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: n/a

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

Q2 comments: n/a

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

Q3 comments: n/a

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

Q4 comments: n/a

5. Under what terms should third parties be involved in the operation of passenger rail services?

Q5 comments: n/a

6. What is the best way to structure and incentivise the achievement of outcome measures whilst ensuring value for money?

Q6 comments: n/a

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

Q7 comments: n/a

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

Q8 comments: n/a

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: n/a

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: n/a

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

Q11 comments: n/a

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

Q12 comments: n/a

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: n/a

14. What other mechanisms could be used for assessing train and station quality?

Q14 comments: n/a

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: The permitted standing time limit should not be increased.

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: n/a

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: Frequency should be maintained at or above current levels by the Government. Journey times should be determined by the franchisee.

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

Q18 comments: n/a

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

Q19 comments: n/a

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: n/a

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: n/a

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: n/a

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 difference should be maximised.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: No stations should be closed. People may have moved to a particular area because of its proximity to a railway station and closure would negatively impact such people significantly. Closures are likely to affect already vulnerable rural communities and closures could result in localised effects such as house price reduction.

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: Local authorities depend on public approval for councillor elections and, as such, should be allowed to propose the funding of new 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: n/a

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

Q27 comments: Integrated rail-bus services would encourage this. Bus services from stations late at night, for example, should be delayed to wait for in-coming delayed rail services.

28. What categories of station should be designated and what facilities should be available at each category of station?

Q28 comments: Litter bins should be made available at every station.

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 north of Edinburgh are vital and should be determined ultimately by the Department of Transport in consultation with Scottish Ministers. The East Coast service from King's Cross to Aberdeen for example provides an important link to and from London and reduces reliance

on air travel thus decreasing carbon emissions. The direct services between Leuchars and London are particularly important to the large numbers of students who frequently travel up and down the East Coast Main Line to and from the University of St Andrews. The link is also of importance to relatively isolated Angus communities such as Montrose (and nearby Brechin), Arbroath and Carnoustie, which gain vital tourist income from the service.

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: There is no need for a change to the current system. Waverley station is already crowded enough without increasing the number of passengers who have to make connections here. It is also far more convenient for passengers to travel from England to northern parts of Scotland directly. Any move to stop direct services would further isolate such parts of Scotland and would have a negative impact on business links and tourism.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: n/a

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

Q32 comments: First class facilities and catering services should be available on all trains.

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: It would be excellent to see widespread wi-fi services on trains as this would increase business productivity. However, investment in this technology should not be detrimental to existing on-board facilities.

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: More carriages should be provided. First class facilities must remain. Customers who use these services would simply move to air travel if

they were no longer made available, which would be bad for rail profits and would also increase carbon emissions.

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

Q35 comments: The banning of alcohol on trains is an absolutely ludicrous suggestion.

Most passengers enjoy alcohol responsibly on rail services and it is seen as an integral part of the comfort of train travel for many people. Some use train services rather than driving because of the possibility of drinking alcohol and a ban would reduce passenger numbers significantly. The problem of loutish behaviour caused by over-consumption of alcohol by a small minority should be tackled by encouraging train conductors to throw such passengers off trains if they do not moderate their behaviour after reasonable warning. To punish everyone because of the poor behaviour of a few would be a ridiculous decision for the Government to make. A ban would simply result in a move to surreptitious alcohol consumption and would negatively impact the atmosphere on rail services.

Temporary alcohol restrictions on trains serving large sporting events are reasonable but no extension of a ban should be considered.

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

Q36 comments: n/a

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: Services should continue to be specified at current levels.

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: It should be an option to contract such services separately.

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 Caledonian Sleeper Service is culturally important and epitomises the traditional charm of long-distance rail travel. The direct connection to Fort William is very important for the tourism industry but a service alternating daily between Oban and Fort William could be considered. Current facilities on the sleeper services are adequate and costs to the passenger should be kept to a minimum, although the provision of standard class single cabins should be considered.

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: n/a