

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

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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 X 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: Rail services are an economic lifeline for the Highlands and essential for many isolated Highland communities. As a world class tourist route recently named as the Best Railway Journey in the World the West Highland Line has the potential to attract a lot more tourism traffic but needs more investment in order to do that. The West Highland Line falls into the social rail objectives covering economic and social sustainability of the West Highlands.

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

Q2 comments: The contract needs to be of a sufficient length to enable the franchisee to achieve a return on their investment in stations, better rolling stock etc. The contract should be at least 10 years and possibly 15 years. Reviews should take place every 5 years to keep abreast of changes and respond accordingly.

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

Q3 comments: No comment

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

Q4 comments: No comment

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

Q5 comments: Third parties such as Local Authorities and Regional

Transport Partnerships could be involved in strategic decision making but not in the operational day to day running of rail services. These bodies should be very much involved in improving connections with other modes of public and private transport.

The Fort William-Mallaig “Jacobite” trains have been very successful. Development of more tourist trains by third parties, using heritage trains with relatively low capital cost, would attract more visitors to the West Highlands.

However, these trains must not abstract revenue from the year-round ScotRail train service.

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

Q6 comments: There should be incentives to develop/increase tourism on routes such as The West Highland Lines. This will have added benefits of more services for local people.

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

Q7 comments: No comment

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

Q8 comments: Failure to fulfil franchise commitments should incur strong penalties with the possibility of terminating the franchise for repeat service failure.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: By providing a good service the franchisee may see increased use of services so this should be their incentive. Poor performance should be penalised.

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: The performance regime set out should allow for local variations in different parts of Scotland. Priorities on rural lines with

infrequent trains and vital connections are totally different to main lines with frequent services. The regime should be appropriate for the route being served and the onward connections to other modes of transport such as ferries to ensure performance regimes are not mutually incompatible.

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

Q11 comments: There should be no difference to delays on commuter trains and rural/tourist routes. It's important rural journeys keep to time to allow for onward ferry/bus connections. However a company should not be penalised for delaying a connecting train due to another train being late. Local management decisions are all-important.

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

Q12 comments: Rural journeys particularly on the West Highland are already necessarily slow and should not be extended just to improve punctuality statistics.

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: SQUIRE is required on ALL aspects of station and service delivery and can be managed through the franchise. Lighting at stations and heating on trains, for example, should be covered by adequate performance indicators.

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

Q14 comments: Attention should be paid to trains with regard to heating, comfortable seating, good toilet facilities. Special attention should also be made for access/seating for people with a disability. Station adopters could provide more accurate feed-in than the periodic checks currently carried out.

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: There should be no standing on rural/west coast lines. This is a world class tourist route and needs to provide sufficient capacity to cover peak travel periods.

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: Passengers do not like changing if it can be avoided. People who are infirm, older, carrying luggage or have a disability are particularly inconvenienced.

Direct journeys should not be reduced further on the west coast, development of services is needed.

There could, on the other hand, be an opportunity to increase the effective frequency of trains economically on the WHL by providing additional connecting services at Crianlarich. But this would only be acceptable as an addition to the existing infrequent direct services provided on the lines and subject to substantial improvement to the interchange facilities there.

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: It is better for the Government to set the requirements for frequency and journey time. Journeys such as The West Highland Line has been designated as The Best Railway Journey in the World but passenger numbers could be increased greatly if the Line was marketed more effectively and at least four services each way provided, with the summer Sunday service extended to run all year. Incentives to encourage the franchisee to identify new initiatives and growth potential should be built in.

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

Q18 comments: There should be a robust contract specification that is objective and measurable and clearly set out which will encourage the franchisee to deliver quality on time and on budget.

It should be sufficiently flexible to allow additional services to be added to the timetable through the duration of the contract.

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

Q19 comments: The Government could set up an innovation fund to incentivise the franchisee to introduce additional services on an experimental

basis. If successful, these would be incorporated in the franchise.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares policy should be geared at a reasonable level so as to ensure that this does not form a barrier to travel and will encourage modal shift to rail from the private car. It should be less than the perceived cost of travel by private car.

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: On the West Highland Lines, normal fares, eg anytime returns, should be regulated. The franchisee should have commercial freedom to offer special fares to attract optional leisure travel from the markets in the Central Belt, and further afield in England and internationally.

Highland Railcard and Club 55 should be retained.

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: More efficient ways of running the train service will reduce the subsidy. Staffing levels and costs should be investigated.

Network Rail is also expected to increase efficiency. Overhead costs could be further reduced by greater integration of Network Rail and train operators (vertical integration).

There is huge potential to generate additional revenue on the WHL by improving marketing and timetables to attract more local and leisure travellers, and also more international visitors. The need for better co-ordination with other forms of transport should be an essential part of the franchise, e.g. better bus and ferry connection to promote circular trips around the Highlands. Close links with Visit Scotland essential. More encouragement to promote the use of smaller intermediate rural stations would be of benefit to passengers and local businesses alike.

Fares rising above inflation would not be advisable on the WHL, as journey times are uncompetitive. Revenue growth should come from higher usage, not higher fares.

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: No comment.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: All rail stations should be retained and there should be initiatives to encourage their use. On rural routes such as the West Highland Line, relaxation of standards could allow significant savings to be made - e.g. reduction of platform length. Where communities are growing the Government and the franchisee should actively support the opening of new stations.

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: Third parties should be encouraged to make greater use of railway stations for sit down restaurants, craft shops and local community/tourism agencies. One option for this is through a franchise.

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: It would be simpler to leave station maintenance with the franchisee, as the most customer-facing rail organisation. The franchisee could be given the freedom to subcontract some stations to local line support groups.

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

Q27 comments: Railways should be more integrated with the community rather than being an insular organisation. Projects such as 'Adopt a Station' should be extended.

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

Q28 comments: On the West Highland Lines, the stations fall into two categories:

Interchange (Oban, Fort William, Mallaig), should provide staffed ticket office, waiting room, toilets, left-luggage lockers, newspaper stall, and information

about the local area and connecting bus and ferry services. Local management should be given responsibility to monitor critical ferry and bus connections. If the role of Crianlarich is developed for connections aimed at providing an enhanced service to Oban and Fort William it should also be categorised as an interchange. However, facilities would need to be substantially upgraded.

Rural (eg Corrour, Ardlui) providing basic shelter, help point, and basic local information.

We are not convinced a separate “tourist” category would be relevant.

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: Through cross-border services to Glasgow are essential in providing connections to the West Highlands from London, Birmingham and Manchester via the west coast route and Sheffield, Leeds, York and Newcastle via Edinburgh and the east coast route. Otherwise, journeys to the West Highlands from the north east of England would require two changes of train (in Edinburgh and Glasgow), which would be a disincentive to travel by rail.

The case for introducing a direct daytime Anglo-Scottish train service to the WHL should be investigated, possibly using Voyager or equivalent train.

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: For the West Highlands, an Edinburgh Hub would be detrimental (unless all West Highland trains are extended to start from Edinburgh and run via Glasgow).

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Rolling stock should be placed in the hands of an arms length organisation. This can be similar to CMAL who look after the Calmac

ferries and retains ownership and control of rolling stock in public hands.

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

Q32 comments: There should be suitable stock for the type of line. Extras such as facilities for computers & mobile phones, adequate storage for luggage, etc should become standard to encourage business and tourists.

On the scenic WHL, visibility is important, so seats should line with windows where possible, and seat backs should not create a claustrophobic feeling. Space for bicycles should be provided on rural lines.

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: The provision of Wi-Fi and mobile communications should be a priority. While it is important on urban routes this should be taken forward quickly on longer journeys to the west and north of Scotland.

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: Seating capacity to be tailored to demand and first class provision linked to demand for these facilities.

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

Q35 comments: A blanket ban on alcohol over the whole network is perhaps unnecessary. There should be some work done to identify the scope and extent of the problem. A ban would cut the viability of providing a catering trolley service where this is currently available.

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

Q36 comments: Printed and internet timetable information for trains is generally good. There should be clear information on forward connections with buses, coaches & ferries. Having times displayed in rail carriages is also an option.

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 should continue to be specified in the new franchise. This is an essential long distance service which provides an efficient and environmentally sustainable means of travel directly to and from the centre of London. It is especially important for the West Highlands because of the lack of high speed lines and limited air services. The Fort William Sleeper links the capital of the UK directly with the Outdoor Capital of the UK.

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: There are plusses and minuses for each option. A separate franchise would make sense because the main Scottish franchise is internal to Scotland while the sleeper traverses the length of the UK. The new operator would have the incentive to raise standards and improve on the very poor marketing and booking arrangements which exist at present.

The current Sleeper operation is largely separated from the domestic services along its routes. We believe that this should no longer be the case, and that it should not remain as an under utilised exclusive train that is expensive to run and fairly useless for many local passengers. It is an asset ripe for development especially at this point in time when major investment is poised to take place in the coaching stock. This could well interest a new specialist operator with innovative ideas.

However, it needs to be fully integrated into the domestic services to complement the inevitably sparse services along the West Highland Line in particular, it should on balance not be treated as a separate franchise unless stringent conditions are attached.

39. We would be interested in your views in the level and type of service that the Caledonian Sleeper Services should provide. Including:

- 1 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?
- 2 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?
- 3 What facilities should the sleeper services provide and would you pay more for better facilities?

Q39 comments: A passenger survey should be undertaken to establish what facilities would make the service more attractive. This could also present alternative timetables. The current timetable fits quite well with needs and

arrives in London in good time for early morning meetings or to allow for onward travel connections, but there may be scope for improvements. A calling point in the Midlands would improve the journey opportunities.

The current departure points of Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen are well established and strategically located to service the North of the UK and should not be changed.

The provision of improved catering for evening meals and breakfast along with lounge seating, with radio facilities and business connectivity in the sleeping accommodation would improve the passenger experience.

Higher fares for First Class passengers could be introduced to cover costs of showers and en-suite facilities, while retaining an affordable Standard Class and recliner seat service.

A major re-branding and re-launch of this unique product is now required to ensure its sustainability and development through the 21st century (and put behind us the last twenty years of heavy subsidy, a period characterised by lack of innovation, starved of serious investment.

The whole operation needs to be thoroughly reappraised to identify areas where savings could be made and greater efficiency achieved; at the same time ways of dramatically enhancing and developing the product should be sought with new markets identified and opened up. The recent announcement for major investment in the Sleepers means that this an excellent time to ensure that significant improvements are also put into place and maximum returns follow.

Consideration should be given to the merging of the Highland and Lowland Sleepers - an East Coast Train could then serve Edinburgh and the Inverness and Aberdeen Lines, with a West Coast Train serving Glasgow and the West Highland Line with connections to Oban and Mallaig. The re-introduction of motorail to Fort William only should be investigated.

Both trains should incorporate seating capacity for local traffic along the routes they serve so that they form an integral part of the domestic 'national' service as well as performing the 'international' role. An all inclusive train, therefore, which covers the whole spectrum of the market. On the West Highland line the sleeper package should include onward connections at no extra cost to the Mallaig and Oban lines. A good connection to Oban at Crianlarich is essential. Needless to say, the current situation of West Highland Line seated passengers having to get out at Edinburgh in the middle of the night and then find new seats on another portion of the train should be consigned to history.

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 comment