

Andrew Macintosh

## 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: There is a danger of losing the network benefits from having one unified franchise. You will be aware that there is considerable interworking of resources such as trains and crews between different services. If these were to be separated out costs would be sure to increase. What happens to borderline services? What happens in the event of growth, or decline? Presumably they would then be 'stuck' in the wrong franchise. There would be a danger of loss-making services being ghettoised with no opportunity for growth and expansion.

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

Q2 comments: Experience in England has shown that longer franchises encourage investment by the franchisee.

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

Q3 comments:

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

Q4 comments:

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

Q5 comments:

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

Q6 comments:

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

Q7 comments:

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

Q8 comments:

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

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

Q9 comments:

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

Q10 comments:

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

Q11 comments:

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

Q12 comments:

13. Is a Service Quality Incentive Regime required? And if so should it cover all aspects of stations and service delivery, or just those being managed through the franchise?

Q13 comments: Yes, I think it is important and it is good that the SQUIRE regime is in place. However, the financial figures would suggest that more work is still required for it to achieve its objective, so more attention is obviously required.

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

Q14 comments:

### **Scottish train services**

15. Can better use be made of existing train capacity, such as increasing the permitted standing time beyond the limit of 10 minutes or increasing the

capacity limit? What is an acceptable limit for standing times on rail services?

Q15 comments: On commuter services, standing is acceptable for journeys of up to 15 minutes. However, for longer distance services I don't believe it is acceptable at all.

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:

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:

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

Q18 comments:

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

Q19 comments:

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments:

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:

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:

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:

## **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments:

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: This is to be encouraged. Often, a local organisation will see potential that is hidden to larger organisations, and they will have the will and the energy to make things happen. Community rail is thriving in England but needs more encouragement in Scotland.

26. Should only one organisation be responsible for the management and maintenance of stations? If this was the franchisee how should that responsibility be structured in terms of leasing, investment, and issues relating to residual capital value?

Q26 comments:

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

Q27 comments:

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

Q28 comments:

## **Cross-border services**

29. Should cross-border services continue to go north of Edinburgh? In operating alongside ScotRail services, how do cross-border services benefit passengers and taxpayers? And who should specify these services, the Department of Transport or the Scottish Ministers?

Q29 comments: I see no justification whatever for curtailing services at Edinburgh. As a regular traveller between Dundee and London I value the direct service very highly. Most of the time I am travelling with luggage and need to work during my journey. By changing at Edinburgh I would lose working time and have the additional stress and disruption of carrying my luggage between trains.

I question some of the assumptions made in section 8 and would be

interested to see whether they actually have any factual basis. I disagree with the assessment in 8.4 that capacity is 'frequently considerably underutilised'. This is not my experience on Edinburgh to Aberdeen services, which are regularly packed. Of course, the additional carriages provide additional capacity north of Edinburgh and considerably more comfort than the indigenous services.

8.9 mentions 'some possible drawbacks'. Regarding a 'perceived or actual time penalty' if direct trains are withdrawn, I can assure you that the penalty is real. The current timetable shows that changing at Edinburgh adds 30-40 minutes to an already long journey. Direct journeys from Dundee take 5 hours 47 minutes. Times changing at Edinburgh vary from 6 hours 13 to 6 hours 29.

Part of the problem here is that trains on the direct path from Dundee arrive at Edinburgh 2 minutes before trains on the faster path to London depart. Correcting that would mean recasting all the paths both ends of Edinburgh Waverley which is an unlikely proposition, to put it mildly.

Your priorities in this exercise are to 'focus investment on making connections... to/from Scotland better'. This proposal would certainly have the opposite effect. I would much rather investment was focused on improving and speeding up direct services north of Edinburgh.

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: None, as far as I can see. The opportunities for Scottish connections are there already.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments:

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

Q32 comments:

## **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 benefits would be greatest on longer distance ScotRail Express services, so it would make sense to fit the Express fleet first.

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: On the current diesel fleet, the additional capacity created would be marginal at best. In the Class 158 fleet the seats in first class are identical so declassifying them would bring no benefits. In the Class 170 fleet you might create 6 additional seats per train. Whether this would be worth the disruption and cost of a refit and compensate for the loss of first class revenue seems highly dubious. Your figures suggest that First Class ticket sales generate high revenue per ticket sold. I would much rather see an improvement in the First Class product, particularly for longer journeys.

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 would be counter-productive. Prohibition is to be encouraged where there is a specific reason (eg on football and rugby match days, where drink-fuelled bad behaviour is guaranteed). However that is no reason to penalise those enjoying a drink with a meal on a long journey. This is a selling point for long-distance operators: both Virgin and East Coast provide free alcohol for first class passengers, and the removal of that benefit would not be desirable.

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

Q36 comments:

### **Caledonian Sleeper**

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

Q37 comments:

38. Should the Caledonian Sleeper services be contracted for separately from the main ScotRail franchise? Or should it be an option for within the main ScotRail franchise?

Q38 comments: I can see benefits in both models. Being part of the main franchise makes cross-promotion (and sales of tickets) easy, and both franchisees have exploited this. However, the sleepers differ operationally from the rest of the franchise and if a stand-alone franchise had the freedom to promote itself aggressively and expand the operation this may not be a bad thing.

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: What are the 'journey time improvements' referred to in 11.7? I can see no potential improvements in the medium term on either the East or West Coast franchises, particularly given that the former had a complete timetable recast recently. If some of the other proposals here come to fruition, journey times on daytime trains will increase (see my response above).

The great benefit of the sleeper is the ability to get an early start in London which is otherwise impossible by train from Dundee. Flying for an early meeting means waking at 4am. It also offers the chance to combine an overnight stay and long distance travel, thus saving a considerable amount of time.

I would welcome on-board showers, which is the main deficiency of the



current rolling stock (which was built in the 1980s, incidentally, and not in the 1970s). Offering shower facilities at Euston to **all** passengers would be a welcome step in this direction, however. I find it unacceptable that these facilities, which were refurbished recently with funding from the public purse, are restricted to First Class passengers only.

The other thing which I would find hugely beneficial would be a sleeper service on a Saturday night.

### **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: