

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:

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

Q2 comments:

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:

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:

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:

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: Whilst it is important to consider the lateness of trains it is important to realise that, like life, rail timetables are a compromise. Timetables could be constructed so that there was so much slack built in that a train was rarely late. However that would lead to fewer services and longer journey times.

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:

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

Q14 comments:

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: I would like to suggest several ways in which better use can be made of existing train capacity and would like you to consider changing the internal layout of some of the carriages which are used on some of the busy routes, such as the Edinburgh to Glasgow line. I wonder how many extra seats could be fitted into an existing carriage shape, by taking out most of the

tables and arranging the seats in a different way. I envisage a carriage which has half of the seats facing the direction of travel and the other half of the seats facing backwards to the direction of travel and only one table in the middle of the carriage, on each side, where the facing seats meet each other. If carriage types were clearly marked then travellers could choose their preferred option.

Such a carriage configuration could replace one of the three carriage arrangements which is used on the Edinburgh to Glasgow line. In my experience the vast majority of travellers on that route come in ones or twos with fewer groups of three or more. Most people coming in ones or twos seem to prefer to sit in the two seat groups. So this arrangement might give more capacity whilst still using the existing train configuration but give a more useful seating arrangement.

I also think that you should look into freeing up seats which are occupied by small children, say the under fives, as there are many promotions which offer free or reduced travel for children. It does not seem very logical to have adult fare paying passengers standing when seats are occupied by small children who are travelling at a very reduced rate.

I would ask you to consider a new policy which states ' that adult passengers should not stand whilst children under five, are occupying a seat'.

The person accompanying that child should be prepared to take an under five year old onto their knee. If there were several children in the group then the centre arm rest could be lifted and three children could fit into the two seat group.

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:

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:

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:

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares policy should be easy to operate and to understand for both rail staff and customers alike.

I would like you to look at the rules governing the purchase of the Senior Railcard which can be bought by the over 60's enabling them to access a 33% discount on fares.

Currently this can be bought for a one year period by buying it at a station. However it can much cheaper to purchase one for three years but this can only be bought on-line.

Please consider your target market here. Many over 60's are not able to use a computer, do not have access to a computer or are not interested in using a computer. The over 60's who are able to use a computer, have access to a computer and are interested in using a computer, may still not wish to conduct financial transactions on a computer. So the three year Senior Railcard is out of their reach.

If a one year Senior Railcard can be bought at a station why is it not possible to buy a three year Senior Railcard there too?

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:

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:

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

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:

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:

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: I understand that many routes and lines are 'full' and so it cannot make sense to double the number of trains on that route. This is what would happen if more services terminated at 'hub' stations rather than move on further north or south.

If, for example, East Coast trains terminated their service at Edinburgh and Scotrail continued on further north, then two trains would have to be accommodated at that station instead of the one East Coast train.

Passengers would suffer if train services were terminated at 'hubs' instead of continuing their journey north or south. It does seem much simpler for people

to stay on the trains instead of having to move themselves and all of their luggage onto another train. People do tend to have much more luggage on these longer routes. Two lots of administration, seat reservations etc, etc, would have to be carried out with train service changes. Journey times must be longer if people have to change trains.

If there is disparity within the route finance operation then surely you must seek to iron this out rather than try to inconvenience passengers more. Taxpayers and fare payers are paying for the services whether the monies come out of the Westminster pocket or the Scottish government pocket.

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: I understand that many routes and lines are 'full' and so it cannot make sense to double the number of trains on that route. This is what would happen if more services terminated at 'hub' stations rather than move on further north or south. If East Coast trains terminated at Edinburgh and Scotrail continued north, then two trains would have to be accommodated at that station instead of the one East Coast train.

Passengers too would suffer if train services were terminated at 'hubs' instead of continuing their journey north or south. It does seem much simpler for people to stay on the trains instead of having to move themselves and all of their luggage to another train. People do tend to have much more luggage on these longer routes. Two lots administration, seat reservations etc. etc. would have to be carried out leading to more expense. Journey times must be longer if people have to change trains.

