

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: Although there is a strong case for the economic element to cover the main interurban services, a social element should apply across the entire network to ensure that a franchise holder does not remove the less remunerative services on Sundays and in the evenings, as has proved to be the case in respect of bus services.

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

Q2 comments: Future franchises should be of the same length as the current franchises, with the option to terminate these early should the franchisee not prove to be suitable.

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

Q3 comments: Risk support should be provided in the case of new services or in increased levels of service only.

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

Q4 comments: Profits should be kept to a minimum within the operation of what is after all an essential public service. This should be an obvious lesson from what has been seen in the bus service network.

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

Q5 comments: Local transport partnerships i.e SESTRAN, TACTRAN, SPT etc should have some influence in the operation of local services, to avoid accusations of a centralised system.

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: A system of fines for late running, cancellations and other failures on behalf of the franchisee should be put in place.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Good performance should be expected as part of the franchise, therefore should not be rewarded.

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: As current, with routes and service groups.

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

Q11 comments:

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

Q12 comments:

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: No.

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 times should not be altered from the current.

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: In no circumstances should the number of direct services be decreased if this is just to cut journey times. If for example as proposed at one time the stations between Dundee and Aberdeen lost there through services and to reach Edinburgh/Glasgow had to change at Dundee, this would create great inconvenience for the public for the sake of perhaps 5 or 10 minutes benefit for passengers travelling to Aberdeen. It would also be likely that some passengers would drive to the interchange station instead, increasing road congestion. There is also the issue of missed connections due to late running, and poor waiting facilities.

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: On the main, the government should direct frequency and journey times, as is the case with the highly successful system in London. Indeed such a franchise system should be extended to all transport systems to ensure proper integration at interchange stations.

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: Fares should be fair, affordable and encourage access to the rail network for everyone.

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: The government should regulate ordinary fares and season tickets as current.

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: Fares should be increased as currently. Fares should be increased on areas of the network where services have been enhanced if they are matched by corresponding decreases in fares on areas of the network where services have been reduced, or through services removed.

Taxpayer subsidies will always be necessary to ensure that the social element of the railway; these will inevitably increase over time as has the amount of subsidy requested by operators in the deregulated bus service.

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 current differences should be retained. The vast majority of peak time passengers have to travel for work purposes, and cheaper fares off peak will not be any use unless employers change working hours.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: As long as there are passengers using a station, then the presumption should be made that the station should remain open. Stations with low passenger numbers often have poor services - for example, the stations with the lowest passenger numbers (Barry Links, Golf Street) have poorly timed services which are no use to the public.

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: If a third party wishes to do so, then they should be encouraged wherever possible.

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: Yes, but it should perhaps be the government that takes charge.

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

Q27 comments: There could possibly be some degree of incentive - for example improved services, special fares.

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

Q28 comments: All stations should be provided with comfortable waiting facilities and easy access to information on services. Present station categories should be retained.

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, undoubtedly. These services are vital not only for travellers within Scotland making leisure/business trips to England, but for tourists heading to Scotland from the south. Scottish ministers should work with the DfT on the specification of these services, and they should be increased rather than cut. The opportunity to extend some East Coast services to Glasgow Queen St on the electrified route should be explored.

In the document, it was also stated that these services were of poor value as they are often cancelled north of Edinburgh during problems on the rail network. Yet on 8th December 2011, the only rail service running directly from Dundee to Edinburgh was the East Coast service; all Scotrail services being withdrawn. This proves how valuable these services are.

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. There would be no benefit to the travelling public.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Buying the rolling stock rather than leasing it may be cheaper.

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

Q32 comments: Toilets are the only absolutely necessary facility which should be provided. On longer distance services there should be some element of catering. First class should continue to be provided where it currently is.

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: Priority should be given to the major services, but at the same time consideration should be given to the provision of Quiet coach facilities on those trains.

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: Lengthening trains should be considered.

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 actual level of problems reported should be considered, as should limits on the amount of alcohol that can be taken on/bought on trains.

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

Q36 comments:

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, sleeper services are vitally important and must be kept in operation.

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: Should be let within the main franchise.

39. We would be interested in your views in the level and type of service that the Caledonian Sleeper Services should provide. Including:

- 1 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?
- 2 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?
- 3 What facilities should the sleeper services provide and would you pay more for better facilities?

Q39 comments: The provision of more early/late trains would be of little impact if there are no earlier/later connecting trains/buses provided. The appeal of the Sleeper is that it provides an easy journey with convenient arrival/departure times.

The Highland sleepers are vital, more so than the Lowland sleeper. If cuts must be made then the Inverness/Aberdeen service could uplift passengers at Edinburgh; the Fort William service could be diverted via Glasgow Central Low Level station (possibly Partick could replace Westerton as a stop) and the two trains could be joined at Carstairs.

Current facilities are more than adequate.

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: