

Consultation Questions

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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: Commuter services, with severe penalties for poor performance, and social/tourist services, with financial incentives for good performance, should be split, with Government determining how profits from the former could augment the latter.

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

Q2 comments: 3 years, as this may force operator to be more responsive.

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

Q3 comments: Needs to be some to ensure provision of commuter/business services.

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

Q4 comments: Provided all criteria met then profit share should be significant.

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

Q5 comments: More power to groups such as RAGES.

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: Severe penalties for under-performance. Passengers should be compensated much more for cancellations. The compensation voucher system should be replaced with something which is easier to use for passengers. I recently received £5 worth of vouchers – one for £3.44 and the other for £1.56 !!! If I am entitled to compensation then why not in cash?

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 on commuter services and incentivise good performance elsewhere.

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: Must be individual routes and service groups because one system is how Scotrail currently fudge their statistics.

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

Q11 comments: Regular surveys; monitor complaints; better use of web sites.

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

Q12 comments: Always performance. Better late than never.

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: SQUIRE seems to be working.

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

Q14 comments: Regular surveys; monitor complaints; better use of web sites.

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: Increase standing time; abolish 1st class; make existing 1st class compartments priority seating areas.

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: If going through a major hub, then yes.

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: More Government direction, particularly on Edinburgh-Glasgow and other commuter services.

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

Q18 comments: Targeted to meet different needs.

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: Increases should not be permitted unless performance has been achieved to a pre-determined level; encourage use of season tickets; on-peak/commuter services should reflect the performance of the service route; there should be no charge for using Park'n'Ride facilities.

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: Should all be regulated depending on performance and inflation.

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: If reliability is increased then passenger revenue will increase. Reduce frequency of less profitable or less used services (off-peak commuter services).

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 significantly and visibly cheaper to discourage peak use when not necessary.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Local consultation in conjunction with cost/benefit analysis.

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: Would need to meet certain criteria in terms of cost/benefit to all rail users.

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:

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

Q27 comments: Information boards, business adverts, murals, sponsorship, local business (newsagents, etc.).

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

Q28 comments: All stations should have basic shelter from the elements, although at most stations these do not have much capacity at the moment.

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: No. All cross-border services should terminate at Edinburgh or Glasgow from which point Scotrail services should be used. A lot of delays occur because Scotrail services are having to give way to high speed trains.

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: Yes. Would encourage better performance on local routes and provide more revenue to Scotrail.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: National Lottery funding.

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

Q32 comments: No catering; basic toilets; less cycle areas.

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: Not required.

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: Abolish 1st class.

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

Q35 comments: As is works fine.

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

Q36 comments: the hardware is in place (screens, tannoys) but the problem is that Scotrail/Network Rail cannot get this information to the information points in time or accurately. So even the most advanced technology cannot compensate for the incompetence of the providers of the travel information.

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: Purely commercial.

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 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:

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: Bums on seats.