

## Consultation Questions

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### 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: The thinktank Just Economics recently reported that UK rail services were less affordable, less comfortable, slower, more inefficient and more expensive than those in France, Germany, Spain and Italy. There would appear to be a number of lessons to be learnt at a structural level by looking at Continental comparators. My impression is that they are far less fragmented and spend much less on railway bureaucracy without the crazy UK plethora of infrastructure, operating and leasing companies and accompanying executives, administrators, shareholders, advisers and regulators, civil servants etc.

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: Penalise poor performance only. The franchisee should make money from doing the job properly, which ought to be incentive enough. Otherwise it's like paying the bankers a huge amount of basic salary and then promising them even more if they just do their job.

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: One system.

11. How can we make the performance regime more aligned with passenger issues?

Q11 comments: Award the franchise to a mutual, social or not-for-profit enterprise, so that there is less risk of performance being skewed by the need to generate profit (which are not real 'profits' anyway, as the whole system is subsidised much more now than it was under British Rail).

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: Yes, SQUIRE regime is needed and it should apply to all aspects of station and service delivery.

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: 10 mins is an acceptable limit.

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: No. Interchange services are never as convenient for passengers as through services. A situation could be envisaged where the onward part of the journey becomes even less economic (through passengers transferring to a more convenient alternative). An unscrupulous operator might use this opportunity to make a service so uneconomic that it can justify axing it altogether.

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 direct (high) minimum levels of frequency and (short) journey times. Experience has shown some franchisees going to extraordinary lengths to maximise profits at the expense of passengers by manipulating frequency and journey times where they have the opportunity.

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: The fares policy should aim to achieve simplicity, transparency and best value for passengers however they buy their tickets. The nonsense of having to buy a pile of single tickets to get the cheapest fare on a return journey must end. Some other ridiculous anomalies should be abolished, like charging huge supplements to advance passengers who get

off the train *before* their ticketed destination.

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: Stop paying shareholders, fat-cat bosses and the myriad of lawyers, accountants, regulators and other snouts in the trough of the privatised railways and put that money back into the network. The idea of applying fare increases to 'enhanced' sections of the network is unfair and unworkable. It's supposed to be a network, like the motorway network – do motorists on the A1 from Edinburgh to Haddington have to pay extra because that section has been dualled recently? No way. How would you define 'recently enhanced'? If you were building a new TGV network, then possibly fair enough, but the likelihood is that the 'enhancements' are simply repairing tracks or modernising stations that should have been maintained and repaired properly anyway. Would passengers stop paying the increased fares once the enhancements were paid off? How would you calculate the increase? Faster trains might mean more services, which might lead to more fare-paying passengers, which might pay for the enhancements more equitably than fare increases. Electrification might be regarded as an enhancement, but the benefits are more widespread than just for passengers in terms of carbon emissions, noise, fuel efficiency – why should passengers pay extra for these broader environmental and public benefits? Would passengers who regularly suffer delays or overcrowding see their fares decreased until the problem was sorted? Why should passengers on a repaired route pick up the tab for previous chronic underinvestment and asset-stripping by Railtrack etc.

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:

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: I think the management and maintenance of stations should be the responsibility of one organisation. The system is fragmented enough without introducing further players and regulatory measures. Health & safety on the railways is a very specialised business, and it is better left to one organisation dedicated to railway infrastructure to deal with it.

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

Q27 comments: Making rail travel affordable, stations safe, accessible, warm and friendly, and providing appropriate services to travellers.

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

Q28 comments: All stations should have good quality cycle parking, and this provision should not be subordinated to maximising the number of car parking spaces. Certain major stations should have European-style "bike hubs" in recognition of the existing high level of cycling to that station and to encourage modal shift. Lifts should be long enough to accommodate cycles. (The recently installed lifts at Edinburgh Waverley and Haymarket, are slightly too short).

### **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:

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:

## **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: All trains should have enhanced cycle carrying capacity. Some trains have a ridiculously low capacity and a requirement to book in advance. I recently went on a cycling holiday on the West Coast and it was impossible for just 6 people to go on the same train with their own bikes (3 bikes was the maximum). Free cycle carriage should continue to be a franchise obligation. A minimum service provision to be included in the specification for the new Scotrail franchise relating to cycle carriage provision, with cycle capacity specified at two cycles per coach, in a flexible use space. This should apply at all new rolling stock – such as for EGIP – and also be retro applied to the existing fleet.

## **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:

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:

### **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: The franchise terms and key performance indicators should reflect Scottish Government policies to increase levels of walking & cycling (as transport modes as much as leisure activities).