If there is disparity within the the route finance operation then surely you must seek to iron this out rather than try to inconvenience passengers more. Taxpayers and fare payers are paying for the services whether the monies come out of the Westminster pocket or the Scottish government pocket.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:

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

Q32 comments:

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:

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:

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

Q35 comments: The railway is there to provide transport for passengers to get from A to B and is not there to provide alcohol. So the first consideration is to provide safe, comfortable travel for customers and staff. Alcohol is not necessary for train travel and its consumption can reduce the likelihood of safe, comfortable travel for staff and customers alike.

Many of us will have felt that sinking feeling when a group of people get onto the train and produce the carrier bag full of bottles and cans and proceed to rapidly consume them. No social drinking here, but a determined effort to become drunk or inebriated. People rarely become more pleasant when they have consumed alcohol. The likelihood is that they will become more unpleasant.

We are expecting them to consider other travellers but this becomes more unlikely as time and more consumption of alcohol goes by. We know that there is only going to be one member of train crew on hand to 'police' that entire train and his/her job is only likely to become more difficult dealing with people who have consumed alcohol.

We are looking to visitors to finance more and more jobs in the future in our year round tourist season and we are hoping to attract thousands of people here for the Commonwealth Games in 2014. Both of these groups could influence more people to visit Scotland if they experience a pleasant stay.

The consumption of alcohol on trains leading to inebriated behaviour, people being sick and the smell of stale alcohol, is hardly likely to encourage them to return.

The Duchess of Cambridge is patron of 'Action on addiction' and recently ceremonially opened a pub which only sells non-alcoholic drinks.

Please ban the sale of alcohol and the consumption of alcohol on trains. Yes people might consume more alcohol before getting onto a train, but here the effects will gradually wear off as the journey progresses and not increase with the consumption of alcohol being permitted on trains.

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

Q36 comments: Travel information for passengers can be vastly improved with minimal expense.

For instance on the Edinburgh to Glasgow line the service operates with carriages grouped into threes. So on some services there will be a three carriage train and on others, usually at peak time, there will be a six carriage train. However passengers never know what number of carriages will be on the train that they are waiting for.

Platforms are marked out with three car, four car and six car train stopping lines. When stations are crowded, the knowledge that a six car train is about to appear for that journey, would make people spread out along the platform. It would then be quicker for people to board and there would be more chance of them finding a seat and finding it more quickly. Journey times could be shortened and made more pleasant.

All that would be required to be done would be to advertise that number of carriages on the next train by putting a number three or a number six next to the advert for the next train and people would be able to judge the platform for themselves. Further advertising could be done over the tannoy system.

You should be pleased with staff at Haymarket station who already employ

this system during the Edinburgh festival time in July and August. The announcement comes over the tannoy – 'This is a six car train. It is a very busy train. Spread yourselves up the platform.' So everybody adjusts their position on the platform relative to the six car marker. No extra expense here.

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: People in Scotland are already hampered by having to travel huge distances to get to the south of England and vice versa and the sleeper services do help to solve this problem

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: Part two – I would like you to consider adding Oban to your sleeper destinations list. It is a very busy port with many ferry services to the islands. The RET (Road Equivalent Tariff) has, I understand, been very successful in encouraging visitors to our islands and I would encourage you to continue to fund this system in perpetuity and to expand it so that every ferry service is able to offer this on every route. Since RET is to continue for a few more years it would make sense to see Oban as a sleeper destination.

Would it be possible to continue with the sleeper service to Fort William as well as Oban. I envisage a service from and to, both destinations with a joining up position somewhere down the line with only one train running from that joining point.

If a joining operation is difficult with the Fort William/Oban idea would it make

more sense to operate a sleeper service alternating between these two stations eg. Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday departs Oban and Monday, Wednesday and Friday departs Fort William.

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: