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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:

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:

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:

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 respect of the Aberdeen-Edinburgh and Glasgow services, journey times and average speeds compare unfavourably with the wider rail network. For example, a journey from Aberdeen to Exeter via Edinburgh Haymarket and Birmingham New St (the fastest available), yields sector times and average speeds of:

Aberdeen – Haymarket 2hrs 30min 48mph

Haymarket – Birmingham 3hrs 50min 76mph

Birmingham – Exeter 2hrs 30min 66 mph

Scheduled times between Aberdeen and Edinburgh are actually longer now than in the early 1980s. This has presumably been done in the name of increased reliability but is unacceptable if rail is to be an attractive alternative to flying or the private car.

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:

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: The Government should exert pressure on both the franchisee and Network Rail to lever improved journey times on Aberdeen – Edinburgh and Glasgow routes.

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: The East Coast Main Line (ECML) services between Aberdeen and London should continue. It would be perverse to discontinue these given that the UK Govt is procuring hybrid electric diesel drive trains for these and other services. They also offer competition to the Scotrail franchisee and offer far superior passenger comfort between Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Finally it is unacceptable for Aberdeen, Dundee and Inverness not to have a direct London service.

However provided that the ECML services are retained and hopefully speeded up, I would be comfortable with the Cross-Country services between Aberdeen, Dundee and SW England terminating at Edinburgh. In many cases these services do not offer the fastest journeys to the destinations served. Withdrawal would penalise those for whom a change-free journey is more important than journey time but this could be ameliorated by provision of more

on-platform assistance at Edinburgh Waverley.

Clearly a substantial proportion of the route mileage between London and Aberdeen/Inverness lies in Scotland so one would expect Scottish Ministers to be consulted on service specifications.

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: See Q29 above.

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: Scottish Ministers should continue to specify sleeper services.

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: A separate sleeper franchise would be relatively small and

runs the risk that the franchisee would lack either the willingness or strength to promote the sleeper service properly.

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 Highland sleeper is a very helpful option when a late evening departure is required, especially from London. The sleeper replaces a night's accommodation and avoids the need for an early start for the first flight of the day or an early day train. The Lowland service is perhaps less attractive given the introduction of the early morning Flying Scotsman services between Edinburgh and London.

However the greatest appeal of the Highland service is to tourists and especially to those seeking outdoor activities in the Highlands. In this respect the service should be promoted more strongly and internationally and it is interesting that it received much more coverage than normal in the national media after this consultation was launched with the suggestion that the service might be curtailed.

Given the economic importance of Aberdeen and the North East and the growth of Inverness it would seem perverse not to serve these destinations. Fort William should also be retained because of the unique access which this service provides to outdoor activities in remote areas.

Oban could be provided for very simply by arranging for an additional day train to connect with the sleeper at Crianlarich – avoiding several hours wait for a connection.

Finally I would find the sleeper a more attractive alternative if lounge facilities with shower/change facilities and possibly a light breakfast were made available to ALL passengers at main terminals. I believe that these are already available to first class passengers but would be happy to pay a supplement to have this facility.

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: