

**Ian Murray**

## **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?

I have only answered questions that I feel I am able to comment sensibly on. See specific questions answered below.

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

Min 3 years with 2 year options after that. Sufficient time to “bed in” and generate profit that can be reinvested.

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?

Financial penalties plus rigorous scrutiny of directors' bonuses and the ability to cancel these if appropriate.

### **Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

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

Both

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

Actual routes

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:

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?

Yes, particularly for on board passenger experience

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?

10-15 mins is acceptable.

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?

Better determined by franchisee but it needs an external regulator to allow for the social element/community need of services rather than just the financial.

18. What level of contract specification should we use 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?

Fares should only be increased in line with RPI or CPI (whichever is lower) and then not at all if level of profits is considered by the Regulator to be excessive.

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?

The current differences are just about acceptable and this does encourage off peak travel

## **Scottish stations**

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

Rather than close stations they could (in extremis) be unmanned such as certain Welsh stations are (ie you flag down the train).

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?

Possibly cleaner stations.

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?

Absolutely yes. Why on earth should services stop at Edinburgh, an already very busy and crowded station. You then have another fight to get a seat. Tough luck if you are elderly. The idea is to improve rail services not to make them worse. Frankly marginalising Fort William, Aberdeen and Inverness etc is insulting especially given the state of the roads in Scotland, particularly in Winter.

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?

This is a non starter.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Lease purchase. You can't really reduce the interior quality as a lot of the lines are rural and long distance.

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?

Quiet carriages should be included. I appreciate the business need but if you can't live without WiFi (and all the data security implications involved) for a few hours then it's a poor show.:

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?

Unfortunately the standard of behaviour on Scotrail trains wrf alcohol consumption is getting worse. And it's not just young people but middle aged people and girls as well. The language is dire and so is the behaviour. It is getting worse. You cannot expect the inspectors (some female) to control some of the brutish behaviour. And if the BT Police are called why should the train be held up, to the annoyance of all? Better that the unruly passengers should simply be immediately ejected by the BT police so that the train can move on.

The other issue is policing of any ban, as per above, it would need to be enforced with no alcohol being brought on board (as the offshore workers do in Newcastle when coming north to Aberdeen. Their behaviour can be pretty offensive towards women). Sadly I think a ban is needed..... except for the sleeper trains.

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

It's not bad at the moment. It is a fine balance between passenger announcements and repeated information which simply disturbs everybody.

### **Caledonian Sleeper**

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

Sleeper services are needed. They provide a useful service for business men and for people who prefer train rather than driving or flying long distance in the UK.

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?

An option.

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?

The services and timing are pretty good at the moment although extra services could be run during peak holiday periods. The facilities are fine although I accept that the rolling stock is getting old.

### **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: