

Consultation Questions

The answer boxes will expand as you type.

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: Sleeper services provide a lifeline to the remote parts of Scotland – particularly Fort William – and are an intrinsic component of the transport infrastructure for (a) local communities, and (b) tourism.

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: I believe it should be retained within the existing franchise. Look at Grand Central and the Shropshire and Wrexham “examples”.

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 appeal of the sleeper train is an economic mode of transport that conveniently gets you to/from where one needs to be with the minimum of disruption. There are four main uses: regular commuters; families travelling together; tourists seeking the remote places; travellers with sporting equipment which is not viable on an airline/bus.

Reliance on air networks is fine for the lowland sleeper service (one can just get on a plane) but it is not a viable option for Fort William or Inverness on the Highland Sleeper – nor for any of the stations north of the Central Belt.

Replacement by an earlier/later train is not an option if you live in Fort William!

Oban is similar to Mallaig – it is a short further train journey from the sleeper service (Crianlarich/Tyndrum) and the tourist attraction of Oban is considerably less than Fort William and Ben Nevis.

Of the three Highland Sleeper final destinations reliance upon the sleeper as the only viable means of long distance travel is least important in Aberdeen, more important in Inverness which has ever poorer air links, and 100% vital to Fort William and the west.

In terms of stations en route this list is exactly the same.

There is no doubt that the sleeper service is "tired" but "en suite" rooms are absolutely not what this service needs. It requires basic, clean accommodation – look at the boom in cheap, basic hotels - this is surely the model to follow.

Likewise look at the success of no frills airlines around the world – people don't want to pay more for 'half-baked' luxury – they either want everything at vast expense, or the bare minimum at least expense. The Caledonian Sleeper is not the Orient Express – it needs to be efficient and clean – and affordable. And nothing else!

Can the sleeper serviced not be beneficially utilised for overnight haulage of some sort?