

Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Title Mr *Please tick as appropriate*

Surname

Forename

2. Postal Address

6 Afton Dr.		
Renfrew		
PA4 0UN	0141 885 0069	frasermcdonald04@yahoo.co.uk

3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

☒

/

Group/Organisation

☐

Please tick as appropriate

- (a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate X ☐ Yes ☐

- (b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available ☒

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address ☐

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address ☐

- (c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate ☐ Yes ☐ No

- (d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

Y Yes

☐ No

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: Very few services in Scotland are going to break even. The Glasgow – Edinburgh service via Falkirk may be treated as commercial. The rest are a public service. The franchisee should state what he is going to do on each line to encourage more traffic. The approach will be different on different types of line. Even one rural line can be different from another. The Stranraer line is going to have to meet the needs of the people of Galloway now that Stena Sealink has abandoned it. On the other hand the West Highland has also to meet the needs of tourists who probably make up more than 50% of the traffic. WHL services carry much more traffic than the Stranraer line but have far fewer services. Should there be more? This line has won the Wanderlust Magazine “Greatest Railway Journey in the World” Award 3 years in succession. The Jacobite steam train is advertised as a visitor attraction by leaflets in hotels and visitor centres throughout Scotland and beyond. It fills 6 coaches all season. The ScotRail services on the lines, including Oban, as well as providing a local public transport service, need to be promoted in the same way as the Jacobite. A potential franchisee must show what he is going to do to exploit these unique railway lines. Scotland happens to be the country in the UK that has this award winning railway. A Scottish government must ensure it is exploited to its maximum. Any Scottish Government that does not do this should be ashamed.

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

Q2 comments: A long franchise will encourage the franchisee to invest. However there should be a get out clause for both sides. If the franchisee fails to deliver TS should have the right to cancel the franchise. In fairness if the operator finds economic circumstances are not as calculated he should be able to get out on a fixed penalty. A penalty is necessary to prevent operators making unrealistic bids and to be fair to unsuccessful bidders.

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

Q3 No comments:

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

Q4 No comments:

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

Q5 comments: If an open access operator can show he is willing to provide at his own risk a service not offered by the franchise he should be allowed to operate it subject to track capacity being available.

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

Q6 No comments:

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

Q7 No comments:

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

Q8 comments: The SQUIRE regime works well but does need some fine tuning. Otherwise the ultimate sanction is loss of the franchise.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Good performance is expected, poor performance 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: The system should be the same for the whole of Scotland. An over all result should be published along with a breakdown showing results on individual routes. A 90% satisfaction score over all is unhelpful to customers suffering a poor service on one particular route.

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

Q11 comments: The current performance regime works well but consideration should be given to making exceptions for running a train late. E.G. Should a train be delayed 10 mins at Oban to save customers from a late running ferry having to wait 5 hours, or even overnight for the next train.

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

Q12 comments: Planners should aim for the fastest possible journey times with only a small margin built in for recovery time. The idea that journey times are not important on rural routes is very far from the truth. Someone travelling from Dumfries to Glasgow on a cold dark winter's night for a hospital appointment in the morning just wants to get there as soon as possible.

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: SQUIRE is good and should cover all aspects of the customer experience.

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

Q14 No 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: Standing should not be planned to exceed 15 mins. E.G. on the busy Glasgow Paisley corridor where the train is standing room only to Paisley or Johnstone, before seats become available for all. Increasing capacity to seat all passengers between Glasgow and Paisley would be very expensive and not justified. Standing on the short Paisley Canal line at peak times might free a diesel unit for other longer distance services. It could help provide that much needed 4th daily train on the West Highland Lines.

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: Customers just do not like changing trains. They do not like having to carry heavy baggage through stations and on and off trains. If the first train runs a little late the customer suffers stress worrying he will miss his connection. The more changes required on a journey the more likely a customer is to choose some other mode of transport. A journey by car requires no changes. That is what RAIL has to compete with.

An exception could be a ring of bus to rail interchange stations round cities, allowing customers to make a quick change from bus or car to rail for the final

part of their journey into a city centre. There must be through ticketing at the same fare. Bus regulation may be required, but the bus congestion and pollution in Glasgow city centre cannot be allowed to go on.

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: A minimum level of service should be in the franchise. In the 21st century the West Highland Lines surely require more than 3 trains per day. Beyond that the holder should be encouraged to provide extra services at his own financial risk. The franchisee should be rewarded for cutting journey times.

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

Q18 comments: Service level should be contractual, but there should be flexibility to allow TS to pay for extra services to meet changing need during the term of a lengthy franchise or for the franchisee to provide an extra service at his own risk.

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

Q19 comments: There could be a free track access period for additional services. The trial Sunday excursion service from Edinburgh to Oban could offer a better fare if that were the case. This would bring great economic benefit to Oban.

There should be a reward for cutting journey times.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: It looks as if there is not a fare that customers would be willing to pay that would allow the railways in Scotland to make a profit. Therefore the fare structure must be set on getting as many travellers as possible to choose rail as their preferred mode. The core fare should be a walk on fare. A car driver just calculates the cost of fuel for his journey. He does not build overheads into his calculation. He does not have to order his fuel 6 weeks ahead on a non refundable basis if not used on a specified day at a specified time for a through journey. That is the competition. I do not think there is a need for a greater differential between peak and off peak fares. One questions the need for a peak and off peak differential on long distance services. If an operator notices some trains are very lightly loaded he can

offer specially discounted fares on these specific trains. Advance tickets with very heavy penalties for a change of plan can be counter productive. If a customer, for reasons beyond his control, has to change plans, or even just miss a train due to heavy traffic on the motorway delaying his taxi, feels he has been ripped off, he is likely to vow never to travel by train again. Remember you do not have to plan ahead to take your car. You cannot plan ahead to attend a funeral. At least a customer should be allowed to upgrade to a walk on fare for the difference plus a small admin charge, say £5.

There should be off peak single fares available at half the cost of an off peak return. It is ludicrous that a person travelling off peak one way should have to pay almost as much as a return fare.

All fare anomalies must be sorted out. The present operator promised to do this but has failed. The customer should be able to book a through ticket from any station in Scotland to any other station in Scotland (including connecting ferry and bus destinations) sure in the knowledge he is getting the cheapest possible fare for his through journey.

In Scotland very few people over 60 travel by train. Why should they pay for a journey they can do free on the road by bus and now even get free coffee and sandwiches included? This does not help Scotland meet its carbon targets.

The Senior Travel Scheme can easily be extended to off peak rail without any cost to the taxpayer. I understand the payment to bus operators is based on a discounted standard single fare. An off peak return by rail is about the same price as 2 standard singles by bus. If the same discount arrangement was implemented for the train operator to allow free travel for seniors, based on off peak fares, the cost to the taxpayer would be zero. This should be built in to the franchise.

As an aside, has anybody ever calculated the ongoing cost over 25 years of providing large subsidies to wind farms? What if we built one large coal fired power station to the most modern standards, electrified all the railways and made all public transport free. Would the carbon footprint be lower than depending on wind power and keeping lots of people travelling in cars? Would the total cost be less? The results would be interesting.

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: The government should set **maximum** fares of each type, the operator can then set **minimum** fares if he wishes.

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 travelling public are fed up seeing above inflation fare rises year upon year since privatisation. Add to that the abolition of the Super Saver and extension of peak hours on some services leaving only a very small window to use an off peak fare. Fares for some journeys have now doubled, but we are told this is not a fare increase, just a change to the terms and conditions of certain tickets. We are told every year fare increases are required for future investment. The future has come, but the service from Glasgow to Mallaig for example is exactly the same as it was pre privatisation. Where they can, customers are ready to vote with their feet. In these harsh economic times the railway needs to be like other businesses and have a fares freeze for a while.

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: The balance is about right. A differential on walk on fares is suitable for commuter routes only. There is no need for it on long distance services, though cheap fares on selected quiet trains could be offered.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: We must make the best use of the stations we have. If a station is hardly ever used and closure would cause no hardship, then perhaps it could be justified. On the other hand a new station could be built to meet a change in the population on a rail corridor or the setting up of a new business park or shopping centre. The concept that a station should close because it is within 1 mile of another is totally unacceptable. Paisley St. James serves the new St. Mirren Stadium, but because it is 1 mile from Paisley Gilmour St. it could be considered for closure. This station is just across the road from the stadium entrance. Its services encourage fans to travel to it by train from all over Scotland. If it were closed most would choose to take their car. At other times the station serves a deprived housing area with low car ownership.

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: If a local business is going to benefit from a new station it is only right they should contribute towards it. Stations should be built to serve places like Silverburn Shopping Centre or Ibrox Football Stadium. Braehead Shopping Centre has a track bed, but no railway. It has 100 buses per hour and 6,000 car parking spaces. The developer should have been required to

provide a railway or light rapid transit before planning permission was ever granted.

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: Where a station is used in near equal amounts by more than one operator it might be better to continue operating it by Network Rail.

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

Q27 comments: The ScotRail adoption scheme is working very well. Bottom line though is that the upkeep of the station is the responsibility of the operator.

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

Q28 comments: Answer seems obvious. Big busy stations need more facilities than very small stations.

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: Customers will desert the railway if they have to make more changes in their journey. Cross border services must continue north of Edinburgh. To benefit all customers they must run complimentary to the ScotRail timetable, not in competition. The Highlands lost the Virgin West Coast service because ScotRail decided to run an extra train to Inverness 10 minutes ahead of the Virgin train. A waste of taxpayers' money. This service should be reinstated with sensible timing.

Edinburgh/Glasgow to Manchester is a route that **can** beat the airlines on journey timing. It is so sad that it has been downgraded to a local stopping service with sub 125 mph trains, thus making it uncompetitive. I know 2 plane loads of business customers depart Glasgow every weekday morning for Manchester. If the railway offered just one non stop morning and evening service in both directions with breakfast facility, it would win almost all of this traffic. That represents about 1,600 passenger journeys per day at full business fare.

