

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:

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: Improved journey times are worthless if the performance doesn't match. No use having a quicker journey on paper if the train is delayed or cancelled.

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: I am already displeased to pay full price for a ticket and often have to stand in overcrowded conditions. Other measures should be used to overcome capacity issues.

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:

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: Government should have a role.

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: Encourage modal shift from private car to public transport. Ensure rail travel is accessible for all and that the service is considered good value by customers.

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: Perception as a passenger is that fares constantly increase while service quality does not follow.

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: Many people need to commute at peak times regardless of peak/off-peak fares and times.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Passenger demand and social need.

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:

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

Q28 comments: Good passenger waiting facilities - covered seating areas available at all times of day.

Where information is provided - it MUST be reliable and accurate; information screens consistently show out of date and plain wrong information, even when for example mobile websites are showing accurate information at exactly the same time. Information should be SIMPLE to understand for all passengers, not just for rail professionals - for example CLEAR instructions about front trains and back trains at a platform, for example on the Fife Circle trains on both platforms show as destination Edinburgh, which is confusing.

Large amounts of high quality, secure cycle parking should be available at all stations to encourage cycle-rail journeys. This should not be based on a percentage of car parking spaces but on potential demand for cycle parking only (see Dutch stations for inspiration!). Rail stations should link into local cycle networks.

Rail stations should closely integrate with local bus services (bus stop locations and also service timings).

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: Yes, services should continue north of Edinburgh. Not to do so would be a backward step for all living on lines to Aberdeen etc. who can currently benefit from direct links south.

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. These connections can still happen but there is no need to terminate services here.

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: This is a difficult issue - on many services there is overcrowding for all passengers and also demand for space allocated to specific user groups.

Existing free cycle carriage is very welcome and should continue. Booking on some services for cycle carriage seems a sensible approach and has worked well in my experience (for example Glasgow-Fort William).

If practically possible cycle spaces should not be doubled up with wheelchair spaces. Similarly there should be space for both pushchairs/buggies and bicycles to be carried.

Sufficient luggage space is also important.

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: These would improve service quality but there are many other priorities which should come first - reliability, frequency, overcrowding, information.

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:

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: As noted in response to Q28 information at stations is often extremely poor - not up to date and not accurate. A typical example is a 17:00 train showing "On Time" at 17:05, having not arrived at the station.

Information on station monitors is so unreliable I always assume that it may well be wrong. Station staff typically are very helpful in these cases but the information should be right in the first instance.

Information on trains is also unreliable. Automated announcements seem to regularly go wrong, causing uncertainty and even panic among passengers who think they are on the wrong train. In some cases automated announcements are doubled up with 'live' repeats of the same information - why?

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 I put a lot of value on the sleeper services.

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: The Sleeper appeals as a good way to get to London and beyond - leaving late in the evening and arriving in the morning is practical, comfortable and good value and is preferable for me to a domestic flight.

Sleeper services from stations north of Edinburgh are of value in creating links for these places to access London in the manner described above.

I would potentially pay more for better facilities (more comfortable cabin, Wi-Fi, entertainment etc) but consider the current facilities sufficient and good value.

The booking system is somewhat bizarre with Bargain Berths being booked through an entirely separate, almost hidden, system to regular tickets. However Bargain Berths are excellent value.

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: Low carbon power sources. Rail should be competitive in carbon/passenger km versus other modes of travel.

Low noise impacts are also important.

KPIs should also consider wider promotion of sustainable travel for example through cycle parking to encourage bike-rail trips.