

## Consultation Questions

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### Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Keep the fares in line with inflation and comparable to a journey by car to London (e.g. for sleeper service).

### Scottish stations

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: Yes, for universal standards.

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

Q28 comments: Level access should be a must.

### 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: Absolutely, yes. This is essential. At the moment, Scotland and England are still both in the UK. I imagine the majority of passengers are from these countries, so these train services provide services that meet the needs of these citizens. They enable leisure travel and business meetings. Good public travel links should be of interest to the taxpayer and for the health of the economy this is vital.

Dept of Transport should specify these services with consultation with Scottish Ministers.

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, definitely not, because we want a proper, through service. There are problems for passengers associated with broken-up journeys. They work out more expensive, generally, and they are problematic to book. **These are also majorly disadvantageous for older and disabled people – it would be prejudicial against them to introduce more barriers to their journey.** I also imagine that business people will not want too many interruptions to their trip.

### 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: You should definitely specify sleeper services as this service has been going for over a hundred years. Therefore, it is historically important. Also, passenger numbers have been increasing recently, as people discover the benefits of the sleeper service, compared with catching early morning flights. Rail travel is much more convenient and civilised, e.g. no security scans and passport control. It also gets you from city *centre* to city *centre*. I find the quality of accommodation (berths) acceptable – I do not think they require an upgrade. You could possibly convert one or two compartments for luxury upgrades, but I am not sure if this is worthwhile, and I am happy with the arrangement as it is – en suite facilities are not essential. I take the sleeper services between London and Aberdeen approximately 30 times a year, so I have a strong and well-informed view on this from my experience. I have been travelling along this route for over 60 years and intend to continue for at least another 40 years. I have travelled extensively on rail services (including sleeper services) in over 35 countries throughout the world, so I am qualified to make comparisons and would be happy to discuss this further with anyone in person. For example, returning to the issue of whether or not to upgrade berths, I would like to draw your attention to the rail network in France. They have a noticeably comfortable service between Paris and Barcelona/Madrid, but the rest of the network is significantly less comfortable than the Caledonian Sleeper, as they have done away with the *wagon-lits*.

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: I would like for ScotRail to continue with providing the Caledonian Sleeper service because I have had many negative experiences with other (private) providers, such as Virgin Rail. Also, I trust ScotRail not to submit to pressures to increase prices disproportionately. Lastly, where one provider has extensive coverage of routes, they can make efficiency savings, through economies of scale and booking systems are easier to negotiate for customers. It can be very confusing and obscure to deal with separate companies on one journey – it often works out to be more expensive, due to

this confusion. For example, taking the day train is not a straightforward transaction, as it is a different company from ScotRail, and one has to buy two singles.

The franchise ought to be for a minimum of fifteen years (or longer). This allows for solid planning for network infrastructure maintenance and improvement works. Also, it helps to reassure customers when they know there is continuity of reliable service. The other thing is that for people coming to London or Scotland for day-trips, having a reliable sleeper train service cuts out the hassle and expense of renting a hotel room overnight. Also, sleeper services mean that people can rest while they travel, which isn't the case with budget flights, so they can make early morning meetings, for example. I often meet oil executives on the sleeper train services – they make extensive use of this service to Aberdeen.

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:

For appeal of the sleeper service, please see above. Having earlier/later day services would not detract from the appeal of the Caledonian Sleeper for me because I want to make the most of the day in Scotland/London, and I have no trouble sleeping on the train.

Aberdeen and Inverness are essential as the Inverness service means that people from far north can get to London by train – the same applies from Aberdeen, e.g. via Huntley/Elgin/Inverurie. I am aware that many of my friends make use of and benefit from this service. Re: Fort William/Oban: I believe that ferries leave for the Outer Hebrides from Oban, so this could possibly be an alternative to Fort William, but I don't have a strong opinion on this. I have met many climbers who go to Fort William using the sleeper service.

Sleeper services should definitely provide berths and seats. Berths can be shared. As mentioned above, you could have limited luxury cabins (e.g. two per train) in first class. In first class, the beds are the same width as the beds in standard class, so I feel that first class passengers aren't getting much more. In the pre-1970s sleeper trains, the first class beds were wider and

noticeably more comfortable than the standard class ones, but as I usually do not travel first class, this is not an issue for me. I use the restaurant every time I take the sleeper service. I would welcome properly cooked meals, rather than microwave fare, but I understand the difficulties of providing this.