

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:

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: Standing times of more than 5 minutes serve no purpose and simply infuriate passengers. There is nothing worse than sitting in a train that is not going anywhere whether it be deliberate or as a result of uncontrollable conditions. It should be left to the operator to determine optimum capacities in line with minimum service provision requirements.

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: This is a very negative approach. Every time a passenger wants to travel to a destination the ideal is to get one direct train. This is particularly true of the elderly and infirm who find changing trains more difficult. Reducing the number of direct services is not what any passenger wants.

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: Certain minimum service levels are essential since some outlying services would be scrapped otherwise.

18. What level of contract specification should we use the 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: Encouraging people to use the rail services as much as possible and reduce the pressure on the roads.

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: Regulation is only required where people have little or no choice how they travel. This should include commuters into the larger cities since public transport is the only practical alternative for many people. This may also apply to outlying areas as well.

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 should be set at a rate that does encourage people to use rail instead of cars and to optimise the available capacity. Greater capacity may be added later where services are oversubscribed but this takes a significant time to bring in but in general fares should not be used to reduce rail travel. Once the right level has been set then the Government subsidy should be set to ensure that the system is attractive to bidders and this brings in good quality providers.

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:

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: This should be entirely a matter for the community that the station serves. The railways are a public service first and foremost.

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: The railway is a public service so this is entirely appropriate.

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: The franchisee should be in control of as much of the system as possible. Ideally this would include the track as well but the current structure probably precludes this. Time and again it has been shown that a railway that does not control all of the infrastructure operates with one hand tied behind its back.

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

Q27 comments: By making them value the service provided, hence giving people what they need.

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: Everyone I know wants to avoid changing trains wherever possible. This cuts journey times, reduces hassle, particularly with luggage to carry, and makes travel easier for the elderly and infirm. This particularly applies to cross border services. To say these are under-utilised north of Edinburgh or Glasgow seems strange as these trains always seem pretty busy when I use them. It is only north of Dundee that the East coast line starts to get less crowded. Saying that the revenue to the Scottish franchisee would increase and the subsidy required would decrease is all very well but this would almost certainly be accompanied by an increase in fares for the services from Edinburgh/Glasgow to England. This is not a good deal for the passenger. I have often travelled on a train from London which reaches Edinburgh at around 5pm and this becomes a desirable commuter train. Such services complement the Scotrail services very usefully. Cross border services are one of the few railways that are reasonably lucrative for operators so it is likely that the provision of services can be left to the franchise owner to respond to demand rather than being subject to Government specification wherever it is based.

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, this would be a retrograde step for passenger service and would reduce the appeal of rail travel just when we need to increase its attractiveness. We want more direct services not less. The cities north of Edinburgh/Glasgow will be made more isolated if services stop in the central belt and this will harm personal lives and business opportunities alike.

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:

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:

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:

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: I suspect that the sleeper services would be okay to leave to commercial forces.

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 think it would be useful to have the sleeper service part of the main Scottish franchise. At the moment the distinction between the two can be a nuisance and I would suspect that it would be more efficient to combine the two.

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:

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: