

Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / Group/Organisation <input type="checkbox"/>	
Please tick as appropriate	
<p>(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?</p> <p>Please tick as appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>(c) The name and address of your organisation will be made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).</p> <p>Are you content for your response to be made available?</p> <p>Please tick as appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis</p> <p>Please tick ONE of the following boxes</p> <p>Yes, make my response, name and address all available <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>or</p> <p>Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>or</p> <p>Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?</p> <p>Please tick as appropriate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	

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 sole benefit would be greater through/joint ticketing availability, though even this is not certain. I am not sure why 'economic' and 'social' distinctions are proposed; given the huge subsidies required by the privatised railway, there are no profitable routes in Scotland, especially in a recession. Why make a distinction? Are there 'economic' and 'social' roads?

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

Q2 comments: I have no real views on this as I regard the privatisation of our railways to be mistaken and wasteful.

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: Get away from the obsession with 'punctuality' – a late train is better than an too-early train. ScotRail will sometimes wave through trains on time, before late connecting services arrive, in order to protect their 'punctuality' records; yet the passengers on the connections do, indeed, arrive late.

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:

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:

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

Q11 comments: See Q6 above.

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

Q12 comments: Some journey times need to be speeded up; eg Glasgow to Fort William/Oban, Perth to Inverness; I really don't see the point of squeezing another 5/10 minutes off any of the Glasgow-Edinburgh routes.

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: Passengers – *customers* – do not think about 'franchises' or 'operators'. Just the railways. It's a unity and should have remained so.

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: This is a ridiculous suggestion. You say (2.22) that you want a 'passenger-centric' railway, then consider more, longer standing? Will you be asking motorists if they would consider longer queues, greater congestion? The inevitable publicity arising from this item has damaged the reputation of both the Government and Transport Scotland. Deservedly.

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: People do not like changing trains. People don't 'change' when making a long car journey; do you want to allow the railways to compete or not? Some changes will be necessary, always, but they should be minimised.

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: Based on their bus operations, the present ScotRail franchisee will close or reduce provision – and simultaneously increase fares – at the drop of a hat on perhaps spurious ‘customer demand’ grounds. So – no.

18. What level of contract specification should we use 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: By spelling out what they should do. First promised to be innovative but there are still, say, no regular services from Glasgow to Fife or Edinburgh to Ayr etc etc. In any case, some of the missing links on the Scottish railway map (Glasgow Crossrail, services to rail-less towns like Kirkintilloch, Crieff, St Andrews etc, electrification) will require Government infrastructure decisions.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: A third of carbon emissions are caused by transport. The Government’s response is to wave through the M74 Extension, the M80 Extension, the misconceived new Forth Road Bridge, withdraw from rail connections to Northern Ireland ferries and ignore any environmental results. Transport Scotland has become a Scottish DfT which bends over backwards to please the motorist. We need an expanded rail network, with more destinations and more, better trains to attract more of the travelling public. Part of this will be reasonable fares; reduced, in many cases. ScotRail offer fewer ‘offers’ than any other operator.

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 types of journey you quote are indistinguishable; I can travel from Glasgow to Edinburgh on a miserable ScotRail Sprinter, on a suburban electric from Queen Street low level, or on a proper CrossCountry train, for lower fares, from Central. Is it a suburban or inter-city journey? All

fares should be regulated as part of transport and environmental policy. Be easier if the rail operator was state-owned, mind you.

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: When the rail industry was privatised – as with every privatisation, the idea promoted was that it would ‘bring private sector funding into the system’. We now know that this means that the public pay greater subsidies through their taxes to the operators, and also higher fares to those same operators. The railways should be *funded* – like the NHS or the police or the army, or, indeed, the roads – rather than their costs derided as ‘subsidy’. And if the Government wants to meet its environmental targets, it will have to *reduce* the cost of public transport. It’s an issue that must be faced. Politicians might wish to note that it would be electorally popular.

I would refer all the powers that be involved in funding public transport to Volume 120 No 4 (2004) of the Scottish Geographical Journal which should be required reading but which I doubt whether any politician or TS official has ever seen. It contains actual *evidence* for funding public transport.

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: Some peak fare premium is necessary – but ScotRail has used the concept to rip customers off, eg, when they travel on the Inverness-Perth route before 9.30am, even though Inverness Station has no real ‘peak’ and no discernible rush hour.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Not just by how many people use them (and we need reliable figures for that) but also how this compares with the quality and frequency of service and the availability of recent fares (articles in the SGJ issue I referred to will be helpful on this). ScotRail still offer no cheap day return fares from Glasgow to most stations on the West Highland or Highland lines and so effectively decline much of the potential leisure market (though in the former case, the awful timetable doesn’t help). Be aware, though, that when you even talk about closing stations, you assume the mantle of Beeching and your political career (whoever is reading this) is over.

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: See the role of the Friends of the Settle and Carlisle Line.

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:

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

Q28 comments: 'Categories' of station is a daft idea. For the customer, a station is where they catch trains. Categories will mean nothing; unless raising this idea is a back-door way of suggesting further de-staffing, in which case, forget it.

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: Whoever suggested mooting this proposal has, I hope, already been sacked. As your report states, some of these services are quieter north of Edin/Glas. They are also, often, quieter north of Carlisle/Newcastle; perhaps we should scrap them altogether and simply run ScotRail Sprinters down to London (note – sarcasm). CrossCountry, Virgin and East Coast services not only provide through travel from England to 'the rest of Scotland' but also journey opportunities *within* Scotland on better trains than ScotRail offer and often for cheaper fares. If ScotRail lose income out of this, let them review their fares and/or get trains that are less rubbish. That's what the private sector is supposed to be about. Rather, we should be looking for additional cross-border services serving Scotland – a CrossCountry or Virgin Voyager continuing beyond Aberdeen to Inverness, say, or beyond Edinburgh to Fort William. There's nothing new about this – there were two daytime trains from Inverness to London as recently as the late 80s.

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: Don't be daft. I'll underline; **people don't like changing trains unnecessarily. You will be condemning Scotland to second-class ScotRail trains. There would be no benefits to customers from an Edinburgh 'hub' which would quickly become a symbol of Scotland's third-class railway.** Enough of this.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Owing to daft franchising decisions by Westminster Governments, some cross-border services by Virgin, CrossCountry and TransPennine operate diesel trains under the wires for much or all of their journeys. This is insane, environmentally inept and should be sorted out between the Governments. Some Voyager services could be diverted to run via the unelectrified Dumfries/Kilmarnock route to give those major stations better links south and a relief from grim 156 Sprinter trains.

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

Q32 comments: Better onboard services the longer the journey. Which begs the question – why are the woeful 156 units in use for the 6-hour trip to Mallaig, with no first class or decent catering? The same goes for Oban services and those to Carlisle via Dumfries, in the latter case with no catering at all. 158s on the Thurso and Kyle runs are considerably better if not perfect and should be considered for the above routes – there can be a form of First Class on them, as well. 156s are used for the 15-minute run to Paisley Canal, so they are clearly a daft choice for long-distance travel. Refurbish Central Scotland 158s for use on the long-distance routes and return the 156s to local services, which is all they're suited for.

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: ScotRail seem deaf to pleas for WiFi, though it is probably difficult to install on their awful train fleet.

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: By careful management. It's not rocket science. Though ScotRail First Class is scarcely that and they are reluctant to even consider it on routes where it is not currently available, even though, on the Thurso/Kyle routes the 158 units actually have a First Class section.

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

Q35 comments:

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

Q36 comments: Passenger information is one thing that is probably better than it has ever been. Though ScotRail are notoriously unwilling to inform passengers about ways to avoid their fare imbalances (compare, say, the price of a day return from Lenzie to Bathgate, with the cost of day returns from Lenzie to Glasgow and Glasgow to Bathgate. You effectively halve the cost, but ScotRail won't tell you).

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, of course you should, and this issue has now been taken out of the consultation's hands, because someone, somewhere, realised what a daft proposal removing them was.

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:

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: On the runs to Inverness and Fort William it is worth considering some low-cost 'couchette' type accommodation for the backpacker market. That's a bit innovative for ScotRail so someone should suggest it to them. Again. Also, a connection to Oban from the Fort William Sleeper is badly needed (as are more services generally on the Oban line).

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: See my above point about diesels running under electric wires. Also, ease of access to stations for non-motorists. Too many 'bus links to stations are perfunctory and do not 'connect'. That's privatisation and deregulation for you, I suppose.