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Consultation Questions

The answer boxes will expand as you type.

Procuring rail passenger services

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: X

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

Q2 comments: X

What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?

Q3 comments: X

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

Q4 comments: X

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

Q5 comments: X

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

Q6 comments: X

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

Q7 comments: X

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

Q8 comments: X

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: X

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: X

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

Q11 comments: X

What should the balance be between journey times and performance?

Q12 comments: X

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: Offer a longer contract but say it will be terminated if the travelling environment is not looked after properly with the usual warnings before termination. This should include the proper care and maintenance of listed buildings.

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

Q14 comments: The successful rail company should file an online report for each station with all repairs, maintenance and regular cleaning accounted regularly. Aspirational objectives should be agreed for each station with reports of completion/failure to complete so that the public can be better informed and able to make better justified complaints.

Scottish train services

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: Why not have two special trains with minimal tip-up seats to be used for two journeys each way for commuters between Edinburgh/Glasgow to be used only by people holding season tickets sold at a special price for use only on these trains. If the idea works it could be extended.

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: In general No but see my response to Question 29 which suggests more interchanges at Perth but

fewer at Inverness. Changing discourages people from using the railway unless it is just a question of crossing the platform; while struggling from one side to the other of Waveley is not fun.

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:

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

Q18 comments: X

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

Q19 comments: Has sharing services between companies, or even between train and bus been considered? For instance there are some direct trains from Glasgow Central to Newcastle while with others you must change at Carlisle onto a different franchise with a different fares policy. Why not have alternate through trains run by either company as the Finnish and Russian Railways do between Helsinki and St Petersburg? The same could be done between Glasgow and Leeds and Glasgow-Manchester. Within Scotland you might consider more frequent trains to Crainlarich for example, and then some go on to Oban and Fort William but others have connecting buses to give an integrated and more frequent service. The current service is very inflexible. There may be other places where this concept could work, but buses waiting immediately outside would be a requirement, see 16 above. The bus services from Carlisle to Hawick and Galashiels, and from Dumfries to Stranraer seem to attempt this.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: A fares policy that encourages the use of the railway. Is it not time to consider a system whereby everyone has an account with the railway if they want it and pays each month by direct debit. Just like the other utilities you could pay so much a month and you could have a discount/incentive scheme for rail miles purchased.

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: X

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: X

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 should be at least 35% less than peak; or peak should be at least 50% more than off-peak. But see my reply to Question 15.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: The priority should be encouraging the use of stations not their closure. A station should be researched to see why people don't use it and a scheme designed to encourage use. Many of the little used rural stations are little used because the available trains don't do what the public would like them to do, see my response to 19.

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 problem would be in finding such organisations that want to do it rather than it not working as an idea. What incentives can you offer them?

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, mixed responsibility gives mixed results, including at Lockerbie where you have a Scotrail run station without Scotrail trains.

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

Q27 comments: If the trains provided do what they want them to do, see 24 above. An interesting and well designed station will be better supported by the local community, a bus stop is just that.

You are urged to remember the importance of heritage in the future of Scotland's railways and to give it a significant role in the new tendering process. The introduction to the Consultation says, "We believe that we can achieve a distinctly Scottish railway", but this can only be done through a proper respect and care for the historic environment of the railways in Scotland. The railways were built and owned by Scottish companies, principally the Caledonian, the Highland, the North British and the Great North of Scotland, and their different characters are still reflected in their surviving buildings and structures. Scotland contains perhaps the most famous and iconic railway structure in the world, the Forth Bridge, but this is only one among several hundred listed buildings and structures, each important in its own way and to its own locality. It has been shown time and again that the travelling public responds to a railway of character, with varied architecture in the stations, and the handsome and welcoming spaces that the Victorian and Edwardian designers were so good at. I urge Transport Scotland, when considering the future of stations, not to allow the demolition of any further listed buildings or structures, and, further, to encourage their enhancement and greater use. A railway can be efficient without character but it cannot be Scottish, and it will never be loved, admired or used with interest by the public. I thus urge that specific commitments to the historic environment of the railway should be included in the future tendering process and that the Scottish Government should continue to support Network Rail in its proper maintenance of many listed structures, as well as Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Waverley stations.

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

Q28 comments: Mainline stations, which are stations where important through services stop and interchanges are made. These stations should have the full range of facilities. Community stations, which are local stations where commuter, local and rural services stop. Heritage stations, see my reply to 27 above. These are the stations of architectural and historical importance of which the system and the country should be proud. They can of course be Mainline Heritage and Community Heritage.

Cross-border services

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: Terminating all cross-border trains at Edinburgh Waverley would be a major error as the station would not be able to cope with the considerable number of extra interchange passengers. Have you tried finding Platforms 7 or 9 from the main concourse? A possible alternative would be to utilize one of the large underused stations in the central belt, either Sterling or Perth, both of which have five through platforms, extensive sidings and

direct onward connections to Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness. If the existing through line from Motherwell to Sterling via Cumbernauld, which currently carries only freight, were to be upgraded, then cross-border trains could avoid both Edinburgh and Glasgow if the passengers were destined for further north. This would avoid both the interchange difficulties at Waverley where the passenger numbers are so much greater than at Sterling and Perth and the irritating and confusing trek between Glasgow Central and Queen Street. Terminating cross-border trains at Sterling or Perth could work well for both the sleeper trains and the day ones, and would interfere less with the interests of the Scotrail franchise holder. The sleeper trains could arrive at a convenient time, probably Perth would be best for them and the franchise holder could provide a direct train running on beyond Inverness so that an interchange was not needed there. This proposal would have the additional advantage for the English railway companies with the shorter route meaning the trainsets would spend less time in Scotland with consequential economies. I commend these ideas for serious consideration as they could answer a number of problems highlighted in the Consultation.

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, it would be a disaster, see 29 above.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: X

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

Q32 comments: X

Passengers – information, security and services

How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

Q33 comments: X

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: There is no need for additional 1st class. There should be less on the Virgin trains Glasgow-Euston, but I don't suppose you are asking about them. Scottish services are probably alright as they are but see my reply to 15 above, these trains should be one class.

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

Q35 comments: X

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

Q36 comments: Screens in each carriage and by phone app.

Caledonian Sleeper

Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

Q37 comments: X

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: X

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: See my reply to 29 above. If Aberdeen, Inverness, Fort William, Oban etc. want the service beyond Perth they should make a convincing business pitch.

Environmental issues

What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

Q40 comments: An agreed improvement to the carbon cost per passenger, which could be achieved by increasing passenger numbers/burns on seats, fuel efficiency and more efficient use of rolling stock.

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