

Transport Scotland: Rail 2014 - Public Consultation.

Without reiterating the wording of the original 40 questions, these are my responses:

1. I favour a single ScotRail franchise without specifying economic or social aspects.
2. In my view, as short as possible, bearing in mind the 2014 Referendum and Scotland regaining its Independence
3. I am not competent to reply.
4. I support, very strongly, a not-for-profit organisation as the franchisee, with all profits being re-invested in (the) train services.
5. I have no objection to the involvement of third parties, provided there is no detriment to rail services.
6. I am not competent to advise.
7. I am unable to comment.
8. I am unable to comment.
9. I was expected to do my job properly without incentive or bonus.
10. I favour alignment with actual routes or service groups.
11. It should be flexible enough to accommodate the effect of large passenger numbers being inconvenienced.
12. I think the balance should be weighted towards improving journey times; I do not see why this should affect performance, particularly on electrified routes.
13. Yes; all aspects.
14. National Passenger Issues, through Passenger Focus, should be incorporated in any SQUIRE system.
15. I should prefer carrying capacity set at 105% on peak services, and for passengers' expectation of a seat within 10 minutes, not to be exceeded. This is in sharp contrast to what is happening at present with many overcrowded services.
16. No; most passengers prefer to avoid the inconvenience of having to change trains, by using direct or through services. This is why, for example, so many of us have been promoting Glasgow Crossrail for up to 40 years and more.
17. There are social and economic reasons why a minimum service provision should be specified.
18. I am not competent to answer this.
19. I am not competent to answer this.
20. We should be implementing a fares strategy which encourages people to use trains wherever possible, thereby utilizing the available rail stock to the maximum. To this end, there should be an extension of the National Concessionary Scheme to Off-Peak rail travel.
21. Setting rail fares on a commercial basis is inconsistent with the need to restore parity with road and air traffic, and to attract more people onto rail. Most fares should be regulated by Government, especially those of a socially necessary and geographical type.
22. Since I believe that the railways represent a vital and crucial social and economic public service, then the subsidy from the taxpayer (including myself) should play a significant part in funding an accessible and affordable Scottish rail network. The model used by railway systems in mainland Europe, where there is higher Government subsidy, should set the benchmark to be followed. I do object to the principle of selectively penalising passengers on newly enhanced routes. [I must add that I am very impressed with the Class 380 units.]
23. I think there should be a significant reduction in off-peak fares to encourage people to travel at times when there is spare capacity available, and people are free to travel. Off-peak fares should range between $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ that of peak fares.

[Continued...]

24. In light of the current economic outlook and environmental concerns, there should be no question of closing stations - it leads to social exclusion and denial of employment opportunities. Instead, bearing in mind the success of almost all recent re-openings, we should be thinking in terms of further re-openings, among which should be considered Dysart, Levenmouth (restored line), St. Andrews (new line), Abbeyhill, Ingliston/Newbridge Interchange, Grangemouth, in addition to Glasgow Cross rail (+ Stations) and the Garngad curve re-instatement.
25. I would encourage local authorities especially and others, to promote and invest in new rail stations and facilities and amenities for passengers.
26. I think there should be a sensible degree of cooperation between ScotRail and Network Rail regarding station provision and reduced maintenance costs.
27. The concept of local communities 'adopting a Station' is to be commended and encouraged as a means of improving facilities and amenities at local stations, and improving the Station's appearance.
28. I do not agree with the principle of designating certain stations, since this is tantamount to ruling out the desire ever to improve them; there are far too many bleak, bare, unwelcoming stations consisting of a platform and a small 'bus shelter', e.g. the Auchinleck model. Passenger usage should trigger new facilities.
29. It is important that some through/direct services are maintained from London to Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness. It has been suggested that dividing trains at Edinburgh (as used to happen at Carstairs), would help to accommodate the different numbers of passengers travelling south. I think the Scottish Government should be the principal promoter of such services, with some support from the Dept. of Transport.
30. There is a case for retaining some through services from England to Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness; since Edinburgh is already a 'Hub', a sensible combination of the two is to be preferred.
31. Since electric traction is the most efficient, rapid, clean, silent and reliable form of rolling stock, there must be a continuing programme of electrification to enhance, extend and complement the EGIP work, north to Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen, together with suburban logical infill around Glasgow and Edinburgh, and the Midcald Junction to Holytown 'gap'.
32. Most suburban trains (electric and diesel) are satisfactory, but some seating is extremely cramped, and often there is inadequate provision for luggage, cycles, prams, etc. For longer distance services, a corridor connection throughout the train to ease localised over-crowding, and seats aligned with windows, are a must.
33. Since I have no mobile telephone, I am unable to comment.
34. I favour new rolling stock design offering greater technical adaptability, making it more responsive to over-crowding and thereby changing the balance between first and standard class, as demand varies.
35. Being lifelong teetotal, I should like to see a complete ban on such a dangerous drug, but it would place an onerous responsibility upon Rail Staff who would be required to enforce any such ban.
36. There needs to be a more efficient and speedy method of updating, broadcasting and displaying travel information to passengers.
37. Yes, we should so continue.
38. I think the Sleeper service should be integrated within the ScotRail franchise.
39. I have no comment to make.
40. We need some means of measuring the modal shift from more environmentally damaging forms of transport such as motor car, aeroplane, etc., onto rail.
41. The balance between expenditure on roads and rail needs to be shifted towards the latter. Many rail passengers would not resent their taxes being spent on, for example, dualling the A.9, if the Highland Main Line between Perth and Inverness was being doubled at the same time, and preferably sooner.

K.D.W. McCollm.

12th February, 2012.