

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: A dual focus franchise is confusing. Railways are the lifeblood of the economy. Consequently, I don't understand the distinction between economic and social.

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

Q2 comments: 5 years should be the contract length – long enough to make a franchise commercially viable. A longer contract could give an unscrupulous provider a chance to exploit the public.

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

Q3 comments: The government needs to underwrite it.

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

Q4 comments: No railway will ever run at a profit. A railway is for the good of a nation. Profit should not come into it.

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

Q5 comments: There should be only one provider – third parties lead to subcontracting which just makes matters messy.

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

Q6 comments: Single provider with KPIs. Transparency makes life simple!

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

Q7 comments: Sufficient so that if the company goes bust, the government is not left with a huge bill.

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

Q8 comments: The franchisee should be fined if they do not meet their commitments. For example, fines for trains not running on time.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Both!

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 for the whole of Scotland to ensure transparency.

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

Q11 comments: Have passengers as part of the franchisee review process.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times should be on time and as short as possible. Journey times are a key part of performance along with comfort and safety.

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: Should cover everything.

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

Q14 comments: Qualitative methods e.g. asking passengers for feedback on quality.

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:15 minutes is tolerable. Nobody should have to stand on the a train. Increase the capacity by adding more carriages as opposed to making people stand.

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:Absolutely not. Direct servies are superb e.g. Inverness to London. If you withdraw direct services, people will abandon the railway lines.

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:Address by Government.

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

Q18 comments:Medium level – not too detailed, otherwise the contract negotiations will take too long.

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

Q19 comments:Allow a 5% performance related bonus.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:To encourage the greatest number of people to travel. The policy should not be based on profit!

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:All fares should be regulated by the government irrespective of the locale to encourage the greatest number of people to use the railways.

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: Railways should not be run for profit. The Government (tax payer) needs to take the hit. Fares on a given line should not be hiked after improvements – the improvements need to be across the entire network not just in certain areas.

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: Off peak should be cheaper than peak. However, peak fares should not exploit people especially commuters who rely on the railway service.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: No station should be closed – we are still recovering from the Beecham cuts. We should encourage people to abandon their cars to protect the environment and therefore, we should open new stations as opposed to contemplating closing them.

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: Third parties are welcome as an alternative source of funds as opposed to the Government.

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: Only one organisation should be responsible. The stations should be leased and the organisation carry out any necessary repairs to ensure the upkeep of the buildings.

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

Q27 comments: By providing a good, punctual rail service. Stations need to provide adequate parking and be a safe environment especially for lone commuters travelling at night.

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

Q28 comments: Categories should be provincial versus city. All stations should have toilets. Provincial stations do not have to be manned 24/7 – CCTV should be in force at all stations.

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: It is absolutely imperative that cross-border services go north of Edinburgh. Cross-border services benefit passengers and taxpayers because they provide a valuable financial lifeline to the north.

1. The Highland Chieftain and the Highland Sleeper are two great train journeys - the ability to go from London directly to the Highlands without having to change is a sheer delight. 2. I am a regular user of the Highland Chieftain and one of its use attractions is that it is non-stop from York to Inverness. The uninterrupted journey is great for getting work done - indeed, I have had some of my best ideas on the train - what can be more inspiring than having a coffee and glancing out the window? The ideas just then flow! 3. Having to change at Edinburgh would be a right pain. In the case of my elderly mother, who would help her with her case? She would just get stressed out. 4. I love the Highland Chieftain and sometimes treat myself to first class. It has lovely decent seating with good leg room as opposed to Virgin (Cross Country) trains where there is no leg room. 5. What about the train's contribution to the environment? Surely, a train is far more environmentally friendly than a plane. 6. The train is so practical - you go from the heart of London directly to the centre of Inverness. If you fly, you first of all have to get to the airport then go through security then wait for the flight to be called then fly north then wait for your luggage then get a taxi... You don't get uninterrupted time unlike the train where you can be so productive beavering away on your laptop dealing with clients etc. 7. If the Highland Chieftain and Highland Sleeper are withdrawn this will hugely impact tourism which in turn will impact jobs. There is a world recession so the potential withdrawal simply does not make sense. 8. First class on the Highland Chieftain is a real pleasure with complimentary refreshments. ScotRail to the best of my knowledge does not offer a comparable 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: The cross-border service should not terminate at Edinburgh Waverley – please see my previous comments. No benefits only

disadvantages would result in having Edinburgh as a hub.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Buy as opposed to lease rolling stock. From a financial point of view, accept that the railway is a public service and the rolling stock is pure infrastructure – it is a necessary part of staying in business.

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

Q32 comments: 1. CCTV for security. 2. Free WiFi. 3. Working toilets. 4. Good lighting. 5. Adequate heating. 6. Clean and tidy carriages. 7. Bike racks.

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: Very high priority. If business people cannot communicate with base just think of the financial implications. High-bandwidth services can be a life saver.

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: Simple – both can co-exist. Additional seating in standard class should be provided by additional carriages – not through the removal of seats in first class. Make more room for all.

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

Q35 comments: Consult with passengers and the medical profession. In my opinion, the facts are simple – alcohol leads to misbehaviour on trains. There is no need for staff and passengers to be abused by drunken behaviour. Therefore, alcohol should not be allowed. The alcohol industry will lobby hard under human rights – “the right to drink”. However, the safety and comfort of the majority of staff and passengers is the key consideration. Unfortunately, a small minority who cannot handle alcohol in an adult fashion can spoil it for the rest. Smoking has been banned on trains which has led to a great improvement in the quality of rail travel so why cannot alcohol be banned for

similar reason (health and comfort)?

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

Q36 comments: 1. I love having internet access on the train to see how many train is running. 2. Better audio announcements which I can understand – both onboard a train and at stations. 3. Text alerts are really useful for keeping me updated on how trains are running.

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 need to be specified – they should not just be a commercial matter.

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: The contract should be mandatory within the ScotRail franchise – it should not just be an option.

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: 1. The appeal of the Sleeper service is efficiency. For example, I can have a good night's sleep and be in London ready for a morning meeting. The Sleeper service takes me directly from the centre of Inverness to the centre of London – no airline can offer this service. More early and late trains would not detract from the sleeper service – the sleeper service has its own unique place in serving the travelling public.

The value of sleeper service to Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen are absolutely crucial for the local economy especially for local businesses and

the tourist industries. They are the correct destinations. Oban would not provide better connectivity.

The Sleeper service should provide free Wi-fi if it does not already. I would not be willing to pay more for Wi-fi.

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: I would go back to basics – trains are environmentally more efficient than planes so provided the trains continue to attract passengers (e.g. by maintaining the cross-border services to Inverness and Aberdeen), they will have fulfilled their environmental role.