

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: *No Comment*

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

Q2 comments: *No Comment*

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

Q3 comments: *No Comment*

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

Q4 comments: *No Comment*

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

Q5 comments: *No Comment*

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

Q6 comments: *No Comment*

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

Q7 comments: *No Comment*

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

Q8 comments: *No Comment*

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: *Only penalise poor performance. The targets set should be robust and attainable and adequate to meet needs of passengers – therefore no need to incentivise good 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: *Should be aligned with actual routes. No merit in one system as the poor results are lost in the total mix.*

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

Q11 comments: *Performance should take account of delays at intermediate stations to reflect interest of all passengers and should also highlight and separate commuter services from the remainder as they affect by far the majority of passengers.*

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

Q12 comments: *Punctuality should be the prime consideration. Current journey times should be reviewed and tightened to eliminate “slack”.*

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: *A Service Quality Incentive Regime is required but should exclude any “incentive payment”. It should certainly cover all aspects of stations and service delivery. If targets are set then no need for incentive payments even if they are exceeded by penalties to be imposed if targets not achieved.*

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

Q14 comments: *Present system of inspectors appointed by Transport Scotland operating as SQUIRE is best and should be retained.*

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: *The permitted standing time should remain at 10 minutes but should be more strictly enforced. Currently it is frequently and regularly ignored. Ideal solution is to provide sufficient rolling stock to meet demand within this restriction. This is the most frustrating problem area and is the major complaint among passengers.*

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 number of direct services should, if anything, be increased rather than reduced. They are attractive to passengers avoiding the inconvenience of changing trains; often with luggage; elderly and handicapped passengers; and avoid waiting time for the next connection.*

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: *Frequency and journey time must be directed by the Government. If left to the franchise it would "pick & choose" to best suit their needs and requirements and not the passengers.*

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

Q18 comments: Targeted Specification is the preferred option.

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

Q19 comments: *Consider offer of premium to franchise if number of passengers on each route increases annually over agreed base figure as this would reflect the provision of an attractive improved service both frequency, timekeeping & capacity.*

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: *Further simplify the fare structure – it is still very confusing for passengers.*

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: *Extend regulated fares to include as many types of ticket as possible. Ideally to all fares in any new simple fare structure.*

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: *The taxpayer subsidy should not be reduced any further. It is a charge for a good efficient rail service that the public require. Fares should be standard over the whole system. The taxpayer is not required to pay for travelling on improved roads i.e. motorways – Why should rail be different?*

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: *Why penalise commuters with very high peak fares – they have no option on their time of travel to work. Increasing the differential between peak and off-peak fares will only have minimum impact.*

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: *The present system for assessing the need for new stations is fair and adequate. As the population increases and business expands why deny a new catchment area the benefit of a rail service simply because it extends a journey time by a few minutes. There is slack in the present timings to overcome this challenge.*

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: *This should be allowed. In the borderline cases where the demand and additional costs of a proposed new station cannot be justified it should be open.*

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: *Only one organisation should be responsible for the management and maintenance of stations to the standards set by Network Rail. This organisation should be the franchisee. The standards subject to inspection regularly by N.R. to ensure they are maintained with power to impose financial penalties if not so.*

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

Q27 comments: *Third parties to be encouraged and allowed to further enhance and improve standards at a local station at their expense.*

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

Q28 comments: Staffed stations should provide the full range of facilities. Unstaffed stations only the basic facilities.

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 to go north of Edinburgh. The convenience to passengers travelling south to England is permanent and outweighs all the other factors. Indeed the rolling stock provided by these services is more attractive and passenger friendly than ScotRail. The Dept. of Transport should specify these services.*

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: *See comments to Q29.*

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: *Invite a new ROSCO to enter the market to provide additional competition. This would probably mean a foreign competitor. Larger initial order for new or replacement trains should result in more attractive quotations and result in lower leasing costs. The current lifespan of 35 years is too long*

and should be reduced to at least 30 year maximum.

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

Q32 comments: The facilities detailed at para.9.17 do not include toilet facilities which are essential both in number and standard of cleanliness – currently not adequate. Likewise provision of adequate luggage space – currently not adequate. Certainly on longer distance routes these facilities should have priority.

A current weakness is that class 158 and 170 trains when linked to provide a 5 coach train do not have access between the two units. The conductor cannot pass through the train and neither can the onboard catering trolley resulting in passengers not being allowed to access this service although it is advertised as being available.

Future orders for new trains should ensure that they provide linked access to existing trains.

Also if a 3 coach unit does not provide sufficient capacity and a route requires 4 or 5 coach capacity, why not construct longer units to meet these needs in future orders.

Another limitation on passenger capacity is the length of platforms. On the Aberdeen to Inverness route, First Scotrail claim they can only operate trains of a 5 coach maximum. However, when the HST Inverness to London operated on this route on Sundays, it ran 7 coaches and 2 locos. Also the Royal Scotsman and other charter trains operate with 8 or more coaches. Network Rail and Scotrail should resolve this problem area.

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: Certainly generate revenue whenever possible from provision of catering and mobile communications, particularly on longer distance routes. As demand for mobile phone and wi-fi type services continues to increase the passengers must be prepared to pay the charges to cover the cost of provision.

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: There is first class accommodation on all Class 158 and Class 170 units although the present franchisee chooses not to make it available on the Far North and Kyle routes. It is open to standard class ticket holders. First Class service should continue to be made available as at

present with franchisee allowed to make a reasonable increase in these fare to reflect loss of capacity.

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

Q35 comments: Consumption of alcohol should be banned on all trains. Bad behaviour and distress caused to other passengers more than justify this action.

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

Q36 comments: Present provision is adequate. Only fault is lack of information when things go wrong.

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: Sleeper services should continue as there is a demand which justifies this provision.

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: The sleeper service should be contracted for separately from the main Scotrail franchise. A new operator would have new and innovative ideas to improve the service and make it more attractive.

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: More early or late trains would not affect the Caledonian Sleepers only the Lowland portion Caledonian Sleeper is attractive to

business and more especially leisure and tourist passengers.

Oban as a start/finish point has equal merit to Fort William. The new franchise should have freedom of choice.

The facilities should be upgraded and improved. Ensuite facilities to be provided in at least certain coaches. All to be reflected in increased fares as there is a demand for a higher standard.

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: *Agree with the proposal and course of action set out in this section.*