

## 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: While the definition of “social” versus “economic” may be useful to safeguard some of the services outside the Central Belt (more likely to be the ones labelled as “economic”), it may mean that those deemed “social” railways will then suffer from a lack of investment in new or improved services, or in infrastructure improvements.

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

Q2 comments: Given the current legislation that, in effect, requires the use of a franchise model, then, to allow for any inward investment by the franchisee, the length should be as long as possible – 10 years or more. A shorter term will not allow for any new rolling stock to be procured to give a realistic rate of return; even with mechanisms in place to allow for the asset value, these may not give sufficient incentive for the franchisee to invest.

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: On a route by route basis, where there is spare capacity (including freight), then an Open Access operator should be allowed to provide new passenger services.

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: The performance regime should have both incentives and penalties. Incentives should also be awarded for expanding services into new routes, as well as for significant increases in frequency on existing routes.

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: By setting the performance regime on a route by route basis, then there will be ways to award incentives, as outlined above.

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: For routes where the current end to end time is competitive with the comparable (peak time) road journey (eg: Glasgow – Edinburgh), then the balance should be skewed towards performance. For other routes (eg: Glasgow – Oban), then (infrastructure allowing), there should be more emphasis on the journey time.

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: Any successor to the current SQUIRE should cover all aspects – one side effect of the current set up is that “track” and “platform” are treated separately, leading to anomalies such as litter on the platform being swept on to the track area, to meet the quality requirements of the “platform”

part.

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

Q14 comments: Station quality should encourage development of new facilities – for example, the creation of shop units in stations that have currently out of use buildings. While train quality tends to focus on the immediate – litter removal, there should be incentives to develop better rolling stock ambience; seats that do not line up with windows should not be an acceptable design for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **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: With the current train capacity limitations (as a result of decades of reducing rolling stock down to the service requirements), attempts to relax the acceptable standing time limit would tend to encourage more reduction in rolling stock, if the revised limit could be reached with fewer

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: The existing set of direct services should be used as a baseline, with an increase in the use of interchanges being used to facilitate rail to other modes.

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: Service provision should use the current timetables as a baseline, with the franchisee able to “buy out” aspects, for example to reduce the number of trains on a route, or to increase the end-to-end time. However, the “buy out” cost should be set at a sufficient level that it does not act as an incentive to opt out of the “social” services

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: While service innovation is to be applauded, then the overall incentive should also be based on the increase in revenue that such a measure has created. For example, more use of on-train catering should be tempered with whether it has also increased revenue.

### **Scottish rail fares**

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

Q20 comments: Given the large number of fare anomalies, as often quoted in the press, there should be a far simpler policy, based on either distance travelled, or (as with the Dutch system), a national zone system, with fares between zones easily calculated, with a lesser value for intra-zone travel. This could be an extension of the existing SPT zone system, although some of the existing complexities of that system would need to be addressed.

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: The current system, where some kinds of ticket are regulated by government, and other kinds are not has led to some of the anomalies. Hence, any regulated fares should cover all ticket types. Franchise incentives could be given for using some commercial (downward) pricing to encourage travel in some of the lesser used 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:

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: For off-peak fares to act as an incentive to switch travelling time, there needs to be a widely publicised and consistent difference – say 25% reduction for off-peak. There also needs to be a consistent set of times; Glasgow – Edinburgh has different cut-off times in the morning, as well as also having an evening peak.

## **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments: While there are some under-utilised stations, there are also some where the lack of use is because of a lack of effective service – those near Dundee, such as Broughty Ferry used to have a regular service, which was inexplicably cut in years gone by. Hence, station usage should be tempered by the proportion of trains on that route that stop at that station. Provision of stations should, where possible, be tied more to the population centres. Where a station is remote from population, then consideration should be given to turning it in to a request stop before any attempt is made to close it.

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 old Strathclyde Passenger Transport mechanism for service provision worked well; when it changed to the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport, then it became less well-defined what the benefits were.

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: Stations with local involvement (such as Maxwell Park) clearly should be encouraged, with liaison with local community bodies being made directly by the franchisee.

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: Cross-border services should continue as they are as much as possible; with few current cross-border Aberdeen and Inverness services, cutting them off would only serve to isolate parts of Scotland outside the Central Belt.

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: There already are Scottish connections at Edinburgh from the cross-border services – Fife Circle; North Berwick; Bathgate (and the Borders line under construction), so creating an artificial barrier for those in, say, Dundee or Aberdeen would not be beneficial.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: With some of the other franchises currently looking to replace rolling stock, then it may be possible (given the reduced NPV of older stock), to lease some of the existing, surplus stock to boost 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: As a basic, the seats should be comfortable, and line up with the windows, so that there are not seats with only a view of a wall. Many modern designs fail to achieve this (something that was universal in 1950s to 1970s rolling stock). For anything longer than inner-suburban, then toilets should be considered essential, with catering and cycle rack provision for longer distance services.

## **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: With mobile signal already widespread in many areas, then WiFi provision on trains should start with those routes that already have provision (primarily those used by cross-border services)

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: In days gone by, the provision of first class seating was tempered with the provision of passenger incentives, such as reduced rate “weekend first” tickets. Virgin Trains still offers such a service.

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

Q35 comments: Other than the existing, local and specific bans around the time of large football matches, there should be no pandering to a New Temperance movement

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

Q36 comments: Looking at the London Underground, it is clear that every

single station not only has several large and clear maps on the platforms themselves, but also ready access to printed route maps. The current Scotrail map, derived from the SPT map, now fails to be as clear, as it colours all SPT routes the same, and does not provide an index to stations (as the LT map does). It is also not clearly displayed on every platform of every station. Outline service patterns and times to major destinations should also be clearly displayed.

### **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: As the sleeper may come under the “social” provision, then it should still be specified.

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: At the moment, London appears to be the destination – all the services are marketed as going to London. The Caledonian Sleeper should therefore be marketed with the Scottish destinations as the primary goal, from more English start points, such as from Cardiff, Bristol or Penzance.

With more services (in the 1980s, there was both an all-sleeper service and a mixed seated and sleeper service from both Glasgow and Edinburgh to London, while there used to be more English destinations), then the seated portion would be competitive with the overnight bus services.

Fort William is a good destination in the summer, as the sleeper will connect with the Jacobite steam train. It may even be possible to alternate Fort William and Oban as destinations, with them being served every other day.



## **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: