

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: There should be a strong Social element

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

Q2 comments: they should be made fairly long term so that investment is worthwhile by the companies involved

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

Q3 comments: More profitable routes can subsidise the loss making routes but there should be mechanisms in place to make sure that companies do not take huge subsidies while paying excessively to shareholders.

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

Q4 comments: There should be a requirement to use a proportion of profit for upgrading services

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

Q5 comments: Only in as much as it improves integration of services

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?

Q8 comments: If it fails it should not be allowed to bid again for a certain number of years

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Incentives always work better than penalties. However passengers should always be put first not the incentive or penalty as so often happens.

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: One system

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

Q11 comments: Train connections should be advertised as such and maintained. There have been too many cases of connections being missed because of penalties where the passenger has not been the primary focus

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

Q12 comments: Journey times are also a measure 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: Yes

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

Q14 comments: Interior comfort and noise levels

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: Need to increase capacity. Passenger comfort not profit should be the key

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: No I am vehemently opposed to this. For elderly and handicapped persons interchanges are a nightmare and put them off making the journey. More direct services are the key, not more interchanges

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: Depends on the nature of the line. For social reasons the government might intervene for the welfare of the communities being served.

18. What level of contract specification should we use the 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: Rail fares should be restructured to be easier to understand and should not be increasing above inflation

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 regulated based on the social needs

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: Higher increases to enhanced areas will end up being counterproductive as the enhancements will then not lead to benefits

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: In non suburban areas peak and off peak services are not an issue as people have to get to a certain place at a certain time. I think these fares should be only introduced in major commuting situations.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Need to balance costs with social effect

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 knowledge is always helpful in these situations and may lead to improvements

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: Again this needs to be factored in with how long the lease will be to allow investment to be worthwhile

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

Q27 comments: They can adopt a station and be responsible for beautifying projects to enhance the travellers experience

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

Q28 comments: There are currently too many unmanned stations leading to problems for those who are handicapped or elderly

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: Definitely. Interchanges slow the journey times and increase the stress of travel. Also the long distance services provide a higher level of comfort when travelling on to places such as Inverness and Aberdeen. Scotrail would not lose so much of this travel if they made their own long distance services more attractive but I suggest that to make it worthwhile for franchises means upgrading both the Highland line and ECML with OHEC to allow electric services for the whole journey.

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 would be no benefit to passengers at all as the option currently exists to use Edinburgh as a hub should they choose to do so.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:

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

Q32 comments: toilet facilities and catering facilities are necessary on anything other than very short journeys. Current rolling stock is noisy and uncomfortable for anything other than short hauls. WIFI is very useful when doing business while travelling, which is one reason to use the train rather than the car as you can get work done should you choose.

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: On longer journeys very important these days to allow work to be undertaken while travelling.

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: Additional seating can be provided by additional coaches not by cutting back on services

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

Q35 comments: My experience is that it is the drunk getting on the train that causes the problem, not people drinking to excess once on the train. There are certain services such as those from Aberdeen when oil rig workers get on the train after coming ashore where the guard needs more backup to enable him to eject trouble makers. Often they just hide and do not even check tickets.

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

Q36 comments: If stations had people who were kept informed then they could keep the passengers better informed, also with improved wifi and mobile facilities the guard can be kept informed better to keep the passengers on the train better informed

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: yes, it provides a vital social link

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: No opinion

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: For tourists and for business people who have to make the journey it provides an excellent service. You can travel down overnight, do a day's work and then travel back in time to be in the office again the next day. I use the Inverness sleeper and it is a great service. Oban would certainly open up access to the western Isles. There is certainly a need to upgrade facilities. The lounge car is excellent and well used when I have travelled but more single berths would be better.

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: Trains are always going to be more environmentally friendly. Increased electrification will make an even bigger difference so the more investment in this area the better.