

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: They cannot be neatly split – there is a continuum between economic and social services.

2. What should be the length of the contract for future franchises, and what factors lead you to this view?

Q2 comments: A long contract needs to be linked with commitments to long-term investment

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: They should have targets for growth in passenger numbers

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: organisations are famously excellent at achieving targets, without actually delivering the outcomes which the targets were intended to measure.

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: Clearly, the timetable must be realistic, but there has been a tendency to pad the timetable to avoid penalties from late running

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: This may be necessary in the Glasgow area because trains cannot be lengthened beyond 6 carriages.

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: Many longer-distance passengers are only occasional travellers. They are nervous about changing trains and need direct services.

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: To encourage people to use the trains more often.

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: public transport is essential to the economies of our larger towns and cities. By reducing congestion, they leave space for those who have to use the roads – so it is perfectly logical to subsidise rail services.

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: The use of stored-value smart cards should make it easier to charge more flexibly. Many people travel one way in the peak, but the other way off-peak. Many others travel regularly, but not every day (e.g. hospital staff, who often work 3-4 12-hour shifts), so season tickets are not suitable. Some of the mobile phone packages deals might give ideas – if £100 is stored on your card, then free or cheap off-peak travel should be available for the next month or so. The 'bus pass' should give much-reduced fares at less-busy times.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: It is quite possible that some stations are no longer in the correct place for their community – they need to be located at major traffic origins/destinations.

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: There are merits in this – eg a tourist organisation could promote additional trains in early and late season when they might not be viable through fares.

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: Communities should be made helped to make their station into the hub of their community.

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: They should continue to go North. Long-distance passengers are usually infrequent travellers, with luggage, and often nervous -eg the older generation visiting their family. They would be unlikely to travel at all if they had to change. The East-Coast trains are also popular for internal journeys because of their environment is pleasanter – eg quieter (no underfloor engines). Class 170s are not InterCity trains. The problem of revenue sharing is a UK-wide problem and needs a UK-wide solution.

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: I see no benefits to passengers

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: free WiFi is essential so that people can work on their journey

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: essential

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: There have been too many complaints of drunk passengers on trains, and some people recommend travel by bus for this reason.

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

Q36 comments: As in London, service information should be easily accessible by smartphones.

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:

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: With the only other Sleeper being to Cornwall, and the suggestion that they run into Waterloo, a UK franchise is a possibility. There is no doubt that they suffer at the London end because they are not operated by the West Coast Franchisee.

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 document does not give any details of revenue, occupancy etc. Current locomotives are not allowed on the Oban section.

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: