

(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?

Please tick as appropriate ☒ Yes ☐ No

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: I think it important that the Scottish rail services are operated as a single franchise, to maintain integration. That said, there may be merit in dual focus, analogous as it is to the present arrangement for non-subsidised and subsidised bus services. The division should not necessarily be on the basis of route alone; for example, some evening and week-end services on commuter routes (busy during peak periods) should be operated as social services, as they may be the only means for people in those communities to travel, out of peak hours.

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

Q2 comments: Long enough for there to be an incentive to the franchisee to improve service and reap the rewards generated by the improvement.

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: I find it hard to see how third parties could sensibly contribute to the running of rail services themselves, but there could be scope for the provision of on-train trolley services, or the lease of shop or similar units within stations.

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: Both.

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: It should probably be aligned with service groups, e.g. commuter lines, inter-city, and rural routes.

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

Q11 comments: Performance outcome on any given route should be measured by a combination of passenger satisfaction and passenger numbers.

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

Q12 comments: A major factor in my choosing to use a rail service is whether it will make timetabled connections, either within the rail network or with other modes of public transport. That being so, it is more important to have a timetable that is reliably met, than to have an advertised timetable that offers a potentially faster 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: The existing SQUIRE arrangements described in the document sound sensible and desirable. Clearly, where assets are managed

by a different body, the findings and consequences need to be directed appropriately.

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: Personal experience suggests that on certain peak-period commuter trains such as Stonehaven-Aberdeen, many passengers regularly stand for the whole journey of well over 10 minutes. Recognising the inefficiency of adding carriages which are under-used for the rest of the day, I suggest that rather than setting arbitrary limits to standing time, efforts are directed to greater use of fare differentials to try to spread demand over a longer time period.

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: Direct services are not only convenient but also offer the assurance that the journey will not be disrupted by a missed connection, if one train should be delayed. I would be against reducing the number of direct services, and in fact I would suggest that more direct services from (for example) Huntly, Inverurie and Inverurie to Edinburgh/Glasgow and vice versa would encourage use.

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 Government should set minimum frequencies for certain lines, where traffic is light. In return, financial consequences for the franchisee must be recognised.

Another area that Government should direct is inter-connectivity between rail and other services. For example, it is currently not possible to travel by public transport from Kemnay to the Strathclyde area for a week-end, unless one is willing to set off for home early on Sunday afternoon, because the tea-time Sunday train from Glasgow arrives in Aberdeen after the last bus to Kemnay

has left. The Government needs to knock heads together!

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

Q18 comments: Targeted specification, as per Option 3 in the document.

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: To spread peak-hour demand over a longer period. More generally, to encourage rail use by people who have alternative means of making the journey, e.g. by coach or private car.

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 on rural lines should be regulated, recognising that such lines have low demand but are vital to the local community and economy.

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: Taxpayer subsidy needs to be analysed per passenger-mile, rather than just as the raw sums. If fares are set so high as to discourage usage, the subsidy per passenger will as a result increase.

Rail fares in the UK are already notoriously high in comparison with other rail systems, and increases that are set above RPI are almost a guarantee that that situation will worsen. The rate of increase should be limited to no more than RPI.

There is at best only limited scope for increasing fares on enhanced sections as this will discourage use, which would defeat the objective.

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: There needs to be a significant premium for travel on those peak-period services which are regularly over-full. Research is needed as to how large the differential needs to be, in order to spread demand. A three-level (peak, shoulder, off-peak) rather than two-level regime is worth considering.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Changing patterns of population may well justify a new station. The population within (say) 2 miles of each potential station site should be calculated. A clear example is Kintore, which is now a substantial town, on a railway line but still with no station despite local lobbying.

Conversely, scarce passenger use at existing stations is an indication for closure, especially if there is another station within a mile or so.

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: It may well be advantageous to allow third parties, including local councils, to provide stations in return for some share of the revenue from passengers alighting or boarding at those stations. I say this because Network Rail has been dreadfully slow at providing new stations, e.g. the greatly expanded town of Kintore has been crying out for a station for years, with no progress. Local bodies might show more commitment in getting things done.

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: Not necessarily one organisation. The franchisee is unlikely to want to spend on a station when there is no guarantee its franchise will continue beyond its initial term, unless there is a guarantee of recompense for capital expenditure at the end of the franchise.

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

Q27 comments: By including leased facilities such as cafés and shops within the station premises, by ensuring co-ordinated timing with local bus services, and by having adequate car parking adjacent.

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

Q28 comments: Table 6 is a good basis, except that the first category should be "Principal" not "Principle". Category "Interchange" should include interchanges with bus services, not just other rail services. "Tourist" and "Other" should be merged as "Rural", since all stations provide some kind of transport connection, if only to travel by private car.

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: It would be a significant disincentive for cross-border passengers from north of the central belt to have to change in Edinburgh. Therefore, a number of through trains from Aberdeen and Inverness should be retained. These should be integrated with the ScotRail timetable, so that there is not a competing ScotRail service to/from Edinburgh either just before or shortly after the cross-border service to/from Edinburgh, resulting in under-utilisation of both 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: No.

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: Toilet facilities should be provided on every train. As a minimum, hot drinks and sandwiches should be available on all inter-city journeys. A majority of seats on long-distance routes should be at tables.

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: Personally, I do not find these important but I recognise that there may be demand from others.

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: If we have first class at all, there is an inevitable seating problem because many long-distance trains act as busy commuter services over sections of their routes. The balance is perhaps best left to the franchisee.

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

Q35 comments: There is certainly a case for banning the carriage of open containers of alcohol on trains, and stipulating that only alcohol bought on trains may be consumed. The underlying assumption is, of course, that catering staff will refuse to sell excessive amounts to passengers.

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

Q36 comments: Information about how connections will be affected by late running is currently seldom available on trains, and causes much concern to delayed passengers.

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: Sleepers are the only really attractive alternative to flying, as a means of getting from north Scotland to London without losing a day in travelling. For environmental and social reasons, it would be very undesirable if they were lost, as might happen if they are not specified.

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: Perhaps they could be contracted to cross-border operating companies, but this would require close investigation.

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: As stated above, sleepers are the only really attractive alternative to flying, as a means of getting from northern Scotland to London. They are especially attractive for attending meetings or events that begin early in the morning, in or near London.

As a major ferry port and yachting centre, Oban would appear to justify a service at least as much as Fort William does. A service merging/splitting at Crianlarich would seem an obvious possibility.

Between Aberdeen and Inverness, late-evening guaranteed connecting services could assist people from e.g. Elgin, Huntly and Inverurie to use the sleepers (if it is not practicable to run a sleeper service on that route).

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: The franchisee should produce an annual calculation of its carbon emissions, not only from trains but from its vehicles, its buildings, its workshops and yards, and its share of the emissions from power stations for

its electric trains. The total should then be expressed in kg per passenger-mile (or passenger-km, in this metric age!). There should be a reasonable target for year-on-year reduction in that figure.