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 can see no benefits from concentrating all services into a hub at Edinburgh.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 No 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: It is just common sense that the longer the journey the more comfortable the train should be. Many short journeys of under one hour are provided by Class 170 stock, considered the highest class of unit operated by ScotRail. In contrast the longest journey is the 5 hours from Glasgow to Mallaig on the award winning scenic West Highland Line. This service is provided by Class 156 units, now considered to be the lowest quality stock used by ScotRail. These units still have old fashioned non retention toilets which often run out of water 2 hours into the journey. Only one toilet for every 2 coaches. The heating is inadequate for the cold conditions encountered on the WHL in winter. Many complaints have been made but nothing improves very much. Any Scottish Government should be ashamed that it allows such an icon to be treated so badly. The economic potential here is enormous. The line should have rolling stock that meets the following requirements

- Align seats to windows and provide a seating arrangement that allows all customers to view the scenery. Low window sills to let children see out.
- At least one toilet per coach is needed for the long journeys made by WHL trains. (Retention type toilets required.)
- Air conditioning
- Absolute minimum capacity of 3 cycles per coach as at present. The WHL serves Fort William, the Outdoor Capital of Britain.
- Adequate luggage facilities.

I would call this an AAAAA or 5A policy. If the cost of commissioning special trains for scenic routes is too high a good compromise would be existing class 170 trains with rearranged seating.

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: There are those who would say the best investment you can make for mobile phones on trains is to invest in special glass that would block out all mobile phone signals. Failing that one coach in 3 be fitted with the special glass and designated a **quiet coach**. A new regulation should be incorporated into railway bylaws and strictly enforced. For those who have to use a mobile phone some type of transmitting cable in tunnels and other poor reception areas would stop them getting cut off.

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: It would be up to the operator to offer first class incentives on trains where it is known first class accommodation will not be well used.

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

Q35 comments: This is one of the times rail travel scores over car travel. The ability to enjoy a drink on your journey. The problem is not drink, but unreasonable behaviour. Nobody expects conductors to put themselves at risk, but they should try to control unreasonable behaviour and be more ready to call the police at the next station to eject customers who continue to act unreasonably. Unreasonable just means anything that does not consider the experience of your fellow traveller. It could be as simple as talking too loud to the annoyance of others. The present alcohol bans could be extended somewhat. Most trains heading south from Dyce and Aberdeen would benefit from an alcohol ban.

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

Q36 comments: Just make sure the on line information is kept up to date and easily accessed. Restrict train announcements to really useful information. We do not need to be welcomed aboard at every wayside station, nor do we need to be reminded to take all our belongings. Rail customers are of average intelligence.

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 franchise should specify what sleeper services are required.

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: Caledonian Sleeper services should be specified in 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 sleeper train is the only form of transport that enables you to have a full night's sleep and be at your destination in time for the start of the working day. A "daytime" train that departs at around 4 a.m. is of little value to the business traveller who would like to be alert and awake throughout the working day. On the other hand a train that departs around 6 p.m. and arrives about 10 p.m. allows the traveller to be home in his own bed that same evening.
- Because of the longer daytime journey the Highland sleepers probably have a longer term future than the Lowland sleepers. The Fort William sleeper probably has the best future of all if properly marketed. It has an iconic appeal for optional travellers. Go to bed in the big smoke, waken up by mountain, moor and loch. Enjoy breakfast as you view the rivers and mountains. That sort of thing. It has to be well marketed (package deals including hotel and car hire) and be able to sustain a slack period through part of the winter. How many people in the Bearsden area of Glasgow realise there is a direct service from their local station at Westerton direct to the heart of London? With its ferry connections a sleeper to Oban may well attract more passengers than Fort William, but I would not introduce such a service at the expense of the latter. Many people have modelled their lives around the fact there is a direct sleeper to London. Always look after the regular customers you already have. As a tester perhaps customers could be charged the fare to Oban and offered a free taxi service from Upper Tyndrum.
- Ideally the money put up by the UK and Scottish Governments should upgrade the sleepers. I don't know how much a new sleeper fleet would cost, but it would be the preferred option. The younger generation of business traveller has come to expect higher standards.

The days of sharing a hotel room with your colleague and walking along the corridor to the toilet are over. Single rooms with en-suite facilities are the norm. Ideally the same should apply to sleeping cars if at all possible. It could be marketed as a single room service, but if you were willing to nominate a second customer to share your room then the second customer gets an 80% discount on the fare, or at least on the sleeper surcharge.

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: Biggest enhancement to the environment along lines operated by class 156 sprinters would be the introduction of retention toilets. A financial incentive could be offered to operators to do this.

Operators should try to stop diesel trains running over electrified lines. E.G could the few miles of single track from Corkerhill to Paisley Canal be cheaply electrified to enhance the environment and reduce running costs?