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## Consultation Questions

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### 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:

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

Q2 comments:

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: Good should be the default standard. Poor 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: There should be a local dimension of some sort.

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

Q11 comments: By never losing sight of the fundamental fact that a passenger railway is about conveying passengers by operating trains rather than operating trains which carry passengers.

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

Q12 comments: Safety first, then journey times, then other factors.

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:

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

Q14 comments: Passenger surveys, surely!

## **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: I regard modal shift from car to train as a key environmental objective. Motorists do not have to stand in their cars and are unlikely to be attracted by the prospect of standing on trains. Standing for protracted periods also becomes increasingly uncomfortable with age, e.g myself with 2 artificial hip joints! The days when younger travellers would readily give up their seats

to older persons are regrettably long gone!

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: Interchange stations work well for suburban networks where through ticketing is readily available, heavy luggage is rarely carried and stations are designed to facilitate interchange. Other countries seem to make much more use of inter-modal through ticketing. One serious problem of interchange on longer routes is when connections are not guaranteed in the event of late running and the next train may involve a long wait.

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: The franchisee's first loyalty will always be to its shareholders rather than to the public and it is therefore important to have a safety net of Government direction. This should not operate however in a manner which results in the views and aspirations of a reasonable and prudent franchisee being unreasonably disregarded.

18. What level of contract specification should we use the 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: There should be an incentive on the franchisee to conduct regular consultation with rail users and community representatives to determine perceived gaps in service provision.

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments: To achieve a reasonable degree of uniformity of time-based or distance-based travel costs -- not sure which of these is better -- not sure how track access costs pan out between express and stopping services when allocated on time or distance bases. Fares which are too closely reflective of local costs are likely to throw up unwelcome differentials between localities. e.g busy urban routes have high marginal capacity costs while quieter rural routes have high infrastructure costs.

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: Regulated and commercial fares are not mutually exclusive. Government should approve the economic model for fare setting for defined franchised services but the franchisee should have reasonable scope for commercial fare initiatives to optimise performance in the face of short-term capacity constraints or opportunities.

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: The recovery of network enhancement should be spread uniformly across the entire network and should not lead to significant regional differentials in fares for comparable journeys. The balance between taxpayer and passenger contributions is a matter for political judgement. A good starting point would be to set an objective of making the choice of rail travel cheaper than the motor car alternative. This would require the road journey to carry the full allocated cost of roads infrastructure and vehicle capital and revenue costs.

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: Existing peak v off-peak differentials are very effective in discouraging peak travel by those like myself who can usefully avoid peak times. Many people do not have the luxury of choice and are constrained by hours of work to travel at peak times. My own professional background was in electricity supply where over-zealous selling of off-peak tariffs in the 1960s and 70s distorted the demand pattern to such an extent that the peak moved to the former off-peak period!

## Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Please do not repeat the mistakes of the 50s and 60s where the services to stations were steadily and cynically reduced to levels at which they were of no use to anyone -- followed by closure! There is clearly a balance to be struck between inconveniencing the many and accommodating the few but every effort should be made to thoroughly understand and adapt to local needs before closing 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: The railway exists to provide services which meet the needs of local communities and businesses. If a local authority or business has to intervene in funding a station or service, the Scottish Government, through Transport Scotland, has gravely failed in its duty to the electorate.

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: If you provide a good service, with road transport connections where appropriate, "**people will come**". Talk to experienced travellers like myself about the journey patterns of different groups within local communities.

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

Q28 comments: Common sense should produce a spectrum of stations and facilities ranging from the "bus-stop" type for short-distance, frequent service, local travel to the airport type for long-distance travel.

## 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 regularly use Inverkeithing station as a starting point for cross-border travel, taking advantage of the Aberdeen - London direct services. I made the switch from air travel when the journey time and convenience of a direct service won me over. I can state from experience that changing at Edinburgh seriously detracts from the comfort and convenience of cross-border travel, particularly on the return direction when the interchange is particularly unwelcome near the end of a long day's travel. When St Andrews hosts major golf tournaments, many visitors come up for the day from London due to the convenience of direct services to Leuchars.

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:I think I've answered this against Q29.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: Listen carefully to the experts within the franchise.

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

Q32 comments: Plenty of experience to draw on here over many years!

## **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: Bow to the inevitable!

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: No need for first class on journeys less than 2 hours. First class is important for business travellers and older/less able leisure travellers on longer services and should be a franchise requirement.

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

Q35 comments: None -- just do it!

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

Q36 comments: By travelling on a Fife Circle train and noting that the destination screen often shows a station located in the opposite direction to the train's direction of travel and finding out who is responsible for this crazy state of affairs!

## **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: The existing sleeper services are very much the "cuckoo in the nest" of the present day railway. It would be interesting to see what, if any,

innovative sleeper services would be offered commercially if no franchise requirement existed.

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: Take them out of the main franchise!

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 main appeal of sleepers is the early morning arrival, fresh and rested, in city centres. Oban, with its extensive Hebridean ferry connections, (and where I keep my own boat!) would be much more useful than Fort William. Aberdeen and Inverness are unquestionably the best "big city" destinations for their vicinities.

### **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: