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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:

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

Q2 comments: The franchise term should be for over 15 years. The Chiltern Railway Franchise is a good exemplar of what can be achieved with a long franschise.

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 performance should be incentivised.

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: Better results can be achieved if the regime is by service groups, fine-tuned for each.

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

Q11 comments: By encouraging the avoidance of overcrowding which passengers greatly dislike. By ensuring sufficient seating capacity for all passengers (except for less than 10 minutes) more occasional passengers will return to rail again. Even seated passengers do not like being hemmed in by standees. Serious consideration should be given to lengthening train formations especially on key long distance routes such as Edinburgh/Glasgow – Aberdeen/Inverness.

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:

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:

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: No. Many passengers do not like changing trains and having to do so can divert some passengers to other 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: Best determined by the franchisee.

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:

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:

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: Yes. They should be specified jointly. Through connectivity between cities and towns north of Edinburgh/Glasgow and England is an important factor in their economies. Fewer leisure travellers would visit these places if they had to change at Edinburgh and others would be more likely to fly or go by car thus using less environmentally friendly methods of transport.

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: No. Through trains should continue to operate. Aside from the perceived time penalty in changing at Edinburgh which your document

mentions, another disadvantage is that many passengers especially those with lots of luggage or elderly or with young children etc strongly dislike having to change trains especially at a large and teeming station such as Waverley. It is a strong incentive for many such passengers to use another less environmentally friendly mode such as flying or car. It is vital such destinations as Aberdeen, Inverness & Dundee retain through connectivity to England, especially London, for the sake of their economies and the environment. On the question of under utilisation of through trains north of Edinburgh, with passenger growth at present levels this will be absorbed in coming years. There would be more overcrowding if services at present operated as through trains were replaced by local ones. If anything the number of through trains should be increased to avoid the severe overloading that sometimes occurs on a 3-car train between Edinburgh and Aberdeen, for example. Your document mentions the effect of ORCATS on revenue for the Scottish operator due to through Anglo-Scottish trains calling at stations north of Edinburgh. Yet the document also makes it clear that the passenger comes first. Most passengers neither know nor care anything about ORCATS and it is irrelevant to consider this when determining the best outcome for rail passengers in Scotland.

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:

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:

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

Q35 comments:

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:

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: An advantage of the sleepers is the ability to do a whole day's work (or sightseeing) in London, including into the evening and be back at work in places north of Edinburgh/Glasgow the next day and vice versa. The same arguments about not having to change as mentioned in Q.30 above apply. Diverting the Fort William portion to Oban should be investigated carefully as it may prove a better terminus due to the connectivity with ferry services. To be able to travel with only one change between London and islands such as Mull would be a boost to island economies and could attract new traffic.

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: