

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:

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: Performance should be determined sufficiently locally that it reflects the experience of customers on a given route.

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:

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:

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: Removing first class from journeys under about 100 miles would reduce the need for ordinary passengers to stand.

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 seems odd to think of direct services and interchanges as competing with one another. Trains should continue to serve the interchange stations along their routes, but there seems to be no benefit in stopping them short. In relevant cases, extra interchange stops should be added. An example would be adding a stop at a new interchange station close to Edinburgh Airport, facilitating tram journeys.

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:

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:

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares policy should encourage rail travel, mindful of its wider economic and environmental benefits. Economic calculations need to account for these benefits.

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:

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: Fares are currently too high for many would-be travellers and already increasing beyond inflation. Further increases should be limited to

RPI.

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: Must balance fairness to those who need to travel in the peak against the benefits of utilising spare off-peak capacity.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Experience shows that closing stations is almost always a false economy in the longer term. A useful minimum level of service should be set in the franchise for each station, preventing recourse to “parliamentary” skeleton services.

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:

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: By providing better and more frequent services at even less used stations. Stations such as Monifieth, Broughty Ferry, Invergowrie and Springfield should have more than a skeleton service.

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

Q28 comments:

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: Direct services to London and other major destinations in England are essential to the economy of Fife, Tayside and Aberdeen. They maximise the opportunities for businesses in the rest of the UK to bring trade and investment into the East and North of Scotland. The closer we are perceived to be to major cities elsewhere in the UK, the better. A requirement to change at Edinburgh would be a major disincentive to doing business in Fife or Dundee.

Direct train services also allow many Scots to retain family links with those living south of the border more easily, without needing to own and drive a car. Long distance travelling from Scotland often requires luggage for several nights away, and many travelling groups include children. An extra change of trains is stressful as well as time-consuming, giving extra risks of delay, missed connections, lost luggage or failing to find the right platform at the confusing Waverley station. Would we want to have to lug our cases around, wait for half an hour and then try to find another set of seats on a second train?

Direct train services to England are a critical link, and their loss might well tip the balance in favour of less green travel options like car or air.

Cross-border services concern both England and Scotland and are properly a matter for the UK Government to oversee.

The specification for the East Coast franchise should in future include a requirement for the direct London-Aberdeen services to continue to service all the currently served stations in Scotland, as well as stops at Peterborough to connect with the East of England. The removal of most of these stops in a recent timetable change makes journeys such as Norwich-Aberdeen or Cambridge-Leuchars much harder than they should be.

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: Terminating at Edinburgh brings no benefits at all. No-one considers extra waiting, extra carrying around of luggage, and risks of missed connections to be benefits. Anyone wanting to make Scottish connections at Edinburgh is free to get off the train there already! Direct services to England from Dundee or Aberdeen are faster and more convenient, both in reality and perception.

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: Catering and toilets are very valuable to passengers.

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:

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: The principle should be that no-one should stand on trains with empty seats. First class on packed trains is resented by many more customers than it is valued by.

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: Computer terminals providing links to online transport information. I think these exist at Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Queen Street and could be rolled out further.

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: Sleeper services play an important role and their continuation should be a franchise requirement.

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: I think that standard class passengers travelling on their own could reasonably expect single occupancy rather than sharing with a stranger. There should be a specific single supplement price set to guarantee sole occupancy.

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: