

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

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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:

Railways were, are and always will be commercial and social. Although Scotland's rail network does indeed carry much 'commercial' freight traffic, so far as the passenger franchise is concerned, the railway's role is primarily social. Given that the Scotrail operation received a £1 billion public subsidy for the last franchise period, I fail to see why a franchise is even being considered. Clearly, the Scotrail passenger operation does not have 'commercial' potential in the conventional sense, as it is not actually profitable and therefore the only 'profits' which a franchise holder can make are actually the result of public subsidy. Scotrail's operation could most likely be carried out much more efficiently by means of direct operation by Transport Scotland. Even better would be more closely to integrate vertically Scotrail and Network Rail in Scotland, creating as unified a railway as possible, eliminating inefficiencies in line with the McNulty Review's recommendations. Unnecessary tiers of management would be removed and expense to the public purse would be minimised.

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

Q2 comments:

As above, the Scotrail passenger operation should not be a franchise, but instead there should be direct operation by Transport Scotland.

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

Q3 comments:

See above.

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

Q4 comments:

See above. It strikes me that any 'profit share mechanism' would require to be managed, incurring unnecessary costs, legal disputes and blame attribution processes.

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:

Through the most democratic and effective mode of accountability – direct operation by a company set up as an arm of Transport Scotland

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

Q7 comments:

See above

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

Q8 comments:

See above. Economic sanctions are not very effective – fining a subsidised operator merely circulates public money while accumulating legal fees at every stage.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments:

See above. Economic sanctions are not very effective – fining a subsidised operator merely circulates public money while accumulating legal fees at every stage. The railway should be directly operated and the reasons for any poor performance analysed and addressed in the most effective way – eg by local line upgrades, or mechanical improvements to trains where necessary or even better co-ordination with British Transport Police further to reduce crime on the railway at identified problem locations. Economic sanctions are crude and don't actually solve problems.

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:

There should be a single transparent performance regime.

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:

Journey times are part of performance.

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:

No – a directly operated railway with good management would not need this.

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:

Train capacity requirements fluctuate throughout the day and the present 10-minute standing time limit is utterly meaningless, unenforced and unenforceable. Acceptable standing times depend upon the nature of a journey, the age and mobility of the passengers and how much luggage they are carrying. On short duration commuter services, standing at rush-hour peaks may be hard to avoid, but on Intercity journeys, everyone should have the opportunity to have a seat reservation at busy times. The policy of DSB in Denmark in this regard is a model of good practice.

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:

The success of this depends on the ability of station infrastructure to cope. Key stations in Scotland, such as Edinburgh Waverley and Perth, have layouts inherited from 'pre-grouping' days when various private companies ran Scottish rail services and so they lack platform capacity enabling a direct transfer to be made from one train to another without crossing bridges, or walking considerable distances. In Germany, where most rail infrastructure is either of post-World War 2, or very recent, construction, train connections are easily effected.

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:

Not only should they direct this, Transport Scotland should control its execution by running Scotrail.

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

Q18 comments:

None – see above.

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

Q19 comments:

The best era for Scotrail was the 1980s period when Mr Chris Green was Managing Director. Although trains of the era were neither as fast or frequent as today, the quality improvement achieved by the locomotive-hauled 'Scotrail Express' trains with their comfortable Mark 3 coaches, was outstanding. Many initiatives were undertaken in response to demand. These initiatives provide a precedent for a good quality publicly-run railway. There should be no need for other incentivisation frameworks based purely on financial bonuses and penalties.

The record of First Group and National Express (who held the previous Scotrail franchise) is very poor on all the franchises they have operated. Service quality and the comfort of trains provided are invariably inferior to those run by British Rail (or, as in the case of Scotrail, continue to use significant amounts of arguably life-expired BR rolling stock. So far as I can

see, few UK rail franchises have produced significant service innovations – Chiltern and the open access operator Grand Central being notable English exceptions.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

Fares obviously need to balance the need to cover part of the railway's operating costs while enabling a broad cross-section of the public to travel at rates they find affordable and 'good value for money'. Given that the operating costs of the railways in the UK are reputedly around 30% higher than other networks in Northern Europe, controlling costs will have a direct and positive impact upon fares.

Again, I suggest looking to other North European railways. In most cases, 'turn up and go' railway tickets are priced by the kilometre at peak and off-peak rates whereas, here in the UK, fares seem to be based upon quite unfathomable and illogical criteria. Perhaps Denmark, Norway and Germany offer the best models for 'fair fares' which cover an adequate part of rail operating costs.

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:

Fares should be decided by the management of a publicly owned and accountable Scotrail, answering to Transport Scotland and hence the Scottish Government. There should be a common national fares policy, applying to all routes. 'Turn up and go' fares should be priced by the mile. Special promotional fares would be exempt from this unified framework. Rail fares need to be simple, logical easily understood and user-friendly. The present situation is a mess.

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:

Costs need to be brought under control at all levels to make the operation of Scotland's railways more affordable. Fares should be increased in line with inflation and no more. Fare revenue to pay for enhanced sections of the

network should be subsumed in the general fares policy. I note that between Airdrie and Bathgate, ridership is very low arguably due to fares being higher per mile on the re-opened line than on the existing Airdrie-Glasgow and Bathgate-Edinburgh sections. It is self-defeating to carry out enhancements and then to discourage ridership with higher fares.

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:

In this regard, First Scotrail have done very well with their 'Adopt A Station' policy. This should be supported and expanded.

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:

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:

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:

At present, I understand that the Scotrail train fleet, consisting of just under 300 train sets of between 2 and 4 coaches costs £86 million to lease per annum from the ROSCOs. Some trains are very new and other would sensibly be considered assets long written off. I calculate that the average annual lease cost per vehicle is around £100,000, whether it be an obsolescent Sprinter vehicle or a brand new Desiro vehicle.

I know that, in the bus industry, vehicles are leased directly from manufacturers, rather than through 'third party' leasing companies. I suggest that the most cost effective means of procurement would be a mix of leasing vehicles and a directly-operated Scotrail owning part of their fleet outright.

32. What facilities should be present on a train and to what extent should these facilities vary according to the route served?

Q32 comments:

Facilities require to vary considerably for three distinct types of operation:

1. Central belt commuter routes – ironically, at present, these already have some of the best trains in the country in the form of the Desiro and Juniper fleets. The Desiro type presently used on services from Glasgow Central would be equally suitable for a forthcoming electric fleet for Edinburgh-Glasgow services.
2. Long-distance Inter-city routes from Glasgow/Edinburgh to Aberdeen and possibly Inverness. The present Turbostar fleet is inadequate for these services, which require more substantial and comfortable trains with a higher quality of passenger ambience, more space for cycles and perhaps a buffet area. Turbostars are suited only for routes of around an hour's duration.
3. Scenic routes, such as the West Highland Line, the Far North Line and

possible Glasgow/Edinburgh to Inverness. The present class 156 and 158 Sprinter fleets are very far from adequate, being cramped, stuffy, vibrating and noisy – as well as run-down and grotty. A new generation of high quality tourist-orientated multiple-unit train is needed for these routes with large windows, quiet engines and plenty space for cycles and outdoors sports gear. (I note with dismay that the ROSCOs are considering life-extending the Sprinter fleet – but their concern is to sweat assets for profits, not passenger comfort and enjoyment).

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:

This is probably not crucial given the short duration of most Scotrail routes. More useful would be better seats and tables and the provision of plug sockets at all seats to enable travellers to use lap-top computers comfortably and effectively.

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:

DSB in Denmark has a similar type of seat throughout its Inter-city trains, meaning that Standard sections can easily be converted to First on peak business-orientated trains. This enables optimal use of capacity. Incidentally, Scotrail's First compartments are invariably over the leading bogies, meaning that they are actually less comfortable than Standard anyway.

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

Q35 comments:

Just as on aircraft, it should be forbidden to consume one's own alcohol on trains. Alcoholic drinks from the trolley should be sold at the discretion of the steward.

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:

There should be a UK-wide sleeper franchise covering all overnight services. These are so different in scope and character from conventional Scotrail operations as to make this a sensible development. Sleepers should not form part of Scotrail's remit.

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:

See above

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:

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:

All trains should have retention toilets (the raw excrement dumped in stations by Sprinters is revolting and surely a risk to health – another reason for getting rid of classes 156 and 158 at the earliest opportunity).

New diesel trains should be of the most effective construction and have the most fuel efficient engines.

Network Rail should tidy up the expanses of dereliction around Perth and at other locations in Scotland.

There should be a national policy on station architecture and the design of

railway infrastructure to improve the current messy and random approach to the design of stanchions, lamp posts, bins, benches and other items. A sense of unity and order is badly needed to enhance the environmental quality of the railways as experienced by customers.