

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:

Rather than trying to divide the franchise between commercial and social elements, break the franchise into smaller franchises with a local focus and more accountability as to where subsidy is required eg North (services into Inverness and Aberdeen together with Aberdeen/Inverness/Dundee/Perth to Edinburgh & Glasgow). East (services into Edinburgh from Fife, Stirling, Dunbar, Borders etc together with Edinburgh – Glasgow express via Falkirk). West (services into Glasgow Queen St & Central except Edinburgh via Falkirk). Sleeper (all parts).

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

Q2 comments:

8 years with 2 year extensions if performance measures are met. Long enough to encourage investment from the franchisee(s) but short enough to discourage complacency.

3. What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?

Q3 comments:

No Comments.

4. What, if any, profit share mechanism should apply within the franchise?

Q4 comments:

No Comments.

5. Under what terms should third parties be involved in the operation of passenger rail services?

Q5 comments:

Encourage Community Rail Partnerships and Community Station adoptions similar to the Northern Rail schemes.

6. What is the best way to structure and incentivise the achievement of outcome measures whilst ensuring value for money?

Q6 comments:

No Comments.

7. What level of performance bond and/or parent company guarantees are appropriate?

Q7 comments: No Comments

8. What sanctions should be used to ensure the franchisee fulfils its franchise commitments?

Q8 comments: No Comments

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Both

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: Align with routes in 3 groups - Express/Sleeper/Others

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

Q11 comments: Focus on punctuality as the key indicator

12. What should the balance be between journey times and performance?

Q12 comments: A focus on cutting city to city journey times overlooks the desire of the majority of rail users to travel into a city to/from towns along the route, the desire to cut journey times should not lead to the further worsening of these important journey opportunities.

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: No Comments

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

Q14 comments: No 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: Increasing the permitted standing time makes rail travel less attractive as does squeezing additional passengers into the existing fleet with the existing interior layout. 10 minutes should be the maximum standing time accepted. Increase the seating capacity in trains used on shorter routes by revising the layout to have more airline style seating with fewer bays of seats and tables.

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:

Forcing people to change trains is a disincentive to choose train travel. It is operational convenience driving change rather than customer need.

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:

Minimum standards should be specified in numbers of services per day and a minimum journey time that must be provided by a certain number of these services. The franchisee should be able to provide services above and beyond this minimum specification if they perceive demand to exist.

18. What level of contract specification should we use the for the next ScotRail franchise?

Q18 comments:

Minimum subsidy, specifying the basic level of service and allowing the franchisee to set fares with a maximum pre set level whilst providing any additional services where the franchisee perceives demand to exist.

19. How should the contract incentivise the franchisee to be innovative in the provision of services?

Q19 comments: Allow the franchisee to introduce any additional services and journeys (where capacity allows) as a commercial venture retaining the revenue that can be apportioned to passenger use of these.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

To encourage modal shift from car journeys to rail.

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: Apply a cap of a maximum annual increase to all fares.

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 raised using the average RPI inflation figure for the preceding 12 months as a maximum.

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:

Greater increases applied to peak fares and season tickets valid in the peak to increase the price differential. Introduce off peak/shoulder peak season tickets to encourage a spread of demand.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

Passenger usage.

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: No 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: No comments

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

Q27 comments: No comments

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

Q28 comments:

1. Principal (city) Station - eg Glasgow Queen Street, Edinburgh Haymarket
2. Main Station - eg Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Ayr
3. Other Staffed Station – full/part time
4. Unstaffed Station

Facilities (as a minimum):

Cat 4. Timetable on display, Lighting, local map

Cat 3. As Cat 4 plus real time train display, toilet open when staffed

Cat 2. As Cat 3 plus staffed at all times trains operate from the station, toilets, ticket office with pocket timetables, retail outlet for newspapers/light refreshments.

Cat 1. As Cat 2 with wider provision of retail outlets. All trains passing should call at Cat 1. & 2. Stations.

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, cross-border services should continue to go north of Edinburgh.

A higher standard of accommodation is offered on the intercity type trains

used on these services rather than the suburban type trains run by ScotRail.
The Department of Transport should specify these as part of a UK franchises.

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 benefits to rail users. Connections from to/from Fife and the north east coast stations are already poor, the loss of the few direct trains would worsen this. Waverley is one of the least attractive stations at which to change at due to the need to access stairs or lifts to reach many platforms.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:

Refit the 170 fleet used on local stopping services with higher density seating and fewer tables to increase capacity.

Investigate further cross border services being used to provide morning commuter services into Edinburgh prior to departing for Berwick or Carlisle eg 0742 Transpennine Express, 0852 Virgin and 0830 East Coast departures could all form commuter time arrivals into Edinburgh. This would reduce the number of units required by ScotRail which are only needed in the A.M. peak.

Increase prices of season tickets valid in the peak arrival time further and introduce off peak/shoulder peak season tickets to reduce the demand for peak time services.

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

Q32 comments:

1st class and catering on all long distance services (Aberdeen – Glasgow/Edinburgh, Inverness - Glasgow/Edinburgh, Glasgow – Edinburgh express, Perth - Glasgow/Edinburgh, Dundee - Glasgow/Edinburgh. It may also be viable on Inverness – Kyle/Wick and Glasgow – west highlands. These services should also continue to offer luggage racks and seats arranged around tables. Other services could be operated with higher density seating units with fewer tables and luggage areas provided.

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:

No requirement for either of these features. If there is a perceived demand then the franchisee should be permitted to pursue it as a commercial venture.

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:

Refit the 170 fleet used on local stopping services with higher density seating and fewer tables in bays to increase capacity. Preserve the ability to offer first class.

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

Q35 comments: No comments

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

Q36 comments: No 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: No 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:

Separately to allow the costs to be fully identified.

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: No 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: No comments