

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 ☒ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ *Please tick as appropriate*

Surname

Forename

2. Postal Address

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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 ☒ Yes ☐ No

- (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

☒ 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: An economic only franchise threatens the existence of socially necessary and desirable services. A social or fully specified franchise will not reward franchisee for service improvement or innovation. Profitable routes can be let under an economic franchise but within such a franchise there should be certain minimum specifications to meet social but uneconomic services for example early morning and late night and calling at lightly used stations.

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

Q2 comments: Franchises should be let for 7 to 10 years. A lesser period might discourage investment and development. A longer period might encourage a degree of complacency in what is effectively a monopoly service. The main argument for a longer period lies in investment but with the rolling stock being mostly already specified and matched to the franchise period through the leasing arrangements, the investment requirements and opportunities are relatively limited.

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: The franchise value should be established around a band

overall satisfactory performance. Above this band there should be a modest sliding scale of reward or bonus and below the band a sliding scale of penalty. It may be necessary to specify this band by and the scales by outcome measures. The reward/bonus scales should not be so large as to cause the franchisee to concentrate on only those aspects of the service which affect income whilst neglecting those which do not.

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: The franchise value should be established around a band of overall satisfactory performance. Above this band there should be a modest sliding scale of reward or bonus and below the band a sliding scale of penalty. It may be necessary to specify this band by and the scales by outcome measures. The reward/bonus scales should not be so large as to cause the franchisee to concentrate on only those aspects of the service which affect income whilst neglecting those which do not.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: The franchise value should be established around a band of overall satisfactory performance. Above this band there should be a modest sliding scale of reward or bonus and below the band a sliding scale of penalty. It may be necessary to specify this band by and the scales by outcome measures. The reward/bonus scales should not be so large as to cause the franchisee to concentrate on only those aspects of the service which affect income whilst neglecting those which do not.

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: Given that routes interact with each other, it may be inappropriate, complex or difficult to specify some targets by route. A single scheme covering the network, on the other hand, might lead to some routes being neglected whilst overall targets are achieved. Perhaps grouping may be a good compromise.

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

Q11 comments:

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

Q12 comments: In balancing journey times and reliability, account should be taken of service frequency and that of connecting journeys. A slow, late or cancelled service may not matter too much where there is a frequent service, say every 15 minutes, but can be much more problematic where there is a three hour gap between services, either on the late/cancelled service or a connecting service.

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: Generally speaking passengers expect and have a right to expect a seat. Families and other groups would also normally expect to sit together. In these circumstances it is unreasonable to expect trains to operate at 100% capacity. Efforts should be made to reduce or eliminate standing altogether.

Increasing use could also be made of seat reservations. This may be particularly relevant for service which for part of their route are rural and part busy commuter at peak times.

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: As a general rule passengers prefer through services from departure to destination. Able bodied passengers with a little luggage may not be too inconvenienced other than by longer journey times, however disabled passengers, passengers with luggage and/or young children are likely to be further deterred from travel. Lack of facilities including heated waiting rooms,

staff, toilets and catering at interchanges combined with platform changes and a general feeling of lack of security and comfort all need to be addressed. This would include taking account of extended waiting times due to delayed or cancelled services.

An alternative might be to consider greater use of joining and separating trains at junction stations.

Where stations transport intermodal interchanges are being developed, it is more than just a matter of publishing joint timetables. The timings of services need to be co-ordinated to ensure interchange times are not unduly long.

More difficult however is ensuring that passengers can complete their journey and complete it in reasonable time when one mode is delayed or cancelled. Admirable though it is for train franchisees to undertake to get you to your final rail destination, that doesn't solve the passenger's difficulty if the last bus has gone! Passengers need to have confidence that in the event of delay they will be able helped to their destination by someone.

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: For all routes a minimum number of daily services, by weekday, Saturday and Sunday should be established with earliest and latest service and maximum time between services should be determined by the Government with the franchisee able to enhance these as they see commercial opportunities.

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: Fares should be set at levels which encourage a move from other modes of transport (primarily road and air) towards rail taking into account the relative convenience of each.

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 fares should continue, broadly in line with current practice. Franchisees should be able to offer cheaper fares to encourage greater train use and higher fares where additional benefits can be offered. The franchise should include arrangements governing this and for revenue sharing between the Government and franchisee.

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: If fares are set to be competitive with other modes of transport, it is difficult to see how they can be increased beyond that "the market will bear" taking into account the improvement. Instead the investment should be regarded as protecting the current level of fare and potentially increasing passenger numbers.

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 present differential between peak and off-peak fares is possibly large enough to encourage existing passengers who see themselves as having a realistic choice of travel times to travel off peak. Instead perhaps increasing the number of off-peak services should be considered as a means of reducing peak loading. Perhaps carriages not required for off-peak services could be utilised for "infill" services. In this event shorter rural connections to hubs may be useful on the grounds that a service involving a change of train is an improvement on no service.

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: There can be few objections to third parties being able to propose, promote and fund a station or service subject to arrangements being

reached to ensure that the additional costs (less an attribution for the value to the community of the proposed service) fall on the third party and do not unreasonably interfere with other services. This probably would need to be settled on a case by case basis.

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: So long as track provision remains the responsibility of a third party, station responsibility should also be the responsibility of that third party i.e. NetworkRail. The NetworkRail Franchise should specify minimum standards for station facilities and maintenance with both the Franchisee and NetworkRail able to specify improvements and to be responsible for funding these.

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

Q27 comments: There should be a contractual requirement on the station operator to encourage community involvement either for individual stations or groups of stations. Supporting groups by offering a say in station facilities, services and a modest budget, perhaps on the basis of matched funding, may be a way forward.

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: Cross-border services benefit both passengers and communities. For the passenger there is a more convenient service. For the community there is easier access to and from English locations. Visitors, business and leisure are encouraged both to avoid road or air travel and in many cases to make the journey. Removing these direct services can also engender a feeling of isolation within communities. Rather than discontinue such services, perhaps the Government could work with Franchisees and the Department of Transport to acquire trains which can divide and join at Edinburgh to offer greater operational flexibility.

Services can only be specified jointly by both franchising organisations.

At the present time Lockerbie station is poorly serviced by the many cross-border services which pass through without stopping en route to Glasgow and Edinburgh, whilst many services are regularly delayed on the approach to Haymarket “awaiting a platform” There is also a need for morning trains to Glasgow and Edinburgh to enable both commuting and business travellers to travel timeously. The Government should negotiate improved services from existing franchisees through the Department of Transport or alternatively specify new services be included within the Scotrail Franchise.

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: Apart from what is an unquantified but presumably small financial cost, is hard to see any benefit from the proposed Edinburgh Hub. Edinburgh is already effectively in this position apart from a few cross-border trains.

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: Observation would suggest that the patchy mobile phone reception is a minor inconvenience and few passengers would benefit from continuous access. Perhaps the on-board information systems could be enhanced to advise when trains are within or outside areas of good reception. Observation would suggest that many and an increasing proportion of passengers would benefit from greater Wi-Fi availability. This applies to both business and leisure travellers. However to be usable there really needs to be access to a flat surface eg a table so Wi-Fi provision should really go hand in hand with increasing the availability of table facilities possibly to the detriment of carriage carrying capacity.

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: Alcohol should be banned from all services. It is not only the few services directly affected by sporting events where alcohol can be linked to unsocial behaviour. 50 or 60 passengers in a coach can have their journey disrupted by 2 or 3 "under the influence" Greater presence of Transport Police on trains should be considered.

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: Sleeper services should continue to be specified

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: The service should be a separately specified franchise. No objection to it being held by the same franchisee as the main Scotrail 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 appeal is that one travel's overnight reducing overall travel time. The main deterrents are outmoded train facilities, late departure from stations which are otherwise mostly closed, cold and unwelcoming and the requirement to vacate the train early in the morning before the peak period, again rather putting passengers "on the street" until London "wakes up"

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: