

**PLAINS COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Response to Rail 2014 Consultation Document**

**February 2012**

## **TRANSPORT SCOTLAND**

## **RAIL 2014--PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The first few pages of this collation of the consultation document ie Sections 1 and 2 simply provide info to set the scene / background of the current Scottish network rail system . There are no questionnaire responses to these sections but they are useful as an aid to understanding and completing the questionnaire.

Franchise / funding for the rail network manager (Network Rail) and the service provider (ScotRail) ends in 2014 when a new specification and franchise / contract will become due.

The consultation focuses on rail passenger services since there was a consultation on rail freight services in 2009. Both will be used to inform ministerial decisions on how they will specify and fund the train services and infrastructure of the future railway.

### **SECTION 1--Rail in Scotland**

#### **Current Situation**

The rail network is a mixed-use railway--both passenger and freight. There are 2800 Km of track and 350 stations. There has been a 25% growth in demand for ScotRail services in the last 7 years and this growth in demand is expected to continue especially in the Glasgow and Edinburgh conurbations but also outside the Central Belt. 64% of passenger journeys made in Scotland are made in the Strathclyde area, one of the greatest used rail networks in the UK outside of London.

Under the Railways Act, Scottish Ministers are responsible for specifying and funding the rail network in Scotland . They--

- a. specify and contract for rail passenger services ( currently provided by ScotRail)
- b.fund maintenance,renewal and investment activities of Network Rail within Scotland BUT

Primary legislation dealing with the provision and regulation of railways is mainly the reserve of the Westminster Parliament. That is why the Scottish Government cannot own and solely manage a Scottish rail network.

#### **Some interesting facts**

- a. Network Rail owns all public track in Scotland--they hold the position of Manager of the rail network.
- b.Network Rail also OWN all stations in Scotland---except station at Edinburgh Airport-. But. the only stations MANAGED managed by NR are Glasgow Central and

Edinburgh Waverley.

c. NR have contracted agreements with train operating companies for the use of tracks, stations, and depots and lease all other stations to the company contracted (the franchisee) by the Scottish Government (presently First ScotRail Ltd)

d. This franchisee then leases trains from Rolling Stock leasing companies and provides rail passenger services. e. Rail passenger services within Scotland (mostly ScotRail) are specified / regulated and subsidised by the Scottish Government

The cost of funding by the Scottish Government in 2011/2012 was £700 million. Main costs were-

a. New infrastructure managed by NR, including major new projects eg new Glas / Edin line.

b. Subsidising / funding rail passenger services by First ScotRail Ltd.

The taxpayers' contribution was £259 million----26% of total cost.

The main priority of the Government in the provision of rail services from 2014 is that it "best meets the needs of the Scottish economy, businesses, passengers and communities against a BACKDROP OF DECREASING BUDGETS in a time of economic austerity.

#### Other official bodies with an input into the process--

a. The Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)---is an independent economic and safety regulator for Britain's railways. It regulates and monitors Network Rail's activities and funding. Scottish Ministers can however issue guidance on how ORR carries out its duties in Scotland.

b. Passenger Focus (PF)--- is a passenger rights ombudsman. They do passenger surveys twice a year.

#### **SECTION 2--Transport Policy and Structural Developments---Procuring Rail Passenger Transport.**

Government Economic Strategy (GES)

Government believe that improved rail transport is the key to economic growth in Scotland. There are 3 major (investment priorities---

a. Edin to Glas rail improvements (EGIP) --Airdrie to Bathgate line--still ongoing ??---would allow.

b. Highland Mainline---Perth to Inverness improvements.

c. Aberdeen to Inverness improvements.

These 3 projects are aimed at enabling both improved passenger services and movement of freight BUT the Government feels that there needs to be a balance in favour of passenger service in a mixed-use service with only a finite amount of capacity which will not allow both to operate to maximum capacity

The funding for this ambitious plan is via The Scottish Government's Investment Programme (IIP) with a medium to longterm completion date.

IIP examines choices and options for the Government to consider the way forward and funding options. The plan will be reviewed in the coming weeks, and along with the Consultation 2014 responses, will result in a Government High Level Output Specification for Network Rail for the period 2014-2019 and for the

contracting of future passenger rail services.

Network Rail has also recently undertaken an internal restructuring. Responsibility for its Scottish operations has moved to a Route Managing Director based in Scotland. This decentralisation seeks to give more power, responsibility and accountability to Scotland. This should help to align Network Rail more closely to the needs of its customers in Scotland and assist greater operational integration of activities between Network Rail and the rail passenger service operators.

### **SECTION 3--Procuring Rail Passenger Services**

There is no statutory limit on the number of franchises/contracts the Government can award but the Government is advocating a single franchise of multiple service specification. This would allow Government to define services where there is a social need but also allow the franchisee to determine/ develop service needs of the more commercial inter-city and commuter networks. If this approach is taken the ScotRail franchise would be operated on 2 managed units

#### **1. Economic Rail**

Here the commercial risk will be borne by the train operator. Inter-city routes and some commuter routes fall into this category.

#### **2. Social Rail**

This would be for the provision of rail services to achieve social objectives such as economic and social stability in a particular locality, or to assist with regeneration. These services would be distinctly managed for a fee in accordance with the social objectives necessary to address local circumstances. There would be greater community involvement in the specification of services and the ability to support the gap between revenue and subsidy. Most rural lines are likely to fall into this category.

The Government clearly favours a single franchise with this dual focus approach. But while the Govt expects different managing and reporting info from both sides of this dual focus franchise they adamantly do not want 2 distinct/separate rail networks believing that one operative franchisee (ScotRail) will be able to maximise opportunities for progress in both economic and social networks incorporating the best private sector attributes with a public sector ethos.

### **ANSWER QUESTION 1**

**I agree with the single dual-focus franchise but concerned as to whether the social aspect will be given full weight when it comes to a station for Plains.**

### **Contracts /Franchises**

The current length of contract is 5 years. the rail infrastructure is managed by Network Rail who work within 5 year contracts (control periods). NR assumes responsibility for managing and monitoring the ScotRail franchise.

Some train operating companies who might apply for the franchise want the 5 year period extended. There is no evidence given the fragile state of the economy that this will benefit either the Govt or the involved companies.

The Government's stance is that in this unstable economic climate, shorter contracts will encourage keeping a closer eye on the market and will encourage

more companies to apply for franchise making application a much more competitive process among suitable potential contractors.

Also, other mechanisms could be built into a short contract such as making allowance for residual asset value to encourage investment from the franchisee. The Government also feels that a shorter contract is the best option given the possible/probable significant changes in Scottish industry and the Scottish Constitution in the coming years.

#### **ANSWER QUESTION 2**

**I agree with a short term contract because the reasons given for it are sensible and acceptable**

#### **Revenue Risk**

Under the franchise the revenue risk is the franchisee's eg if revenue from fares is not as high as expected, the franchisee takes the loss, not the Government. But suggestion from Government that since franchisee has no control over downturn in the GDP/economy, it is perhaps a bit unfair that they absorb the full financial impact.

The Government is therefore considering some "risk support" in such circumstances. However, since any such support might put an additional financial burden on the taxpayer, the choice of franchisee may be based on the level of risk they're prepared to take.

If risk support was to be given, appropriate mechanisms would need to be put in place in the franchise specification and any decisions would have to be linked to the requirements of performance bonds or parent company guarantees.

#### **ANSWER QUESTION 3**

**There seems to be as much to be lost as gained by risk support but if anyone is to lose because of default by the operator it should be the operator who was willing to take the risk in the first place, and not the taxpayer, the majority of whom, like myself, know nothing about these things. It is down to the Govt to make these decisions with minimum risk to the taxpayer.**

#### **Profit share mechanisms in Contract**

These mechanisms lie in the careful framing of the contract by the Govt. In the contract the Govt can specify how the franchisee is to be rewarded for the provision of services. This could be a one off fee or by taking a share of the profit, See 3.10 to 3.12 of document.

If the increased profits of the franchisee are due to economic growth rather than solely the result of good management by the franchisee, the Govt is keen to ensure that the taxpayer benefits from this and so proposes that part of the contract specification is that the franchisee provides details of causes of profit growth. The Govt may also look for a profit share system from profits generated by franchise to be specified in the contract.

#### **ANSWER QUESTION 4**

**Again, I can't comment on the type of reward given to the operator by the Govt but do think that taxpayers should benefit from any additional profit as a result of economic growth.**

### **Third Party Funding**

Third party funding involvement could fund / enhance rail services. Government proposes that any such involvement should only be for a short period of time. Success could be judged at the end of this period and further funding be invited or not.

The Government would welcome any such additional funding from interested parties in a hugely costly development plan but only on its short term conditions.

### **ANSWER QUESTION 5**

**I agree with Govt's stance here. Short term contracts avoid the financial risk of ongoing default.**

Many train operators complain that the specified Government demands of the franchise are too restrictive---the Government specifies the amount of trains, journey times carrying capacity etc, etc. Operators want more say in such decisions.

The Government thinks that the new contract has to be designed both to incentivise the franchisee to earn revenue as well as adhering to the binding specified contractual service measures such as quality stations and trains, good customer service as well as addressing issues such as overcrowding and punctuality.

The Government wants a more outcome based approach to the franchise which has to be clearly specified to potential franchisees who would then be expected to provide the Government with OVERALL outcome costs which they will be bound by, rather than the costs of specific inputs which tend to change over time. The Govt therefore have to determine the KEY outputs required from the franchisee. Since improved passenger services is a priority with the Govt, they are considering a mix of passenger satisfaction measures as outcome specifications.

This approach will focus the franchisee on delivering these outcomes and therefore give the Govt value for money. The Govt therefore need to design a contract which incentivises a The Government seem clear on what they are aiming for here but offer no suggestions on how to do it and neither can franchisee to earn money against a set of contractually binding service measures. By focussing on outcomes the Govt expect the franchisee to innovate to deliver efficiency improvements thereby reducing the cost of rail services and the level of Govt subsidy required.

### **ANSWER QUESTION 6**

**The Govt don't offer any suggestions for consideration here and neither can I.**  
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### **Performance bonds and parent company guarantees**

These are provided to franchisee by commercial bond providers or the owning company. They seek to address risk and involve substantial sums.

The Government feels that if the risk of default on a contract involves substantial financial sums, on the one hand. this will perhaps deter unsuitable

companies from bidding for a franchise and consequently protect the interests of the taxpayer.

The Government therefore must consider whether or not to continue with bonds / guarantees or consider other mechanisms or sanctions to avoid the risk of defaulting on the franchise.

Currently the franchisee is required to hold performance bonds to reassure the Govt that franchisee fulfils its commitments. The franchisee pays a premium to the bond provider based on risk. The Govt currently pay the franchisee enough to cover the premium as part of the overall Govt franchise payment. If the franchisee defaults, the Govt can then call on the amount of bond to re-franchise.

Parental Company Guarantees are contracts to put additional money into failing franchisee to prevent default on the franchise.

If the bond/guarantee market and the Govt respectively set the bond/guarantee too high, then it might deter companies from bidding for the franchise or to ask for larger subsidies. High performance bond levels could also prevent or discourage bidders such as mutuals or co-operatives BUT if the Govt set the bonds/guarantees too low, the taxpayer is then at risk if the franchisee defaults.

The Govt's aim therefore is to ensure that the risk of default does not either add substantial cost to the bid or prevent bidding, but also to ensure the interests of the taxpayer.

#### **Answer Questions 7&8**

Again it is outwith my knowledge to give any informed views on these issues. They are issues for Govt experts to solve, again making the interests of the taxpayer a priority.

#### **SECTION 4 Achieving Reliability, Performance, and Service Quality.**

This section, along with section 5, are shorter , easier to understand and the questions easier to answer, so I have just collated the section as one piece rather than in sections.

Top priorities for the Government are reliability and punctuality, This requires co-ordination across the rail industry in Scotland, particularly between the train operating companies (ScotRail) and the infrastructure managing company (Network Rail). The impact of delays, cancellations etc not only adversely affects passengers, but also social and economic costs.

#### **Current Performance Regime**

1. Service Quality Incentive Regime (SQUIRE) . Regulates quality performance.
2. Performance Incentive Payments (PIP) for good performance.
3. A minimum level of performance is set out in the contract and penalties are imposed if it not met eg if a freight train is late the company responsible ie the train operator or Network Rail, that company has to pay penalties to the companies / businesses affected.
4. The Public Performance Measurement (PPM) . This was established in 1997 to measure reliability and punctuality. It is used by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) as one of its Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for regulating Network Rail and is included in the Government Specification to NR for its outputs.

The Scottish Government is considering changing its PPM target from 2014 for the new 5 year control period of the next franchise.

The argument for changing it--shorter journey times increase patronage BUT a new specification giving priority to reliability / punctuality would involve timetable adjustments to increase the time of journeys to achieve punctuality. This might result in a reduction in the number of train services provided. The question is down to preference--journey time or reliability ?

5. Passengers' Charter---Each train operator has a Passenger Charter which is part of the licence conditions as set by ORR. The operator's commitments to customers is set out in this Charter, including compensation arrangements for delay / cancellation, but there is no compensation for this in extenuating circumstances such as extreme weather.

6. Passenger Focus--this organisation carries out passenger surveys twice a year.

**The Scottish Government wants to simplify the performance regime, They are considering---**

1. Doing away with rewards for good performance, and only penalising poor performance.

2. A more stringent definition of lateness---anything outside the published timetable.

3. Whether performance should be measured by individual routes, taking into account particular difficulties, or by individual service groups---the current ScotRail Charter has 7 service groups, including the Highland Service, and targets for punctuality differ among groups.

4. Whether the current Passenger Charter system fully represents passenger interests eg a delay is often only taken as a delay on the final destination of the train and not at intermediate stops.

5. The fact that the Charter does not differentiate between commuter or rural/tourist service. Therefore the number of passengers inconvenienced is not taken into account and therefore does not accurately reflect the economic and/or social cost of the delay.

6. Whether or not the Quality Performance regulated by SQUIRE is too harsh on the operating companies. Currently it only targets ScotRail---Network Rail is not accountable. It is one of the most rigorous monitoring regimes in the UK. Every ScotRail station and approx 200 trains are audited every 4 weeks. 36 aspects are audited ranging from graffiti, toilets to train cleanliness, timetables and public address system.

7. Whether the Passenger Focus surveys can adequately address/ serve the needs of passengers. Approx. 1000 people across the rail network are surveyed twice a year. The Scottish rail network is huge. The Government therefore feels that such surveys are of some use in identifying trends over time BUT not as a detailed measure of current ongoing quality, or lack of.

#### **Changes being considered by the Scottish Government---**

1. Maintenance of stations can be split between both the train operating companies and Network Rail to facilitate meeting the rigorous requirements of SQUIRE.

2. Developing SQUIRE but focusing on identified key priorities.



3. Keeping developing Passenger Focus to more accurately reflect current ongoing quality. or lack of.
4. Establishing quality self-monitoring systems run by the franchisee.

#### **ANSWER QUESTIONS 9---14**

9. I think good performance has to be incentivised as well as penalising poor performance. If you don't it will discourage franchisee from priority concerns about performing to potential. Govt might recoup some of the cost on poor performance penalties but the franchisee could set its targets above poor performance levels and not be penalised and the result would be a rail network that was not as good/efficient as it could be.

10. Yes to alignment with actual routes and service groups and no to one performance regime for the whole of Scotland. Rail network in Scotland huge and lines very disparate/ diverse--- many lines present specific difficulties and have different service requirements and distinct requirements in terms of whether profit/revenue or social/economic/tourism is the main priority.

11. Develop current inadequate Passenger Charter to more acceptably address ongoing passenger issues---Network Rail should be made more accountable in addressing issues and Passenger Focus surveys need to be much more extensive to accurately reflect present and ongoing problems.

12. Journey times could be lengthened to achieve reliability/punctuality depending on the forecast for loss of revenue due to loss of patronage or reduced train services.

13. Many train operating companies, rightly in my opinion, find this regime too demanding and rigorous and key issues for a better performing rail network seem to get lost as service operators try to meet the multiple demands of SQUIRE. In the franchise the Govt need to specify KEY priorities for SQUIRE to cover, thus allowing franchisee to focus on attaining Govt priorities. And ,yet again, Network Rail should be given and accept some accountability for the standard of the stations they, in fact, own.

14. As in previous question Network Rail should be held more accountable for station quality. Establishing quality self -monitoring systems by the chosen franchisee as a specification by the Govt and assessed by the Govt in terms of its quality.

#### **SECTION 5---Scottish Train Services**

Capacity Issues---Overcrowding at peak periods, particularly in urban areas. Under capacity patronage in off-peak periods, especially on rural lines. The Scottish Government is eager to specify criteria to the new franchisee in order to determine what rail services criteria are required for the 2014 franchise in order to address---

1. Maximising growth and expansion on routes where revenue generation potential is highest.
2. Making better use of the rail network in off-peak periods on rural lines.
3. Encouraging a modal shift to rail travel on routes where revenue does not cover costs but where the Government is keen to meet wider policy aims. (social,

economic, regeneration)

### **Fares--Key issue**

Fares must be competitive with other forms of transport BUT the rail network needs to remain financially sustainable for the Scottish Government. Currently ScotRail passenger revenue only provides a quarter of the total costs of the provision of ScotRail services in SCOTLAND.

### **Carrying Capacity**

On busy inter-city commuter lines overcrowding at times is as high as 130% of carrying capacity This is at odds with the current regulation of a maximum 10 minutes standing time. Possible solutions revising timetables or lengthening trains but these options are very costly. Government are considering setting a rule for carrying capacity, possibly 105% BUT this would inconvenience passengers on busy lines at peak times. More or longer trains would be necessary to accommodate a regulated reduction in carrying capacity.

On a large part of the network patronage is very low during off-peak periods and the cost of running a nearly empty train is almost the same as running a full to capacity train. The Government feels it needs to consider other ways of generating /sustaining increased patronage or whether such services offer any value for money at all to the taxpayer.

There is a current on the number of train services to be provided but for the new 2014 franchise, the Scottish Government is considering new criteria to determine---

1. What rail services are required.
2. What services are to be specified in the new franchise, and therefore subsidised as required.

### **Journey Times and Frequency**

The current emphasis is on improving journey times and connections but these are only of most importance to particular types of service eg commuter services as opposed to tourist services.

The Government wants the new franchisee 2014 to devise a suitable timetable to address passenger needs according to a specified limited service criteria set by the Government, including a minimum number of daily services, carrying capacity limit, period of day covered by services among other criteria. However the Government concedes that the provision of services by the franchisee will depend on passenger demand, rolling stock available and customer service considerations.

Services would also depend on whether the service is to address either the economic or the social aspect of a dual-focus franchise.

### **Interconnectivity (buses, ferries)---**little said about this in this section.

### **Interchange Stations**

13% of Scottish stations are interchange stations. The Government proposes to create greater efficiency in the use of interchange stations through the more efficient deployment of staff and rolling stock.

Some longer distance services could be replaced by route interchanging services. However the Government needs to consider that many passengers might not like

having to add another "leg" on to their journey and Government also needs to address implications for rolling stock and train staffing.

The Government feels that the franchisee is best placed to make such decisions but also feels that the franchisee must be able to accompany such decisions with a guarantee of such things as attractive service to customers and competitive journey times compared to other modes of transport.

### **Levels of Contract Specification**

There are 3 options for the Government's future specification for the new contract/franchise----

#### **1. Minimum Specification.**

Where the franchisee will have the freedom to make commercial decisions to run additional services to meet demand.

#### **2. Full Specification**

This will be very limiting to the franchisee and might deter competitive bidding for the franchise.

#### **3. Targetted Specification**

There will be minimum specification by the Government to the franchisee for the busiest and most profitable routes, but fuller specification for less busy lines eg the Far North where the aims of the Government are to improve social inclusion and employment opportunities and tourism. Such fuller specification would be heavily subsidised by the Government (taxpayer?) .

The Government favour Targetted Specification for two priority reasons---

1. To maximise growth and expansion on the routes where revenue generation potential is highest.
2. The Government also wants to continue to encourage a modal shift to rail travel in those parts of Scotland where the revenue on the routes does not cover costs but where there are wider policy aims to be met.

The Government are currently considering what incentives should be incorporated within the specification to encourage innovation by a franchisee and welcomes views on this. ( give no views of their own )

### **ANSWER QUESTIONS 15---19**

15. Better use could be made of existing train capacity by extending the present limit of 10 minutes on busy overcrowded commuter lines at peak periods but it hardly makes train travel an attractive prospect. I think longer trains is a better answer to the problem. Some people might find standing for overlong periods of time stressful eg if they have physical or mental health problems and this would involve health and safety issues.

16. Yes. if it is going to be cost effective. Also if it is currently underused, this would bring in additional revenue and reduce Govt subsidisation. However many people would consider this an inconvenience compared to a direct route service. The challenges are the provision of rolling stock and the efficient deployment of staff to do this.

17. Franchisee would be better placed to determine services needed and journey time based on customer demand, but only on busy commuter lines, but they would also have to meet Govt's minimum specifications.

18. Targetted Specification because it would maximise growth and expansion of the busiest and most profitable routes. It would also encourage a shift to rail travel on routes where revenue is poor but where there are wider social aims.

19. I have no idea. If the Govt can't suggest anything, how can I ?

#### Question 20

Simplification of the Rail Fare Structure is imperative if passengers are not to shift modes of travel. Recent Media stories report that passengers have discovered that they did not get the cheapest fares when travelling on routes that necessitate multiple change of trains. This is due to lack of information from Train Companies, station staff - where available, online - site information and an over complicated ticket structure. There should be a basic premise that cheapest tickets should be a basic service. There should be no anomalies present in the Rail organisation system and best value for money should be guaranteed. Only when this happens will more passengers be encouraged to change to Rail Travel

#### Question 21

Regulated and unregulated Fares systems should continue in the manner that they currently do - according to details set out under 6.5 - to 6 . .9. The Franchisee should continue to set Fares on a Commercial basis for reasons laid out under sections 6.10 -to 6.13 and proposals under 6-12 - to 6.13 should be implemented, also for reasons stated. Regulation should be extended to include Edinburgh to Glasgow Routes in order to maximise results of recent investigations. Franchisees must be given the incentive of having some Fares unregulated thus allowing them to develop innovative offers which should increase rail usage on lighter used services during quieter periods of the week. Commercial freedom for operators to use different strategies to attract more passengers onto urban routes should prove to be more efficient than the current blanket regulation within the Strathclyde area at present.

#### Question 22

The balance between revenue and subsidy must be redressed. Subsidy must decrease, or stay stable at 27% as at 20.11., and Revenue increase. Demand has to grow in order that revenue increases. It seems sensible to apply higher fares in those sections of track that have seen significant enhancement. 2012's January increase of 6% will not be sufficient when compared with level of fuel increases of 15.8%. Decisions over use of RPI as opposed to CPI should come down on the side of greater Revenue. Those passengers enjoying enhanced facilities, should pay higher fares.

#### Question 23

Differential levels between Off Peak and Peak times Fares must be increased to at least 20% , if more passengers are to be encouraged to travel during off peak times. This will free capacity during peak time travel. This Third Level layer of pricing should be successful in attracting passengers to shift from the high peak period, where services are overcrowded, to the edges of the peak period where there is often spare capacity. Although this may cause some confusion in the pricing system, passengers would be attracted by the thought

of cheaper tickets aligned with less crowded conditions. A rethink should be applied to introducing this type of shoulder- pncmg.

#### Question 24

When determining what and where New Rail Stations are required and which Stations are to be closed, certain factors have to be carefully weighed up. Is the Station well positioned, and designed, does it allow for connections to other modes of transport, does it provide the facilities which passengers require, is it allowing the fulfilment of all Company Aims and Objectives and not just those of a financial nature? These, and many other considerations have to be evaluated. When evaluating there are many Company objectives to be looked at -for example a balance has to be struck between providing economic and social benefits for the local area and the effects of increasing journey times for existing services on the considered route. Ordinary people would not mind a extra 2 minute stop at a new rural station when considering the provision of the social and economic benefits to that rural community .When N R are considering the location of stations that could offer the greatest benefits to Scotland, they must remember that Scotland is comprised of all of its people, living in rural and urban settings. Similarly, when considering the Glasgow ommuter area with 11 stations located within I mile of each other, these stations are highly utilised as this is one of the most highly populated areas in Scotland and contains a high number ofN R's patrons and are not all staffed .. The consultation Document gives figures for Lease Costs but does not give similar Revenue figures. It is to be hoped that whilst carrying out the STAG appraisal, and other investigations, that these considerations will be given equal weighting and the fact that all passengers should be equally valued with no extra weighting awarded to , for example, business passengers.

#### Question 25

When considering the merits or demerits of Third Party Funding, the most important one is why these merits/demerits would be considered at all by the Franchisee? Would it be purely to increase Revenue? It does not seem likely, that in these Austere Financial Times with no likelihood of imminent change" that any Local Authority would be in a position of being able to fund and maintain its own new Rail Station. This argument would also hold good for Local Businesses. The latest nation wide figures for the Economy predict a 'double dip recession' with a 0.2% fall in growth. This would not be a propitious time for Businesses and Companies of any type to experiment with any new business ventures. Scot Rail's encouragement of local groups to become involved in supporting its local Station through its 'Adopt a Station' scheme is all very nice as a pastime for local people, senior citizens or local gardening / allotment groups, and possible others ,but cannot be seriously considered as a financially viable venture. No details have been provided of any possible financial rewards for those becoming involved? People may like the sound of being involved in such a venture and would enjoy doing so but the reality is that almost all of them are too busy worrying about the Economy and estimating how they will manage to pay their ever-rising, Energy Bills, to be in a position of taking such a venture seriously. Third Party Funding would add yet another layer to an, already complex management structure and may prove to add to the already - present unwieldiness of the Scottish Rail network. As such it would not prove to be a viable proposition.

#### Question 26

Network Rail should be solely responsible for the Management and Maintenance

of Stations so that equal quality across all Stations is preserved and that no inconsistencies occur. Franchisee cannot be expected to lease those parts of the Station which they do not require. The bring in of a Third Party would be ill advised. Network Rail as owner of the Station will be best placed to manage and maintain its own Stations.

#### Question 27

To encourage Local Communities to support their local station, the approach of offering incentives could be taken. Community Benefits could be shared with Local Community Groups such as Church Groups, and ,Environmental, Self Help, Health" Village Enhancement and any other group operating within the Station locale. The idea of 'Stations Community Regeneration' is excellent but presumably would be for larger, urban Stations. Please refer to answer to Question 25

#### Question 28

When considering how to categorise Stations thought should be given to the relative size and current situation of individual Stations and to the type of rail passenger services that utilise the station. The following quote is self explanatory.

7.26 :

" This Categorisation will then determine what facilities are available at the station, and stations which are more than one type will require the facilities of an of those types."

This is sensible and simple concept for rail users to understand and should prove to be entirely acceptable to all.

#### Question 29

Yes. Cross-border services should continue to go north of Edinburgh. In operating cross-border services alongside ScotRail services, the benefits would include financial gain on the part of ScotRail gaining larger subsidies.. The taxpayer would benefit from having to contribute less money as the subsidies would be larger. Passengers would benefit from enhanced services due to ScotRail being able to have a direct role in the Specifications of services. The Scottish Ministers should specify these services.

#### Question 30

Scottish Ministers should begin discussions with Dff immediately to gain their agreement for an Edinburgh Hub Interchange. The strategy of making Edinburgh Waverley into a 'Hub Interchange' for Cross Border services is a sound idea. Scot Rail should become the sole provider of all of the cross- border services North of Edinburgh, thus regaining the finance currently lost to other providers who currently operate various elements of this service ( Virgin, First TransPennine, Cross Country Trains and East Coast Trains) Franchise Specifications should be drawn up forthwith for issuing to potential franchise bidders. The benefits of The Hub would be: Resilience, Control, Simplicity and

Finance. These benefits should be well advertised to current passengers so as to retain their loyalty.

#### Question 31.

One alternative strategy regarding reducing the cost of purchasing new vehicles, or refurbishing the current rolling stock, could be to transfer the decision to the franchise bidders thus they would then determine the rolling stock strategy and the associated costs could then be incorporated within the 2014 franchise commitment

#### Question 32

Number one Priority, identified by Passengers, is that they should be able to obtain a comfortable seat on each and every journey which they undertake. Strategies in use to attain this objective should include increased use of, sometimes permanently, train Lengthening, especially on those journeys which are always heavily subscribed, usually during Peak times. Other facilities, as outlined on Franchise Specifications, -ease of boarding and alighting from train, controlled on-board temperature, general cleanliness, and safety in standing areas, should be a standard part of provision on all rail journeys and should be part of all Franchise Specifications.

On minor routes, Bike spaces should now be provided when refurbishment or new sales occur as N. R. is looked upon as one of the 'greener' companies .Rural routes and minor lines should be provided with bike spaces, along with all other standard provisions. Up to date information should be available, through one medium or another, at all Stations and on all Lines.

#### Question 33

Network Rail should be prepared to make the major investment required in Mobile Communication Connectivity, by increasing subsidies to certain Franchisees , whilst including in all new Specifications to them, that all new forms of communication, where available, should be standard on certain journeys and tracks, for example those services which are heavily used by business passengers of whom 37% have specifically identified Wi-Fi access as desirable. The provision of access to Wi-Fi must be explored urgently and funded as this is already available elsewhere on the UK rail network and has been for some years. If Passenger loyalty and satisfaction levels are to be retained, this should be a top priority.

#### -Question 34

It may be expedient to cut back on provision for First Class travel or even to discontinue it totally from future, Franchise Specifications. The resulting financial savings could be focussed upon provision of increased seating in those geographical areas where this .Reed already has been identified. This would allow savings in the amount 7 of subsidy previously required. the First Class providers.. The focus should be on the many passengers who are already using the pcissenger service and not on the relatively few who infrequently use the First Class service.

#### Question35

The issue of total, passenger safety takes precedence over the issue of desire for alcohol on the part of a minority of passengers. Physical and mental wellbeing has often been compromised within Network Rail services, by inebriated persons, as has been evidenced in various media stories over the years. Although this has only happened to a minority of passengers, one incident is one too many. The greater good of the many must not be sidelined to suit the wants of the lesser minority who wish to imbibe alcohol on a train. Scott Rail must 'bite the 'bullet' and impose a complete ban on alcohol This is the only way to ensure that no passenger again will suffer at the hands of inebriated individuals. If alcohol is sold on trains then the same measures as is used in Public Houses, would need to be in place there i.e. employment of 'Bouncers' like those who eject drunken nuisances from Public Houses. Unfortunately, trains would require a 'holding cell' to accommodate the "criminal" until the next station is reached . Here be/sbe would be removed from the train. Obviously, the current staffing level of ' driver plus one other staff member' would not be sufficient to man this scenario. It has to be a case of 'Ban the Booze'.

#### Question 36

Despite the fact that there has been considerable investment already in information systems with the larger and busier stations now having customer information screens and public address systems along with A web site and other methods, passengers cite lack of information as one of their major areas of dissatisfaction. This lack of satisfaction is centred mainly on the issue of train delays, along with lack of update information as to what has the and estimation as to how how long the delay will last. It is not the method of relaying information that is the issue, it is the lack of information. Obviously the current methods of dealing with the situation are insufficient and ineffective and thus require full revision and review. There is a case here for a Management unit to be set up, specifically to deal with delays, using specialised staff who are able to address any such situation in any station. Passengers need to be given timely situation updates at perhaps half -hourly intervals with indications as to what is happening with the crisis that caused the delay, through the use of email, mobile phone, I CT etc. A substantial, variety of measures should be available to the specialised staff so that passengers can see that there is some type of response. An example might be the use of a squad of minibuses to transfer agitated passengers to another station/train. A working party should be set up to remedy this source of passenger dissatisfaction. If it is not remedied, passengers may decide to use other methods of travel. This situation is not exclusive to Rail service only and it may be time that all travel modes! operators- road, rail and train providers- jointly decided as to how best they can keep passengers happy ,through co-operation with each other when at crisis is actually happening.

#### Question 37

The Company should continue to specify for the Sleeper Service so as to ensure that the Operating Company will put in place the improvements to the service which passengers have indicated that they experience most



dissatisfaction with. These improvements are laid out under answers to Questions 38 and 39 - Please refer to these. Once these improvements are in place, the passenger utilisation of the service should increase.

#### **Question 38**

Caledonian Sleeper - it would be financially viable to have this Service contracted for in a separate manner from the main Scot Rail Franchise. This would enable generation of increased income .Sleeper only Franchise could attract new entrants to the rail Franchise market. They may innovate their own new ideas about this service. The heavy cost of operation and maintenance would then be the sole concern of this Train Operator.

#### **Question 39**

The main appeal of the Sleeper Service is as an alternative to Air Travel, particularly to people residing in the North of Scotland. Many people are firmly opposed to Air travel. It would be viable for Oban to be the centre providing sleeper connectivity to the other areas of Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen. - and with only one Main Station to maintain, could result in a lesser subsidy to the operator and somewhat relieve burden on tax payers. Improvements to sleeper service should include better beds, noise reduction, better temperature control, en-suite facilities, and mobile phone connectivity. Passengers would be willing to pay more for enhanced services.

#### **Question 40**

All new Contracts and Agreements must feature specific targets for certain areas : Waste Management and recycling. Targets must be set in the areas of : Carbon Emissions; Biodiversity Conservation and Enhancement; Sustainability; and also Targets for reduction in amount of energy required to transport people. The above targets will require closer harmonisation of capacity with demand, as part of the overall policy of promoting Modal Shift, for both passenger services and freight services.