

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: I'm not sure how these can be separated out. Some services are always social, others economic. Depends on line and time of day.

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

Q2 comments: I suspect 5 years gives the operator a chance to understand and run the franchise. However I want the Scotrail franchise to have a different operator from the East Coast franchise to provide some competition even if it is just a few trains so we can all see how others do it.

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

Q3 comments: Penalties from late running and poor information.

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

Q4 comments: No opinion.

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

Q5 comments: No opinion

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

Q6 comments: No opinion

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

Q7 comments: No opinion

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

Q8 comments: Fines and penalties.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Penalise poor performance. Good performance should be the norm.

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: By routes. A Ten minute delay in running via the Forth Bridge has more implications than a similar delay between Dingwall and Kyle.

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

Q11 comments: Make refunds for delays better known. At present they are almost a state secret. A train is late if it is late to or from my departure/destination point. Under the present system if a train from Aberdeen to Edinburgh is late between Aberdeen and Inverkeithing and makes up the delayed time in the final sector it counts as on time. This is absurd.

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

Q12 comments: NONE Both are important.

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:

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

Q14 comments:

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: Standing is not acceptable. It means that catering trolleys and ticket inspectors have great difficulty getting around.

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: Direct Service are better. Changing is a pain. Indeed Glasgow suffers from this due to the Central/Queen Street trek.

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: These should be specified by the government.

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: Tell the directors not to read tabloid newspapers or other reactionary material.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

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:

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: I'd be concerned that more profitable parts of the network are subsidising the rest. Aberdeen Edinburgh seems to be bottom of the Scotland list of priorities and is treated the same as Inverness Wick.

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 overcrowding at peak times and huge gaps in the service do this already. The Off-peak return times five is often equal to the weekly season rate. This ratio should be kept.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: When the passengers numbers are so low that they don't even cover the cost the fuel to stop and start the train that is the time to mothball a station.

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: As long as extra stops are not grinding long distance trains to a halt.

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: No. The present division between various companies is fine.

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

Q27 comments: Encourage planning so that houses are built within 15 minutes walking distance of the station.

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

Q28 comments: A half decent north bound platform at Stonehaven would be start. The bus shelter is a joke at peak times.

East Coast have print at home tickets why don't Scotrail.

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: YES. I will not use cross border trains if I have to change at Waverley. Note the 0752 Aberdeen – London is almost full (in both 1st and 2nd class) when it leaves Leuchars. It is a nine carriage 125. How on earth is a small 170 train going to replace that?

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: No way. If this happens I will fly. No benefits whatsoever. More folk walking around Waverley is not a benefit. Waverley is not suitable as an interchange and should have been flattened years ago. Platform 19 is too narrow as some law and order obsessed person put a police station too close to it.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Electrify Aberdeen to Haymarket.

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

Q32 comments: Wifi, catering trolley on Express routes. We also need voyager sized train on all Aberdeen- Edinburgh (until electrified). Services south from Aberdeen have insufficient luggage space (Offshore workers all tend to have big bag). Airline sized overhead lockers are need. Airline sized lockers with closing doors will also be safer.

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:Wifi is needed on long distance. East Coast have this between Aberdeen and Berwick already. What is wrong with Scotrail? Fife is a notorious black spot for mobile. I think that is a telco problem rather than rail industry issue.

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:Get some longer trains – Voyagers.

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

Q35 comments: Is this a political stunt to impress neo-nazi tabloid types?

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

Q36 comments: Get rid of announcements on screens about “leaving your suitcase”. Nobody in their right mind does this.

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: Never used it. High fares and unsuitable times for me.

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 interest in Sleepers. It would help economically if the sleeper could carry local seated traffic.

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: No interest in Sleepers at present. Prefer the East Coast day time through service. I might be interested in an overnight train if it arrived at St Pancras early enough to connect with the first Eurostar to Paris/Brussels. St Pancras might be a better London Terminal than Euston.

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: Take advantage of electrified lines if they ever happen.