

## 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:

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

Q2 comments:

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, provided it can be properly defined and is not in conflict with Goodrich's Law: "When a measure becomes a target it ceases to be a good measure". A target of "arrival within 5 minutes of timetable" only leads operators to "pad" their timetables, with the effect that trains arriving early obstruct station approaches awaiting a free platform.

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. In railway provision, uniformity is everything.

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: There should be no trade-off. Both can be excellent (see Japan Railways for example).

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: The passenger makes no such distinction – a delay is a delay whether caused by rolling-stock or signal failure. The passenger experience must drive all aspects of the service quality regime, and any attempt at blame-passing or "not our problem, mate", will be utterly condemned by the affected passenger.

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: 10 minutes is unnecessarily strict. (Living in London, I expect to stand for much of my 40-minute daily Tube commute.) 20 minutes would be a sufficient compromise.

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: I would support this. This service model is common in Europe. Shorter-distance services are more reliable, as there is more recovery opportunity in turnarounds at terminal points, but less opportunity for inconveniencing passengers by “running short” and cancelling part-route. Following bus deregulation, end-to-end service runs (from experience in Glasgow) extended greatly, but at the expense of timetable reliability. For example, First Glasgow’s route 66 takes 2h36min to travel from Mountblow to Calderwood off-peak. This is economic for the operator as the bus is in revenue service for all that time, but renders the timetable extremely vulnerable to knock-on delays; the operator will not hesitate to terminate services at intermediate points, leaving the extremities with long service gaps. This model must not be extended to rail.

The other challenge is to ensure that near-platform or cross-platform interchange is available wherever possible. For example, a frequent service to Girvan and Stranraer might be possible by running a regular shuttle from Ayr platform 3, and using platform 2 for the Glasgow electric connections. (This may also free up more paths for trains serving Prestwick Airport.)

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: This must be determined by Government. Leaving these decisions exclusively to franchisees will lead to “ghettoisation” of uncommercial services, as franchisees concentrate resources on lucrative routes. The results are clear to see in the bus market – prestigious routes have the latest models, tender services use the lowest-cost vehicles, usually the oldest. A vicious circle results as customers desert what they see as “inadequate” services. Without effective and enforceable Government direction this will happen for rail. In London, a bus franchisee must accept a bundle of primary and secondary services as a condition of winning their tender.

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: Define “innovative”. In practice, the word is usually applied to ticketing, which inevitably means additional complexity. The only “innovations” allowed should be:

- (1) Provision of appropriate rolling stock. For example, the use of Class 170 units on the Glasgow-Edinburgh route and from the central belt to the north is utterly unacceptable to travellers accustomed to intercity services in other countries, where equivalents of Class 221/222 (or following electrification, short-formed 390s) would be considered the bare minimum. The Government must insist on a distinct Scottish input to the ongoing IEP development.
- (2) Simplification – not proliferation – of ticketing options. Extreme care must be taken with the smartcard rollout to ensure its versatility is not abused to provide a myriad of options which casual or occasional travellers will not understand.
- (3) “On-time” arrival, not “5 minutes late, but still officially on time”.

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments: Uniformity, simplicity and transparency.

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: Fares must be charged by distance and distance only, determined by Government as part of the franchise specification..

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: Appalled that this mindset is accepted without question. It is peculiarly British to apply higher fares to “enhanced” sections of route – see Heathrow Express and Southeastern High-Speed for examples. In mainland Europe, enhancement is carried out without fanfare and without the addition of supplements on completion – because enhancement and improvement is seen as the norm and not a “special treat” for a select group of travellers (for which they are expected to pay extra, of course).

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 peak/off-peak demarcation is an obsolete concept with changing work patterns – it should be noted that the distinction has almost evaporated in most of Europe – and which is now exploited by operators to raise fares, by expanding the definition of “peak” time, in some cases stretching over four hours from 15:30 to 19:30. “Encouragement” to travel off-peak is merely an acknowledgement that capacity in the peak is inadequate, that the will to invest properly in adequate capacity is not there, and that a fear exists of leaving assets “lying idle” in the off-peak period, which is apparently a great commercial crime.

### **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments: Rail stations should be near local centres of population, either residential or commercial. In areas of special need (e.g. where there is low car ownership, or where bus services are slow, infrequent, unreliable or simply non-existent), a railway station is an essential link to jobs and commerce. Leaving out-of-town housing to the mercy of bus operators risks further isolation, as these areas will be seen as increasingly remote and hard to reach (and hard to get out of), whereas a fast link to the city centre brings the area closer in the people’s mindset. An obvious example is the Whifflet line, which puts Carmyle within 14 minutes of Glasgow Central throughout the day, whereas First Glasgow’s route 64 takes 41 minutes (and does not run in the evenings). The suggestion that certain stations in Glasgow should be closed, in areas of low car ownership and containing a high proportion of over-65s, is particularly offensive. Many of these stations are unstaffed halts anyway, and the operational savings from closure would be dwarfed by the social costs and inconvenience imposed on the local residents. The reopened stations are well-used and well-received, exceeding their passenger targets in many cases, and should be held up as a model of the way forward in transport provision, instead of being castigated as a burden somehow.

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: Encouragement of third-party service provision is an abrogation of responsibility of Government and should not be permitted under any circumstances. Public transport is an item of essential national infrastructure and should be organised, directed and funded publicly. Wherever fragmentation in a public service occurs it inevitably degenerates into a free-for-all shambles (bus travel, energy supply, healthcare, telecoms

etc). This should be obvious to anyone.

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: One organisation, nationally-recognised, publically-funded and directed. This will achieve economies of scale in procurement, provide uniformity of "look and feel", and eliminate much waste and duplication that exists in the current fragmented approach among rail operators: multiple boards of directors, multiple contract and legal teams, multiple HR operations, delay attribution etc.

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

Q27 comments: By making the stations the local hub of the transport infrastructure and centring bus services around them. This requires primary legislation which will be difficult to implement given the extremely close political and financial relationship between the head of one of the country's major bus operators and the leaders of the current Government.

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

Q28 comments: In ascending order of facilities

1. (absolute minimum) Shelter, covered seating area, covered bicycle rack, CCTV, push-button help point, PIS, long-line public- address, public telephone, onward travel information (local bus timetables, taxi numbers etc).
2. In addition to 1, rentable bicycle lockers, staffed ticket office open during daytime, heated waiting room (where flank platforms exist, one each side) open during all service hours.
3. In addition to 2, ticket office open during all service hours, toilets, small catering outlet open during commuting hours.
4. In addition to 3, major station facilities (e.g. Glasgow Central, Edinburgh Waverley)
5. (wherever physically possible) Free (or in town centre areas minimally-expensive) car park, step-free access to platform via ramp or lift

### **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 must continue to operate. See answer to Q.19(1). These are the only services operating in north Scotland providing suitable levels of comfort, catering, space and quiet expected of major intercity services.

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:

### **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: Use standard “off-the-shelf” provision:

1. Class 170 should be considered the absolute minimum standard for remaining diesel services (Stranraer, West Highland, Far North, Borders and Aberdeen-Inverness lines)
2. Intercity services between central belt and Aberdeen/Inverness: Ideally loco-hauled stock (e.g. Class 67+DVT) to reduce in-train noise and allow flexible train formation for peak/off-peak/special events). Realistically, Class 221/222 or equivalent.
3. Glasgow-Edinburgh via Falkirk (and to Aberdeen once electrified): short Class 390 or equivalent.
4. All other central-belt services: existing EMUs, supplemented with Siemens/Bombardier new-build as existing Classes 314/318 go end-of-life and electrification progresses across the central belt and the Glasgow suburban routes currently operated by diesel

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. (absolute minimum) Information displays and automated announcements, accessible toilet
2. (commuter services) 1/3 and 2/3 doors
3. (Intercity services) carriage-end doors, buffet facilities, first class
4. (“Business-hours” services) full catering

## **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: Mobile phone coverage in the tunnelled sections in Glasgow, and in the Mound/Calton/Haymarket tunnels

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: These are not incompatible, especially with loco-hauled stock which would allow additional standard-class accommodation to be slotted in as needed.

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 wrong question. Proper enforcement and a zero-tolerance approach to disruptive or uncivilised behaviour would render an alcohol ban unnecessary, and not penalise responsible drinkers.

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

Q36 comments: On-train staff walking the train, Blackberry in hand. Too many train managers still disappear at the first sign of disruption.

## **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. This is an essential service and its provision must be a condition of any franchise agreement.

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 contract. Fragmentation leads to customer confusion.

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 Sleeper allows business and leisure travellers a full day in London without departing in the middle of the night (04:28 VT departure from Glasgow). The rolling stock badly needs replaced, it is very tired. It was a huge mistake to sell off the newly-built Nightstar stock at a loss in the 1990s.
2. The Highland Sleepers are an essential connection both to the central belt and points south. If additional sidings or stabling facilities were provided at Crianlarich, for instance, it would be possible to provide a Oban with a direct connection with the Sleeper.

**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: