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: **[Note that I have not answered all questions; please scroll down to see those that I have answered]**

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:

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:

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: In some circumstances there may be advantages to reducing

opportunities for direct journeys, but in general it puts people off rail travel and should be discouraged. If more changes are needed, connections must be reliable.

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:

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: Station leasing costs are an internal transfer of money within the railway industry. The figure that should be used in decision-making is the actual cost of operating and maintaining the station (maintenance, lighting, etc.); the public should not be inconvenienced merely because ScotRail objects to transferring money to Network Rail.

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 idea seems worth exploring. Are there any precedents elsewhere that could be studied? Would local authorities have the money in the current financial climate?

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: **Terminating all cross-border services at Edinburgh is a ridiculous idea**; it would inconvenience passengers, or drive them to other forms of transport or to avoid making the journey altogether, for no good reason. The internal financial arrangements of the railway industry should not be allowed to inconvenience the public, who have no interest in whether their money goes to ScotRail or another operator. If there is a worry that money from Scotland is leaking south of the border, then I would say that: a) This is a rather narrow attitude given that the Scottish public (who don't all live in the Central Belt) sometimes want to travel to England, and it is in the interests of Scotland for visitors to travel north of the Central Belt and spend their money there; and b) surely there must be some way to shuffle money

around behind the scenes to avoid the problem -- for example an arrangement like that which used to apply to the through trains from London Waterloo to Plymouth, where the same train changed seamlessly from a South West Trains service to a Great Western one (or vice versa) at Exeter without the passengers noticing (except perhaps for a change of conductor).

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:

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: Trains on rural routes should have adequate space for luggage and bicycles, and provide good views of the scenery that draws tourists to Scotland.

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:

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

Q36 comments:

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:

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: Sadly I fear that sleeper services are not currently profitable and would probably disappear if left to purely commercial decisions, so until such time as (for example) the price of air travel rises to reflect its true environmental impact, the sleepers will have to remain something that is required of train operating companies. This should not, however be done in such a way as to discourage the operator from efforts to make the services more profitable.

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: As a resident of the south of England, regular visitor to Scotland and occasional user of the sleepers I value the facility to maximise time in Scotland for a given amount of time off work, and to make long journeys to parts of Scotland that are hard to reach in a day without the inconvenience, time penalty and expense of an overnight stay. More early and late trains would probably not make much difference to me. The increasing trend towards more expensive peak fares being charged, even for journeys to Scotland which used to be largely free of such restrictions, makes things less convenient for people trying to make long journeys in a day, or set out on such journeys in the evening; the sleepers can offer a useful alternative.

A sleeper service to Oban would be useful, and I wouldn't be surprised if it carried more passengers that the Fort William one, but that to Fort William can be useful too. Would it be feasible to alternate the destinations so Oban and Fort William are each served 3 times per week? In any case, better connections to Oban (or Fort William if the service was diverted to Oban) and Mallaig would be useful (how about a discount for sleeper passengers on the steam train to Mallaig that leaves Fort William shortly after the sleeper arrives?).

Single travellers having to share with strangers is an issue -- you expect it in youth-hostel-style accommodation, but not at the more hotel-like level of the sleepers, and it's partly why I sometimes use the overnight seated accommodation. However, just banning the practice would reduce capacity and increase fares for those travelling alone -- there's no reason why those prepared to travel in this way should be forced to pay more. If new sleeping cars are to be built, thought should be given to how to increase the number of single compartments

without reducing passenger capacity unduly (remember that fewer passengers per carriage means not just more cost, but more environmental impact per passenger -- a problem when environmental friendliness is an asset of rail travel). Interlocking compartments, with an upper berth in one compartment above a lower berth in the next, would enable 2 compartments to be fitted into the space currently occupied by one and a half; or maybe an arrangement like a Japanese capsule hotel would be worth considering (provided luggage space was adequate).

I've often thought that there would be a market for continental-style couchette carriages on the overnight trains -- sometimes I am not prepared to pay for a sleeping berth, but would pay more than the seated fare if it meant I could lie down.

Sleeper services to parts of England other than London would be useful, although it is probably unrealistic to hope for a return of these.

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: