

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: The current is fine, TOCs are likely to become lazy over a longer franchise. The case for better investment with longer contracts are irrelevant if investment levels are agreed in the contract.

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: If they fail in their commitments, hit the business where it hurts and rake back their profit back into the public purse, funding future subsidy.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Only exceptionally good performance should be incentivised. There definitely needs to be a real threat of tough penalties of poor performance.

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: Each route. Means performance cannot be “averaged out” over the network.

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

Q11 comments: Retrieving the views of the passengers themselves regularly.

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: For the sake of the passengers, who we are told are at the heart of the network, it should account for all areas of passenger experience.

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

Q14 comments: Obtaining views from passengers

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: Rail tickets in the UK are expensive enough and a ticket should at least allow access to a seat. Understandably, some services are busier than others so the current 10 minute standing guideline should remain. Any longer and there is a risk passengers get no seat at all. Why should someone paying a full fare not be entitled to a seat when others are?

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: Interchanges to reach a final destination eg. cities and north of Edinburgh adds inconvenience to passengers and adds a window of time waiting in stations again when they could be travelling. Connections need to be timed well to keep this impact to a minimum but in times of disruption, it becomes easy to miss connections. This is less of a problem if you were to travel on a direct service. I think services should provide improved integration with other transport modes, particularly ferries and airports. The SW line should have been extended to Cairnryan to allow a credible express service via ferry to NI and the GARL should never have been cancelled despite much of the work being done already. The lack of this makes the integration of major transport hubs into the rail link not very "world class"

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: Determined by the government, that way there is some sort of regulation and the TOC cannot do simply what it pleases.

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

Q18 comments: Targeted

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

Q19 comments: Favourable consideration for the next franchise period.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares must be kept reasonable in the eyes of the passenger, not the TOC. Passengers want to see they are getting their money's worth from their ticket. Also, the fares - across the board, not just the cheap advance fares - should be such that they encourage the use of the rail network where possible.

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: 'Lifeline' ie. rural services should be regulated along with those routes used as commuter routes.

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: I think this is fair, as long as the improvement is noticeable to the passenger eg. new trains, faster services, but passengers wouldn't feel as if they were getting anything for their extra fare if for example the investment was in un-noticeable aspects such as new rails or signals. Care should be taken not to price out the potential new rail users that could be attracted to the network when a new line opens.

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: Off-peak fares need to be significantly cheaper if they were to change peoples commuting habits. Off peak services are quieter as they are exactly that - off peak. At the same time, passengers cannot be priced out of peak time trains. Peak time trains will always exist in a commuter rail network.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: As long as stations are RELOCATED and not necessarily closed to be of more use to the rail users ie. number stations stays the same on the line. The one mile plan is fair but it would need to be looked at how passengers using these stations would react to this.

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: Stations should be continued to be operated by the franchisee - more likely to see greater consistency.

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: Yes franchisee. That way station staff and the train operators are "all singing from the same hymn sheet"

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

Q27 comments: Use of disused buildings, gardening projects etc. Treating the station area as a gathering place like a public park in a way.

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

Q28 comments: I agree with those listed in the document. Commuter should have plenty of car parking. Some stations may fall into more than one category.

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: Inverness, Aberdeen and Dundee are all served on the east coast and should continue north as generally the rolling stock is of better quality and more fit for long distance purposes. Services terminating at Edinburgh may deter people from the hassle of changing train to travel north.

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: Carriages to be deployed more appropriately at peak times - more carriages where demand is greatest, less where demand is smaller. Rolling stock is generally of poor quality and needs a good clean but after travelling on a 380, it was a pleasure - so investing in decent rolling stock and scrapping the awful 156s (esp. long distance routes) over time could bring increased capacity and higher levels of comfort - attracting more passengers.

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 toilets and catering and first class should be available on longer routes.

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: There is a business case. Most other major national TOCs offer the service and Scotrail needs to stay competitive.

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: First class I would have thought is key for business travellers. Maybe would be more attractive if there was wi-fi. But if not viable then personally wouldn't miss it.

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

Q35 comments: You are not allowed to drink alcohol in any other public spaces so don't see why trains are any different. Only alcohol sold on board could be a policy to take up.

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

Q36 comments: On trains and at stations, rolling out the announcements and screens across the network. Provides up to the minute updates. On train systems need to be more reliable!

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: Continue to specify.

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: Again, I feel that it is better for the network to be operated by one 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:

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: