

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?
2. What should be the length of the contract for future franchises, and what factors lead you to this view?
3. What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?
4. What, if any, profit share mechanism should apply within the franchise?
5. Under what terms should third parties be involved in the operation of passenger rail services?

Q5 comments: In general, I think that 'less is best' and that the fewer companies etc involved, there's less bureaucracy (and therefore costs).

6. What is the best way to structure and incentivise the achievement of outcome measures whilst ensuring value for money?
7. What level of performance bond and/or parent company guarantees are appropriate?
8. What sanctions should be used to ensure the franchisee fulfils its franchise commitments?

Q8 comments: Penalties must be heavy enough to deter any non-fulfilment of agreed services/works. Probably monetary? But penalties must be applied promptly and with the full force of law.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

9. Under the franchise, should we incentivise good performance or only penalise poor performance?

Q9 comments: "Good Performance" should be standard and therefore no *incentives* should be offered. "Poor Performance" should and must be penalised BUT there should be clear and concise statements within any contracts, showing: the level of performance expected and the penalties for non-adherence to these standards. Performance should be checked *very* regularly and any penalties should be applied as promptly as possible (and in as simple a way as possible to limit administration costs). Penalties should be prompt and stiff enough to 'encourage' compliance with signed contracts. At all times, should be remembered that public money is being used – not 'fun money'.

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: Simplify wherever possible, cuts costs and hassle. So – one system s

everyone knows the rules.

11. How can we make the performance regime more aligned with passenger issues?
12. What should the balance be between journey times and performance?
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: This word '*Incentive*' again. I put emphasis differently; *Quality* should be guaranteed, failure to provide it should incur *Penalties*.

14. What other mechanisms could be used for assessing train and station quality?

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?
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?
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: I would prefer the Government to have control.

18. What level of contract specification should we use the for the next ScotRail franchise?
19. How should the contract incentivise the franchisee to be innovative in the provision of services?

Q19 comments: *Incentive* again. If the franchisee is any use, they should automatically come up with good ideas. They shouldn't need persuading.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: The purpose of a transport system should be to provide a service which is safe, reliable, clean and as comfortable as possible so that more and more people want to use it and Value for Money – success on these points would ensure fewer empty seats and a greater amount being raised by passengers to go towards total costs. The fare structure should be as simple as possible - still rather complicated these days. The important thing should be to make the fares affordable, fair and value for money.

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: A good transport system is so important that I feel the government should have the final word as they are answerable to voters, whereas commercial organisations are ruled by profit margins.

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: I feel that ongoing improvements should be made to the rail network, bearing in mind my comments in Q20. If this is followed, resultant increase in passengers would bring in more revenue. I think fares should be kept as low as humanly possible, and I don't think higher increases to enhanced sections is the right way to go. 'Enhancement' I take to mean 'improvements' and if this is so, then improvements should be done on priority basis, and as a rolling practice to ensure best possible service etc all round.

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: Mixed feelings. Lots of staggered work hours these days so perhaps not as necessary as it once was. Perhaps still useful to restrict some/all cheaper fares to after 0900hrs though.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: This is very difficult. I don't think it can be determined solely on usage though. The worst thing that happened to rail travel was the closures of so many stations by Dr Beeching. The railway was a vital link to many small communities and when their stations closed, great hardship resulted and some places became ghost towns. We need more railway stations, not less. We need to get more people/cars/lorries etc off the roads and onto trains. They keep talking about building more roads but destroys more countryside and really just produces more cars. Cheaper, safer, more comfortable to make more use of our railway tracks.

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: Too haphazard.

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 is preferable in my view – less duplication of time, money etc. But I'm not qualified to comment further.

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

Q27 comments: Local press articles / posters / Community groups etc – publicising station location, and ensure station clean, well-lit, some shelter and good timetable notices. Good station & train staff are a very big plus and cannot be valued too highly.

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

Q28 comments: Not sure exactly what this means.

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: Logically, see the benefit in having cross-border services going north Edinburgh, but not qualified to answer further.

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: Can see the logic in this for Scotland but if something sensible and simple could be worked out, then still think trains from south should be able to carry straight up north, and vice versa.

Rolling stock

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

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

Q32 comments: Toilets, rubbish bins as standard

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: Don't think this necessary on short haul routes, and should be limited long haul to specific carriages, which should be clearly marked.

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: Standard seating capacity should always have priority.

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

Q35 comments: I see no real reason why alcohol need be available on trains, even long-haul. Possible problems and difficulties, in my mind, far outweigh the opportunity have a glass of wine or whatever on a journey. I realise, however, that I may well be in the minority. BUT many people who might approve alcohol would be the first to complain if their journey was disrupted or disturbed by the few who know no sense of moderation.

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

Q36 comments: It would be very helpful if printed timetables at stations could be in bigger font; or printed 'landscape' so that one could actually read the top sections when necessary. Where sensible, interactive screens would be helpful so that one could check up on train times etc.

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: Never use this service but can see that some sleeper services could be a sensible and viable option for some travellers.

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: Wherever possible, I think all rail services should be under one main leadership.

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: Have not used sleeper services for nearly 40 years so cannot really comment, except to say that I do NOT think luxury should be provided for some or all sleeper services.

Environmental issues

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?