

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: should not just be the economic element. It is the role of a good society to support those less advantaged (in this case those who live in rural areas – where a train service might struggle to be financially viable)

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

Q2 comments: NK

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

Q3 comments: NK

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

Q4 comments: NK

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

Q5 comments: NK

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

Q6 comments: No financial incentives. The terms and conditions guaranteeing a good service are laid down at the outset and the franchisee, having done its sums, agrees to this.

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

Q7 comments: NK

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

Q8 comments: The franchise should not necessarily be offered to the company which offers the cheapest service. And the company's ability to provide the service suggested should be scrutinised in great detail – perhaps then the chance of defaulting would be less likely.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: They are being offered the franchise on the understanding that a good performance is produced at all times and therefore do not need to be rewarded. Only penalise 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: Whole of Scotland – there will always be some routes such as some rural routes which will struggle more than those in the high population areas

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

Q11 comments: Think like a passenger – place yourself in every possible passenger scenario and work out what you as the passenger would want as a solution to the situation/problem

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

Q12 comments: performance should be good at all times whether journey is long or short

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: SQIR not required. As above, good service is what people/businesses are paid to provide. Pay the correct sums/charge the correct fares in the first instance and forget about incentives

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

Q14 comments: What about "Mystery Passengers" whose job it is to report back on what they see and hear.

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: Scotrail trains to the north are already tight for space and capacity could not be increase in these carriages. Standing times of 10 mins should not be exceeded – passengers are paying substantial fares and should expect a seat.

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: As a traveller from Highland Region the answer is “no”. We already often have to change. The challenge would be to board a new train with luggage when often there is insufficient luggage space as it is and sometimes seats cannot readily be found. (Perhaps it could be the guard’s job to tidy up the luggage areas – ie stack cases neatly - so that economical use can be made of the limited luggage space available).

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: Perhaps the Government should stipulate the minimum requirements. (Franchisee would always be wanting to cut costs, routes, services etc)

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

Q18 comments: N/K

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

Q19 comments: NK – but it would be nice if something completely different was to appear

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: NK

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: Costs of journey to rural areas should have a ceiling imposed by the government

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: NK

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: Not sure what the difference should be. If the difference is big enough then passengers who are able to, will probably travel off-peak. However it seems unfair that passengers who have no choice but to travel at peak periods should pay fares excessively higher than off-peak passengers.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: NK

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: Sounds like a good idea to solve a problem, but I consider that all stations should be under the same ownership.

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: One organisation but probably not the franchisee since this body can change from time to time – not just when the franchises are up for

renewal (eg bad service or company going out of business)

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

Q27 comments: Make sure the station is clean, tidy and well-lit. Make sure the franchisee is providing a good, efficient, clean, reliable service that meets their needs. Then both station and train service will become attractive.

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

Q28 comments: Categories NK. Facilities should include somewhere to shelter (if possibly, heated), should be clean and possibly have a good vending machine for hot drinks

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 north of Edinburgh. Passengers benefit from continuity of journey: no need to pack up all belongings; nor to stand on a cold draughty platform; nor to have to find a seat on a new train, nor to have to struggle with luggage. People often travel by train because once boarded, they will not have to disembark until they reach their destination. Train is an easier form of travel for those who may have some health or mobility issues. Also the train journey from say London to Inverness is at about 8 hours min. To extend that with a change of train would be intolerable. Also much air travel has become so much cheaper that flying would almost certainly become the preferred option if the journey time was increased.

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

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: NK

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

Q32 comments: Trolley service on any train route over 1 hour – and facilities to take on board more hot water at, say, Perth if there has been a delay and there is no hot water left for the remainder of the journey. If a trolley service is supposed to be provided, then the passenger must be sure that it will definitely be there.

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: NK – this is a facility I would be unlikely to use

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: Second class seating in Scotrail coaches is fairly cramped at the moment (and the seats are too upright). Also there can be inadequate storage space for luggage. I also understand there can be problems transporting bikes. (This is part of the bigger picture of supporting Scotland and its tourism and should be given adequate consideration). If there is a need for more seating, then a further coach should be added. Statistically this information should already be available.

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

Q35 comments: When I travel on a train I want it to be a relaxing pleasant experience. Whenever there is a group of 3 or more, with their own carry-out, then it becomes anything but a relaxing enjoyable experience, as the party become more noisy and boisterous. Perhaps the only alcohol allowed should be sold on the train at exorbitant prices, which would keep the alcohol problem in check.

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

Q36 comments: Allow the public to speak to advisers who know the geography of the area on the phone. Do away with automated services. Also, the public should be able to contact by phone those stations which are manned

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: Not sure. I have used it myself but not often. I suspect that if this is left to the operating company, then it will be discontinued; and that such a service in some form or other is a requirement for a country of this size (GB, that is)

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: Don't know enough about this

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: They appeal would be that you do not waste a day travelling and that you can go about your business as soon as you arrive at your destination. Would think that Aberdeen and Inverness are essential but don't know about Ft William or Oban – although Oban would be a good link for people who have travelled from the Outer Hebrides, the ferry journey already having taken 5 hours or more.

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: NK