RESPONSE TO RAIL 2014 CONSULTATION PAPER

This consultation document is particularly disappointing given its political context. Supposedly issued on behalf of a Government committed to radical change in Scotland's constitutional status, it accepts as given the existing legal framework of the rail industry which (according to the document) makes direct operation of train services unlawful, and it recycles many of the dreary British railway management orthodoxies which have made the last two decades an increasingly unpleasant and frustrating experience for existing and potential customers.

The consultation questions are often inadequate or ask the wrong questions. They are phrased in such a way as to either rule out options which should be considered (as in Section 1, which accepts the status quo of the Railways Act 1993) or prejudge contentious issues (e.g. Q.22 assumes fares should be increased not decreased; Q.30 talks only of "additional benefits" from forced change of trains at Edinburgh).

The document is marked on occasion by hypocrisy. At the same time as it is describing one of the aims of *Scotland's Railways* as "...offer(ing) easy transfer from...ferry", one of the best rail-ferry transfers in the country is being allowed to die at Stranraer, without the Government even making the effort to specify and invite tenders for a continuing passenger ferry between Stranraer and Northern Ireland, in stark contrast to their repeated efforts to establish a *car* ferry link from Ballycastle to Kintyre.

Section 1's discussion is phrased in such a way as to suggest that the costs of the rail network are a burden and that hard choices need to be made in a time of decreasing budgets. Yet what the cash flow diagram reveals is that of the £549 million flowing from Ministers and Passengers to ScotRail less than half (£251 million) is going on track and rolling stock costs. Unhelpfully the "Rail Infrastructure" cash flow is not explained so it is impossible to tell if that is for a steady state railway or an improving one. However if the rail industry is compared with the bus industry, which does not pay for its infrastructure, it appears that the passenger is already paying for track access charges and rolling stock leasing costs, and the non-infrastructure rail services subsidy is nowhere near as high as the subsidy which Ministers give to the bus industry in one form or another (the most notable being the over 60s bus pass). It would be interesting to know how much of the £298 million net sum which remains with ScotRail is profit. Between that profit, the cost burdens associated with having to lease trains from other shareholder-driven organisations (ROSCOs) and the scope for reducing network costs to European levels, there is plenty scope to drive down costs other than by reducing service standards or raising fares.

In Section 2, as already mentioned, the choices are fixed. The tenor of para. 3.7 is some consolation. However, actions speak louder than words. If the Railways Act 1993 is to blame for Scottish Ministers or any other public body being barred from direct operation of train services, should Ministers not be pressing for a change in the legislation as part of the discussions over the devolution of further powers to Scotland? Indeed why has no Westminster MP of any political persuasion representing a Scottish seat not promoted legislation to do away with that bar in Scotland at least?

The consultation paper should have given respondents the opportunity to opt for public control of the delivery of rail services in Scotland, giving the Government ammunition to argue for a change in the legislation. It is also noted that the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is looking at other intermediate options including a

non profit distributing operating model and these should also be on the table here. Of the two options on offer in the consultation paper (franchise or management contract) the management contract would seem nearer to the spirit of a railway run for public purposes but is still far from ideal.

Q.1: The Highlands already has experience of this kind of split focus acting against passenger interests, in the so-called "Highland" railcard not being available on routes south and east of Inverness. The rationale behind that is to stimulate demand on the "social" routes to Kyle and Wick only and indeed at one time fare levels south of Inverness were being set with the scarcely concealed objective of suppressing local travel demand. The assumption that services or routes can be clearly classed as "economic" or "social" is flawed since they will often fall into both categories. In Strathclyde or "Greater Edinburgh" (for want of a better description) it is difficult to see how "some" commuter routes could be separated out and run on a different basis from others.

Q.2: A short franchise would be preferable if constitutional change would open up the possibility of reverting to a publicly accountable railway of the more common European model instead of the doctrinaire British model. We should be free to take that opportunity, if it arises, as soon as can be done. The limited English experience of really long franchises suggests that they may offer scope for investment but as the paper says the evidence is inconclusive. Arguably, the positive experiences are more down to the railway background and can-do attitude of key managers in those franchises than to the length of the franchises. The experience of the current extended ScotRail franchise, where customer-focused rolling stock decisions of every kind seem to be getting put off until the next franchise, suggests that there is a risk of a "marking time" culture developing in longer franchises.

Q.3: Risk support is a convoluted way of doing what would happen anyway in a publicly owned and operated system, i.e. the taxpayer has to meet the costs of things not working out as planned. This question cannot be separated from Q.4. Any risk support mechanism must be matched with a profit sharing mechanism. It is unacceptable that franchisees should be in a "win/win" position at taxpayer expense.

Q. 4: This should be a straight percentage or proportion mechanism based on actual performance. Leaving room for franchisees to debate what profit growth was due to their actions runs the risk of time and money being wasted on futile debates or legal costs.

Q.5: It would have been helpful to see examples of how this would be expected to work in practice and how it differs from existing experience and powers, particularly as the costs of even modest enhancements such as new stations or new services have been inflated by regulatory requirements in the past 15 years to levels that few if any third parties (public or private) could contemplate even in good economic times. Apart from cost inflation the main obstacle to enhancements in the form of new stations recently has been Transport Scotland's near-universal opposition to their promotion through the Development Plan system even where there are prospects of third party funding.

Q.6: There should be scope for early termination of the franchise and resumption of direct operation of services.

Q.7: No comment.

Q.8: Built-in penalty clauses and provision for early termination of the franchise in case of consistent underperformance.

Q.9: Both.

Q.10: There should be a single performance standard covering all service groups.

Q.11: Some more fine grained measurements would be helpful, for example, lateness expressed as a percentage of a passenger's expected journey time. Impact on a percentage of a service's possible users would be another possible measure.

Q.12: The preamble to this question is contradictory. Paras. 4.1 and 4.2 make clear that punctuality and reliability are two different things, yet in the first sentence of para 4.8 they are mistakenly conflated (underlined by the use of the word "is" which is otherwise a grammatical error) yet the question posed sets up an opposition between journey time and *reliability*, thus skating over the practice of extending journey times to achieve *punctuality* targets. Whether expressed correctly or not, the question is posing a false choice. It is questionable if reliability has anything to do with journey times. The commuter service from Aviemore to Inverness was cancelled with depressing regularity during its short lifetime; the principal reasons are understood to have been either train failures or crews not turning up on time. The Caledonian Sleepers from time to time are massively unpunctual (sometimes up to 3 hours late) despite relatively long journey times compared to day trains.

Improved journey times are paramount. Even on the Inter-City routes they are barely competitive with road alternatives and they are a bad joke on the Far North line. Indeed it is not hard to find examples of end to end journey times, even in the Central Belt (Edinburgh to Perth) which are no better than the best times 50 years ago. Punctuality and reliability shortcomings need to be analysed and the causes remedied, whether that be by engineering measures such as providing adequate line and station capacity, or addressing staff performance issues.

Q.13: No comment

Q.14: A broadly based user forum would be one way of assessing train and station quality and just as importantly to decide which indicators should be assessed and how. I suspect people who cycle regularly would have a different view from TS or ScotRail officials of the "quality" of cycle parking provision at stations (which is often put in places open to the elements).

Q.15: There is no acceptable limit for standing times. Standing is really only tolerable on short urban journeys. The alternatives of lengthening trains and carrying out infrastructure works "can be" expensive but that once again begs the question of how much of that expense could be avoided by organisational changes (e.g. to traction and rolling stock supply, procurement and pricing) or reducing infrastructure costs to the European average.

Personal experience of Highlands to Central Belt services suggests that adoption by on train staff of a zero tolerance policy to some passengers' selfish distribution of selves and luggage (blocking window-side seats or sometimes an entire table bay) could free up a fair amount of seating capacity at busy times.

Q.16: No for rail to rail. The disadvantages and dangers to both passengers' experience and the railway's attractiveness are like those listed later for longer distance journeys but aggravated by relativity to journey length and numbers

involved. The latter could raise punctuality problems in loading and unloading trains and safety issues in already congested locations.

There is undoubtedly much more scope for interchange with other modes but Policy and structures currently seem to be directed against this. Notable examples are the loss of direct rail to ferry interchange at Stranraer; lack of dedicated, affordable and properly promoted bus links between Scrabster and Thurso; and the scaling-back of the PlusBus network which at one time extended to many towns deprived of their train services in the 1960s' closures.

Q.17: Journey times are basic to the attractiveness or otherwise of rail as a mode of transport. Improvements to journey times should be set by Government as part of its transport strategy.

Q.18: The previous answer is relevant. Targeted specification as described in the consultation paper is best if this is based on real improvements to journey times on the Far North line. However, unless the Government is prepared to put money into infrastructure improvements to achieve that, any such specification risks being mere posturing.

Q.19: Revenue and capital support for additional or enhanced services e.g. by reducing the cost to the franchisee of hiring in locomotives and locomotive hauled stock if (say) they wanted to try out a "high quality" Edinburgh to Aberdeen service.

Q.20: Fares Policy should be driven by the customer-centric values of transparency, fairness, value for money, and competitiveness. The objectives should be to stimulate demand and modal shift to rail especially for the more common short/medium distance journeys thus creating a virtuous circle of increased revenue/reduced subsidy/stimulus to further service and network enhancements. Current practice reflects none of these. These values demand a logical relationship between distance and price; prices which are competitive with the alternative; and single fares at or around 50% of the cost of return fares.

Fares Fair: The ticket below, for one of the shortest station to station single journeys possible in Italy, is equivalent to a cost of about 22p/mile. A single ticket from Glasgow Queen Street to Bishopbriggs purchased last year cost around three times as much - £1.95 for 3 miles.

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Q.21: Government should regulate fares by establishing general principles which achieve the values and objectives set out in the Q.20 response. Government should set the general principle that fares should bear some relationship to distance; set

maximum fares levels per km on the basis that these should never exceed a certain %age of the fuel cost equivalent of going by car instead; and base increases in fares levels on increases in the cost of motoring or the CPI.

Q.22: Based on the Q.20 values and objectives Increases in fares levels should preferably be related to increases in the costs of motoring. Where network enhancements consist of reopened lines or stations it would be unfair for their users to be penalised by higher fares or increases. Such additional charges are only fair in the case of significant step change improvements, such as the construction of high speed routes. Even in those cases there is still a need to avoid charging so much that the service is unaffordable or cost-uncompetitive with alternatives.

Q.23: The difference should be related to peak/offpeak motoring cost differentials. Thus a higher difference would be justifiable around Central belt conurbations (where there is both road congestion and capacity problems on the rail network) than on routes leading into Inverness.

Section 7 is another part of the consultation paper which sends out mixed messages. While it says that there is no intention to reduce the network or the number of stations this is not the message that comes through from the litany of lesser used stations and costs and the invitation to specify stations which are no longer required. "Reconfiguring" the network and "reviewing the location" of stations is code for closing them. The high costs associated with building a new station even on a simple greenfield site are such as to make it highly unlikely that lesser used stations would be replaced by better located stations. There can be no "one size fits all" model for where stations are required. There is still a need for new stations in association with line re-openings to reconnect sizeable communities to the network. From that perspective even just a single station would be better than none. Beyond that, however, a number of geographical issues need to be considered.

Q.24: The location of new stations on existing routes should be determined by the principle of maximising the number of people who can, or can be attracted to, use a train service with least reliance on other modes of transport other than "active" transport. This requires new stations close to major areas of development within conurbations (e.g. Robroyston in Strathclyde). It requires new stations in suburban areas to give direct access to services without the need for a "doubling back" journey into the town centre (which adds to journey time and costs) and by allowing parking to be made free thus making rail more attractive to those who have no option but to drive to a station. This is particularly relevant to conurbations which have grown (or grown together) into a "long, thin" model parallel to a rail line, such as Kirkcaldy (reopened station required in the Dysart area) but could equally apply to places such as Newport/Wormit at the south end of the Tay Rail Bridge.

No station should be closed unless the closure forms part of a package of network growth and reconnection of communities. I use the term "growth" rather than "enhancement" because recent press reports raise the spectre of several communities in Strathclyde being "disconnected" from the network by closure of stations reopened only relatively recently, simply to facilitate EGIP "enhancements" in the shape of a couple of extra Edinburgh – Glasgow trains. That is not acceptable. Furthermore there should be an absolute veto on closures of stations which have become lesser used as a result of the deliberate running down of services to residual or "ghost" levels such as the halts between Dundee and Carnoustie. An acceptable exception to this general principle would be if closure of stations on the existing line between Tain and Golspie was essential to produce a favourable or improved BCR for the Tain-Golspie Rail Link described in the Highland Structure Plan 2001.

Q.25: A local authority, which is responsible for land use planning and local roads and transport, is well placed to identify places where existing or new development requires a new or reopened station and can act as an enabler in a number of ways – safeguarding the site (through local development plans), securing funding (through developer contributions mechanisms), and making the station a well connected place (through development briefs and investment in access facilities). It is rather ironic in this connection that Transport Scotland has been trying to force local authorities to delete aspirations for such stations in emerging local development plans. It is difficult to envisage a situation in which one local business would have the economic clout and traffic generating potential to propose, promote or fund a station or service, other than airport operators.

Q.26: The following personal anecdote is offered as an example of what can go wrong with any apparently rational choice in this matter if the underlying premises of privatisation are not challenged.

On Christmas Eve 2009 my son was travelling from Edinburgh to Aviemore on the down *Highland Chieftain*. The train had already suffered a series of delays and technical problems before it left Edinburgh. It was eventually failed at Pitlochry by which time it was more than an hour behind schedule. Passengers were offered hot drinks and reassured that they would be taken on to their destinations by following trains. However, passengers were then de-trained in order that the failed train could be moved elsewhere. Reportedly this was necessary before the following down trains could reach Pitlochry. Inevitably these were short formation ScotRail trains and already busy which meant that the first one couldn't accommodate all the de-trained passengers. A considerable number, including my son, therefore had to wait for the second of the following trains and were made to stand in the open for over an hour, in sub zero temperatures with snow falling and a forecast of worsening weather, **because the waiting room accommodation which was there could not be opened for them**. The one member of staff available (the signaller) told the passengers that he had neither a key to the waiting room nor the authority to open it. Subsequent enquiries confirmed that although the station is the property of Network Rail it is tenanted by First ScotRail and that under the tenancy agreement only the latter's staff are authorised to open and close the waiting accommodation.

The net result is that a no doubt thoroughly written and detailed specification of who is responsible for maintaining what part of a station failed the customer at a particularly critical time although doubtless no-one involved in writing the specification intended such an outcome. To me it seems inevitable that such incidents will arise when a railway is organised on and "us and them" basis and contract lawyers disempower front line staff.

Q.27: The question seems focused on property rather than the station as a point of access to and from train services. The station adoption scheme is good but is only a partial answer. There should be encouragement to communities to use vacant or redundant station accommodation for community uses which could also act as waiting/toilet facilities for passengers or information points for arriving visitors. Hopefully that would be part of encouraging the community to support the station by using its train services as well.

Q.28: All stations should have shelter facilities with seating as a minimum. Principal, Commuter and Interchange stations should offer full weather protection between train and train or between train and other mode. The last category should include Tourist route termini including but not limited to the two mentioned in the consultation paper,

which are essentially Interchange stations. Staffing, and the ability to buy a full range of tickets over the counter, should be available at all Principal and Interchange stations, and larger Commuter stations. Parking is not necessarily less required at Tourist stations as these may serve rural communities (including off-line communities) where there is no realistic, convenient or cost effective alternative to the car to get to and from the station.

A wide range of shops selling food, drink and media is desirable for Principal and larger Interchange and Destination stations. However in many cases the rail market may not in itself be enough to support a shop of any kind and a better approach would be to make sure that the station entrance is an integrated part of a mixed urban fabric which through a healthy mix and level of pedestrian journeys supports local shops – in other words the converse of the "splendidly isolated in a sea of car parking" site planning approach which characterises the new Bathgate station or Edinburgh Park station.

The community (and in the case of historic buildings, heritage preservation) benefits of finding commercial uses for redundant railway buildings should be more fully exploited particularly in rural locations. However it is important that this process not be driven by commercial considerations only. For example if a station building is leased out as a pub or restaurant a discount on the lease could be offered to the tenant in exchange for letting waiting rail passengers shelter in the premises and use the toilets if they need to.

Q.29: The financial argument for stopping cross border services at Edinburgh is typical of the sectional attitudes which privatisation encourages, and is based on false premises. If the ORCATS allocation method draws income from ScotRail, thus increasing its subsidy requirements, it still goes to East Coast Trains – thus reducing its subsidy requirements. It is all public money anyway.

One of the customer benefits of the existing pattern of operation is that customers who aren't tied to travelling at a particular time of the day get a choice, and can therefore opt for a much superior standard of accommodation and travelling environment to that of ScotRail's trains on the same routes. Customers also value highly the reduced risk of journey disruption, and the absence of the hassle of moving luggage and walking from one platform to another.

Enforced change of trains at Edinburgh would lengthen journey times. Cross border service delays are as likely to occur northbound as in the other direction. Journey plans would have to include a precautionary allowance for missed connections especially for those travelling on "specified train(s) only" fares. Connections would not be held – they never are these days for fear of incurring penalties. The argument that there would be "no reliance on DfT franchised services for connectivity" is a twisting of the facts; the reliance would simply be on Scottish Government specified services instead.

As a percentage of overall journey time, this precautionary allowance and the "hassle factor" would be particularly severely felt by those using the Highland Chieftain from Perth southwards and East Coast trains from Dundee southwards.

Waverley is a particularly busy station, difficult to negotiate quickly at the best of times. Forced interchange would simply add to the number of people milling about. People carrying luggage would have to go through staffed gates and have their tickets re-checked all adding to delay and confusion.

A serious flaw is that despite the Government's focus on economic development and tourism there is no mention of the possible harmful effects that the hub plan could have on Scotland's attractiveness to visitors from England and beyond.

DfT has already been made aware through the "save the Chieftain" campaign that customers think that the hub plan is daft and would be against customer interests. Why do the authors of this consultation paper think it any more palatable if launched from this side of the Border?

Q.30: There are no benefits for customers in the hub plan. From the railway's point of view it is even possible that the plan could prove more expensive overall. The capacity of the existing trains would still be required for the cross-border leg, but it is questionable if the time that they employ in running beyond Edinburgh could be put to effective use elsewhere (even the time the Chieftain takes to get to Inverness would scarcely accommodate an Edinburgh-Newcastle-Edinburgh diagram – and is there that much unmet demand between those two cities when the set would be available?) so these assets would be doing nothing. But – as the experience quoted in section 26 suggests – there isn't enough spare capacity in any one existing ScotRail departure to accommodate all the passengers who would be forced on to it by this "hub" idea. So ScotRail might actually need more trains to cope with the passengers forced to change trains.

Q.31: Rolling stock costs are artificially high because of the procurement structure imposed by privatisation and in the case of older stock which could be used to improve capacity or quality a further impediment is the artificially high asset values and rental charges attached to these.

Q.32: The practice of "one size fits all" in which a train may find itself running on an interurban route one day and a tourist route the next means that it would be very difficult to introduce significant variations to facilities without some negative effects on some passengers' journeys. This is particularly constraining in the case of rural routes which experience significant differences in Summer and Winter patronage. For these routes it would be better if the structure of leasing costs of older traction and stock was changed to facilitate reversion to the pre 1994 practice of running enhanced Summer formations with more seats, better views and more capacity for luggage and cycles. Failing this ideal, it is time for the industry to recognise the mistakes which have been built into the last generation of rolling stock design and set some basic standards to be met in all future procurements.

- Tourism is important to Scotland's economy. Tourists are an important part of the Scottish rail market. People come for the view, and even the area served by the Strathclyde SPT network contains extensive tracts of superb scenery. The seat/window relationship and window shape/size/height must at least revert to the "maximum field of view for the maximum percentage of the seats" standards established by Mark 2 carriage stock for all trains including stock designed primarily for suburban services. Equipment (door opening, air conditioning or traction related kit etc) should be built and laid out around that - rather than the other way about, as appears to have been the case in post-1980 Strathclyde electric train builds.
- As a corollary, efforts should go into restoring the forward view available to passengers in first generation DMU and electric "Blue Train" stock. Clearly among other things this would constrain front end design to Class 170 form (no gangway ends) rather than Class 380 et al (gangwayed ends). Nevertheless if the basic choice of no gangways is made, mainland European

practice suggests that there is no real reason why trains could not be designed so that passengers can see over the driver's shoulder.

- 3+2 seating within UK structure gauge is just not compatible with 21st century physiques – even before factoring in the widespread problem of obesity. It is false economy even on suburban routes since (except in crush conditions) 2 people will usually occupy a triple seat and 1 person + bag will occupy a double seat. 2+2 seating should be the densest layout in any rolling stock.
- Passenger spaces (saloons) should be closed off from vestibules by doors to maintain comfort and avoid draughts in Winter.
- Improved/more adaptable luggage space is required including space to accommodate at least 6 pedal cycles
- Something of better quality and greater diversity than the standard refreshment trolley offer should be available for longer journeys. The non utilisation of the mini buffet built into the Class 170 sets redeployed from an English TOC to ScotRail a couple of years ago showed a distinct lack of imagination and ambition on the part of the latter.

Q.33: Routes connecting the six cities should receive priority for Wi Fi high bandwidth as these enable business customers to work on the train. It is less easy to see a clear priority for mobile phone provision for these trains over others – it could be argued that limited frequencies of trains, endemic unpunctuality, lack of station facilities for onwards connections and high reliance on family and friends for pick up/drop off mean that for social reasons it is rural routes that should receive priority for mobile phone provision.

Q.34: Yet another difficult choice driven by inadequate rolling stock provision! Clearly first class accommodation is important to revenue and valued by customers who use it (at those prices, they must see some benefit in it for them!) At the same time if the standard class accommodation is over-full and there are a lot of vacant seats in first class, standing passengers would clearly resent not being allowed to sit down. When that situation arises train crew should have the discretion to seat standard class passengers in any vacant unreserved first class seat, but first class passengers offered a refund of the difference between standard and first class fare.

Q.35: Issues and evidence to consider include:
- How *really* annoying is it? I have only once felt in any way intimidated or annoyed by other passengers consuming alcohol. Other instances have ranged from the amusing (the Glasgow fishing party that tried to sell their catch to other passengers on the way home from Loch Awe) to the inevitable (the hen party which would have been rowdy on plain bottled water). Of course if a problem does arise it is much harder to contain or avoid with open saloon stock!
- What would its banning do for the attractiveness of the journey experience? Being able to consume it is one of life's pleasures; being able to consume it on the move can be part of the special qualities of the journey; being able to do so without fear of the breathalyser is a real USP for rail.
- What would it do for catering trolley income?!
- It is not an indirect health hazard unlike passive smoking – so banning it is far less justifiable.
- How would it be policed? Or enforced? Do we really need more trains delayed until the BTP arrive or another "big man" intervenes (with what consequences?)

If anything the railway should be looking at ways to encourage responsible and informed alcohol consumption on train, like a wider choice of locally produced bottled beers or route themed malt whiskies instead of the dreary sameness of the trolley's "tinnies" and Glenfiddich miniatures.

Q.36: Travel information has a number of irritating and patronising elements. Endless repetition of security announcements on station PA systems is irritating; being told that something is a "line problem/signalling problem/incident" instead of being told the specific details is patronising. Information when things go wrong should tell customers what is causing the problem, what can be done to resolve the problem, what **is** being done to resolve the problem, what is impeding resolution of the problem, and how soon the problem will be resolved. When this has to happen on-train and it involves the train coming to a stop unexpectedly, why can the information not be provided by the driver in the same way that airline pilots address their passengers.

Q.37: Yes. The arguments in paragraph 11.7 are silly. Unless and until we have real high speed trains between London and the Central Belt there is no realistic prospect of arriving at a destination in London before 0900 – and even then it would still be an early rise comparable to flying thus losing another USP for the train journey. I fail to see how a sleeper bus can meet "higher expectations" (the nearest rail equivalent is overnight seated accommodation). But the mention of budget hotels does point to the way in which the service is badly marketed. If there are two of you do you pay double for a budget hotel room? No, so why on a sleeper? Why is a service described by some commentators as "the most romantic way to travel" not even marketed to couples with "two for the price of one" deals? Why are joint Eurostar/Caledonian Sleeper tickets no longer available?

Not only should the Government continue to specify sleeper services, it should also go some way to encouraging improved marketing – e.g. taking the 2 examples suggested above by paying a bonus to the operator based on the number of couples or "through to Europe" tickets sold?

Q.38: A separate franchise restricted to the current service pattern would simply risk losing some of the current advantages to passengers, such as connections and the ability to use seated accommodation for local morning travel in Lochaber and Badenoch. On the other hand, if new rolling stock was built to "Nightstar" standards of construction and security (or the existing Nightstar stock repatriated from Canada) and the Caledonian Sleeper integrated into the pan-European network of overnight services, the wider benefits of that network would more than make up for local losses.

Q.39:

- The appeal of the Caledonian Sleeper services to me is the ability to reach London at the start of the day, having joined at a reasonably local and accessible station at a reasonable hour and got a good night's sleep. This is particularly useful for journeys beyond London as it makes possible a daylight journey the following day to a wide range of European destinations. I don't see later or earlier trains changing that appeal – although changes to the schedules of services to and across mainland Europe could affect that answer in future – but a service on Saturday night would obviate the need to stay in London for longer than is necessary for some journeys to London. In passing, given that Saturday is the traditional changeover day for self catering accommodation, I remain puzzled as to why overnight services to and from

tourist areas, and which serve a leisure market as well as a business market, can't be justified in the specification.

- The value of sleeper services to Inverness is to give a direct and high quality train service to London to which only the daytime Highland Chieftain can compare for quality and "journey integrity" (no missed connections). The personal benefits of that are set out in the foregoing bullet point but on a wider level this connectivity must be of benefit to the Highland economy. It is certainly the "correct" destination from a personal point of view.

- Present facilities are generally adequate for personal purposes. Facilities such as en suite accommodation are perhaps superfluous for what are relatively short journeys, in relatively uncrowded accommodation, in a relatively mild climate. If facilities such as en suite enabled higher revenue through growth and diversification of the market their consequent loss of capacity could perhaps be justified. My views on this matter are dominated by the feeling that overnight services in mainland Europe have responded better to changing market demands but that this has been made easier both by a more generous structure gauge and a bigger, more extensive network, and that the strategic direction of our overnight services, i.e. should it be an integral part of a more extensive network or remain isolated within the UK, should influence the provision of facilities.