but there is probably not. Anyway, here is a brief wish list of <u>some</u> of my core facilities. No attempt is made to define such subjective terms such as 'good'/ 'adequate'/ 'comfortable' and so forth!

- Comfortable seats with generous leg room/good seat squab height and relatively low seat backs
- Adequate toilet provision
- Clean, reliable, functioning toilets
- Good but not too bright lighting
- Plenty of luggage/cycle/pram/buggy provision and capacity
- Good balance of bay/airline seating possibly 1:3 bay:airline for long distance trains
- Good reliable heating/ventilation
- Good vehicle riding characteristics to give smooth ride
- Minimised vehicle noises and vibrations from eg body fittings/trim/ bogies /corridors/wheel flats
- Good vehicle ambience - no bizarre/outlandish colour schemes
- Good disabled provision
- Reasonable food/drink/buffet facilities on medium/long distance trains
- Safe standing areas/provision with eg hand rails, perch/tip-up seats. Standing is something that inevitably occurs in all types of trains and we should aim to make standing as safe/reasonably 'bearable' as possible
- Provision for mobile phones/wi-fi/laptops
- Assume that the vehicle body structures ensure a high degree of survivability in the (unlikely) event of a crash. Modern rail vehicles usually are very survivable,

Obviously 'facilities' should vary with the type/nature/distance/time of the journey and routes. A one size/type fits all train is not desirable for the varied route needs/characteristics of the Scottish rail network.

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:

Probably best to prioritise on longer distance routes and busy commuter services especially the E+G route and on train/vehicle types with longest projected life-spans.

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:

Basically a question for the franchisee to decide in response to passenger/route demands. Vehicle layouts should be readily adaptable to changing market demands and, where necessary on some services, staff should have the authority to declassify first class accommodation to alleviate gross overcrowding 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:

There would need to be a considerable study to find out the opinions of rail passengers and their attitudes to alcohol on trains and if there are problems/issues/difficulties. This would also have to include opinions/ views/data/advice from a wide range of other agencies/experts and especially from rail staff/management and the police/British transport police.

In my opinion a general ban would be unworkable/undesirable/ unacceptable/difficult to police and would lead to unnecessary confrontation situations in trains and would have many anomalies eg would it apply to all trains operating on the Scottish rail network or just to ScotRail trains?

Keeping the status quo with enhanced on board supervision and quick intervention by BTP/police where necessary and the continuation of and possible extension of the selective system should help alleviate/minimise any difficulties. Again like any licensee the TOCs have a whole series of responsibilities in regard to the sale/management/consumption of alcohol in their premises - i.e. in the TOCs case the trains - and they should take all steps to ensure responsible consumption. Drunks should not be allowed on trains and if passengers are causing problems through their alcohol consumption on the train they should be dealt with appropriately. I could go on at length but I think enough has been stated to get a reasonable idea of my thinking on this controversial proposal.

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

Q36 comments:

Travel information provision does not seem to me to be much of a problem especially if you have digital media/mobile phone/computer provision.

Having said this, I have found recently that there is a continuing lack of ScotRail paper timetables in the major stations. Action needed to improve this situation. Another area where there is room for improvement is when and where there is significant disruption to services which - because of the very fragile nature of the Scottish rail network - is a very common occurrence. Information provision is needed both to passengers and also, it often seems, to rail personnel as well. There should be a very much enhanced and robust

provision in the new franchise to improve the gathering and dissemination of accurate travel information and guidance in such situations.

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:

Following recent announcements, the sleeper service is to continue with a new/refurbished fleet.

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:

Good arguments for/against both options. However the balance is possibly towards the sleeper services remaining within a single 2014 ScotRail franchise. It may be, because of the nature and demands of running a sleeper service, that within this franchise the new franchisee may decide it is better to manage, promote and run the service as a stand alone business.

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 appeal of the sleeper service has many elements. Some main ones include that they are an easy, time saving and, hopefully, comfortable method of travelling to London. Again they effectively can 'save' a day in travel terms and can avoid an overnight stay in the capital.

Hard to say the effect if there were more early/late trains. Possibly they would extract a proportion of the potential sleeper passengers. Operator(s) would need a lot more market research etc before they could make a more definite assessment. Possibly the longer distance sections from Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen are less vulnerable given distances involved.

Not withstanding the above, I believe that there is great potential for a high quality, seated accommodation, overnight train operating (initially?) from

Glasgow/Edinburgh to Euston or Kings Cross. This would have a variety of high quality seating types/seating layouts and good toilet and washing facilities. A small buffet with reasonable food/drink provision could be a possibility. The train would have very good luggage and cycle provision. A five coach emu, possibly new IEP design or similar, would be a good start but a suitably converted and enhanced Voyager could be used to try out the concept. The service would start from Glasgow, pick up in Edinburgh and use WCML/ECML to Euston or Kings Cross. The operator would decide the best route/destination. Could such a train/service be incorporated into 2014 franchise specification?

The is wide and strong agreement that the sleeper services to Fort William, Aberdeen and Inverness have a great value for a number of very significant reasons but especially those related to the tourism/business development. These destinations are correct. Oban introduces further complexity and expense and has been tried before but was not a success.

As indicated in Q32 everybody has their own ideas on what facilities are required on a train and a sleeper train is no exception. In this regard, for a new/upgraded fleet a major demand would probably be for more single berth accommodation with ensuite toilet/shower provision. There is also a significant possible demand for larger group/family accommodation. Provision should also be made for much enhanced capacity for bikes and large luggage. Again, it may be worthwhile studying sleeper accommodation types/styles/layouts in other countries such as USA to get ideas that could be incorporated into the Scottish trains.

People would probably pay more for enhanced provision but depends on so many factors eg how much more would you need to pay? Possibly there is a need for a range of sleeper accommodation types, styles and prices. I think that there is a need/demand for much enhanced seated accommodation on sleeper trains. Reasonably priced but very good seated accommodation would attract an increasing portion of the overnight market.

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:

It is an unfortunate fact that so much of what we want the railways to do or be in terms of the 'environment' is not really within the rather limited scope of the franchisee/ franchise specification. So much of the 'railways and the environment' (in its widest sense) is the concern/responsibility of others especially Network Rail and the 'government'.
However I will try to keep within those areas that could be realistically included in the franchise specification and which are achievable by the franchisee. I do this within the context of a wide interpretation of 'environmental'.

At a more mundane level we could have a measure or series of measures of how the franchisee scores on a range (almost endless!) of the usual suspects.

A few brief examples are given below for illustration:

Use of paper products from sustainable sources
Are energy costs minimised in the properties, stations and depots?
Are employees mainly using/ encouraged to use public transport /trains?
Is rubbish sorted and re-cycled?
Are depots dealing with train rubbish/ waste/ waste oils/ discarded components etc etc in the best possible, environmentally friendly way?
Are stations well kept maintained and litter and graffiti minimised? (Part of SQUIRE regime requirements)

Whether the likes of the above could be key indicators or combined to give key performance indicator(s) is another matter.

At a higher level there are certainly major environmental elements that could be incorporated into environmental performance indicators within the franchise agreement/HLOS.

A very important example would be the degree to which over specific time periods the franchise has achieved modal shift to rail from other less environmentally friendly modes - especially car use and short range air travel.

Another would be based on the shift to more environmentally friendly trains both diesel and electric. These could include indicators focussing on energy use /types/ efficiencies/sources.

While electrification is outwith the franchise remit the new franchise will be able to capitalise on the various electrification schemes - especially the EGIP scheme - that will/could be completed during the franchise period. It would be expected that the franchisee would attempt to minimise environmental impacts of various types by maximising the use and efficiencies of electric traction. Use of renewable energy sources for the electric supply could be a major indicator or at least part of a major environmental indicator.

Notwithstanding the above, it is with the diesel fleet that the franchisee could improve considerably in environmental terms and which the franchisee has much more discretion.

As indicated in the Q31 response, the diesel fleet will have to be renewed or refurbished during the franchise period and the franchisee can elect to do one or the other (or both?)
In choosing to lease new units the franchisee could minimise a lot of the problems environmental or otherwise that the existing fleet will have in the next few years.
The positive environmental features that they should have include:

Highly efficient engines, low fuel consumption, low emissions, low noise levels, retention tank toilets, improved crash-worthiness, much lighter bodies, improved track-friendly bogies, disability legislation compliant, much reduced use of scarce/expensive materials such as copper wire, more comfortable and spacious passenger interiors, increased reliability levels, low maintenance requirements and costs.

Case made for new diesels for new franchise?

Having a new fleet could score highly on likely environmental performance indicators that could be incorporated into the 2014 franchise specification.