

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: The railways should be regarded as a highly important part of social life taking priority over the economic element

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

Q2 comments: At least 10 years otherwise no encouragement for investment

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

Q3 comments:

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

Q4 comments:

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

Q5 comments:

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:

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Incentivise good performance

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: Probably best to align with actual routes and service groups

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

Q11 comments: Listen more closely to passenger issues

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

Q12 comments: Excellent performance should always be the aim, irrespective of length of journey

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: Again good quality of service must be the aim in all things

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: There should be enough seats for all passengers. The prices charged are so expensive that a seat included with the ticket is part of the deal. Permitted standing time most certainly should not be increased. The rail companies must know which routes and times are likely to be the busiest and put on extra carriages.

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: It would be a great mistake to reduce the number of direct services. Not having to change trains encourages people to use the train and for elderly or infirm changing trains is a great inconvenience. In terms of tourism direct services are also much more attractive and not having direct services eg to the Highlands could affect the numbers of visitors heading north. Where a change is inevitable eg no railway the rail companies should work much more closely with bus companies, ferry companies etc

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: The Scottish Government should leave the franchisee to provide the full service but before granting the franchise there should be much consultation and provision in line that if the frequency/journey time does not suit passengers as a last resort the government can intervene.

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: A straightforward system with sensibly priced tickets. The current system is much too complicated. One can get good fares if one books in advance but it is not always possible to plan ahead. All encouragement should be made to entice people to use the railways instead of the car. Buses are all very well but they also lead to traffic problems on the roads.

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: Local urban fares should be like bus fares but otherwise there should not be too much difference between rural and urban fares. Look to the continent eg France and Germany who seem to be able to run an efficient train service. The rail fares should be subsidised. Must better of way of saving the environment and a much better investment than all the wind farms which are currently being constructed.

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: A taxpayer subsidy is vital. If you raised the bus pass age eg to 62/63 or indeed to retirement age there would be others funds available. Fares should only rise minimally each year and there should be no higher increases to enhanced areas. Any area enhanced has suffered over the years of neglect. Rail fares should only ever rise by the smallest margin, less than inflation.

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: A difference is acceptable but it should not be too extreme as it is not always possible to avoid peak time travel.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: You should be aiming to keep all stations open and be looking to open even more.

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: Could be a possibility but I do feel that one train company with high standards overall should be the aim

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: Should be run as one company

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

Q27 comments: If you have a good train service this will follow automatically

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

Q28 comments: Shelter. As many should be manned as possible

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: Cross border services should most definitely continue to go north of Edinburgh and Glasgow. It would be a backward step to stop such services. It would affect the local population but also the tourist industry. The government should be encouraging people to use the trains as much as possible and should also be looking beyond Edinburgh. It is very important to sustain a good population in the Highlands and rural areas in general. To force everyone to change trains at Edinburgh would be a big mistake. It is a pleasure to get on a train for an entire journey and not have to change. It really makes you feel you are travelling/ going on holiday instead of setting off on a nightmare journey wondering if you will make all your connections. The cross-border services seem to work well at present along with ScotRail. Why change something that is working? The Department of Transport should be responsible but the Scottish Government should be able to advise.

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: Absolutely none. It would be a complete disaster to use Waverley as a hub. It is a tiny station, totally unsuited to being used as a hub quite apart from the fact that this would be a backward step. In the old days one used to have to change stagecoaches. Is this the way forward? Look to the French system. Invest in the railways and stop trying to ruin the current system we have. In the past people complained that everything was centralised in London. The Scottish government is now in the process of doing the same for Edinburgh. Edinburgh is only part of Scotland and it is very important that you do not neglect the other areas. I do not agree with using a hub but if so the only station physically capable of dealing with the numbers of trains and people involved is Glasgow Central. At present one often sits at either Waverley or Haymarket, waiting on there being a platform available. How many times more would that occur if Waverley was a hub. There are hardly any lines in and out. There would be no advantages whatsoever in having Waverley as a hub. As the railways are privatised it is

also unlikely that connections would work and there would be people milling everywhere, trying to find out about further connections – a complete nightmare and I am appalled that you are even contemplating the idea. Let's look forward to a great railway network not a small urban system. I really think the best idea would be to privatise the railways once again and then invest in them properly. Rail travel is such a wonderful thing. I do hope the Scottish government is not going to ruin it. I think it would be a great mistake to break up the Network Rail franchise (if you are not going to privatise the railways again).

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: Toilets, hostess trolley serving hot drinks and snacks. Buffet car on journeys over 3 hours

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: Has to be available

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: First class has to stay. Add on extra carriages at busy times.

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

Q35 comments: It would be a shame to have to ban alcohol as a social glass of wine or similar is often enjoyable on a journey eg to relax or perhaps it is the start of a holiday. As usual the minority who overindulge spoil things for other people. Maybe a ban on bringing one's own and a restriction on the amount one can buy on the train.

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: Must stay

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: It should be part of the Scotrail franchise of one the larger companies eg East Coast

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: Many local people here use the sleeper to go to London. I do not believe it would make any difference having early or late train to using the sleeper (although a good idea in general as it would give more opportunity to go to the theatre, concerts etc)

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: