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: The economic and social impacts are essentially the same. A good economy will lead to better social standards and vice versa.

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

Q2 comments: The current contract should be extended till the outcome of the Referendum on Independence is known, as an independent Scotland would hopefully renationalise the railways.

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

Q3 comments: N/N

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

Q4 comments: Cap profits based on profitability of the line. Lines should be rated on availability and a mix of profitable and non-profitable lines should be packaged together in portfolios to ensure profits are spread around to all lines to be reinvested.

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

Q5 comments: Not used.

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

Q6 comments: Benchmark against European rail networks (not the rest of the UK's rail) such as DB in Germany. In fact, why not allow DB to run the ScotRail franchise? Can you clarify whether applications to run the franchise are open to UK operators only?

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

Q7 comments: No response.

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

Q8 comments: Threaten to nationalise (ala East Coast Mainline) if not nationalised already.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Good performance should always be promoted. Examples of how this can be done should be taken from Japan / Europe.

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: One system for the whole of Scotland.

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

Q11 comments: Ensure that passenger groups are represented on performance hearings/boards.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times should be cut as much as possible to avoid trains arriving early and having to wait around instead of leaving as soon as possible. Perhaps change to a new way of timetabling, giving a set allowance of time AFTER a scheduled departure/arrival time but not allowing leaving early? For instance, trains from GLA – EDI will arrive at Falkirk High at 10:15+5 , meaning the train could be there from (and won't leave before) 10:15, however it's not classified as late until 10:20 for purposes of penalising poor performance.

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: It should not be required, but kept ready to be used in case of poor performance.

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

Q14 comments: No response

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: If trains are built for commuters, for instance with specific standing capacity and functionality, then on these trains it should be relaxed.

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: No. the number of direct journeys should be increased. If this requires upgrades to the major stations then this must be done. Direct travel is the key to increasing use of the network yet further.

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: There should be a baseline set by government, but if franchisees see fit to increase capacity/journey time/frequency from the lower limit this should be recognised

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

Q18 comments: No response.

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

Q19 comments: by having baselines (for fares, capacity, frequency, journey times) as discussed earlier, and allowing for improvements to these to be reflected in a possible raising of the profit ceiling.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Costs of fares need to be take into account the entire economic impact of rail travel on the economy. For instance, cheap fares encourage transport to other areas of Scotland, spreading money around the nation and increasing spend in independent shops and stores. It also encourages people to work and work further away, perhaps where there are jobs available.

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: Top fares should be capped by government and based on a per mile basis and nothing else, any advanced fares should be wholly set by the TOC.

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: Nationalise the railways in Scotland.

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: I don't understand the need for peak and off-peak tickets. Abolish them. People need to be in for work early, don't penalise them with punitive fares just for having a job.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Whether there is adequate and fast other public transport available, such as bus links. How much stations are used.

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: There are a lot of merits that come out of this, however there should be a cap on any possible profits available to be made, so that not just the most profitable lines/stations are supported.

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: An adequate set of performance indicators would need to be set up in order to assess how stations are managed before they could ever be "outsourced" to ensure standards are being met.

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

Q27 comments: If they don't use the station, close it.

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

Q28 comments: All stations should have a ticket machine, and sheltered cover. Hub stations should have FREE toilets too.

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 above Edinburgh should not be "specified" however they should be allowed if independent TOCs believe there is money to be made.

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: N/A – But why not consider Glasgow?

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Upgrade the decrepit old stock and electrify as many routes as possible to reduce reliance on diesels, which are less reliable.

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

Q32 comments: Toilets should be on all trains. On long journeys of over 2 hours, there should be a food service. This should be removed from Glasgow-

Edinburgh trains to increase room for passengers.

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: Better mobile phone coverage (such as on Virgin Pendolino) would be more important, as this itself will ensure more people can get online. Either way, please make this free, such as like on the Glasgow 66 buses.

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: Introduce a policy whereby if all standard seats are used, non-utilised first areas should be declassified.

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

Q35 comments: Don't ban alcohol, ban the people who abuse it.

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

Q36 comments: Signage is already very good on the Scotrail network. Electronic signs at all stations would be useful.

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: Yes it should 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: It should be separate, so long as top prices were capped.

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: Keeping things as is, is fine. The late departures are useful, as it means more people can make the trains and also increases spending in the local economy, whereas if trains left earlier then people wouldn't have time to wait before their trains in the local vicinity.

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: CO_2 per passenger mile. More passengers = lower CO_2 per mile, even if more trains are required and total CO_2 output goes up.