

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:

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:

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: Government should determine parameters of service provision.

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: Fair and affordable, see below.

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: Fares should be regulated by government to ensure that there are fair and affordable rates for all routes –otherwise there is a risk that in less commercially viable routes, most likely to be also remoter, rates will be unaffordable creating economic barriers to the use of rail travel.

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: Rather than discouraging people from travelling at peak times, more trains or coaches should be added in the popular routes and

times! The objective should be about providing a service and increasing the level of usage not dissuading passengers. (I frequently travel in the train Perth to Inverness (at 14:54 & 16:12) and it is always busy and uncomfortable to travel until Kingussie or Aviemore –more should be done to provide sufficient space in popular routes)

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:

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:

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: Safety of other passengers

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: Yes sleeper services 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: No, Caledonian Sleeper services should be contracted as part of the main Scotrail franchise –it is an essential service as explained in response to the next question, 39.

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: I frequently use the Caledonian Sleeper Service between Inverness and London and think this is an excellent facility and provides the best means of transport for longer distances beyond Scotland. It is regularly used by businesses and tourists visiting the Highlands (as well as holiday-makers)– so has a central role in connecting the highlands/Inverness with the rest of the UK and supporting the economy. It is comfortable, reliable and able to cope with bad weather. It is not foreseeable that other options will become more attractive in the future, if the quality of service, existing times, flexibility and prices are maintained. It must be emphasized that the Caledonian Sleeper provides crucial services to the Highlands, which is one of the most isolated parts of the UK, thus the level of existing service must be maintained as a minimum if not improved. Air transport is certainly not an alternative as many businesses and passengers are now trying to move to lower carbon transport means. The level of funding & effort required for maintenance should therefore not be seen as a hurdle but as an essential service to the Highlands & Islands.

The current times of departure and arrival for both the Inverness to London and vice-versa trains are excellent. They allow for rest and sufficient time to attend business meetings and connect with other transport. There would be no advantage in having more trains or altering the current timing.

It is good to see improvements to the service (for example improving beds or upgrading some existing equipment) but passengers do not expect en suite facilities (unless this is about having a berth for disabled passengers) in general, so would be happy to see modest improvements rather than more costly changes.

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: Increasing the number of passengers that use train for every route in Scotland (by improving the timings and number of trains) as an alternative to other transport options with stronger environmental impact (air, car) should be a key target & performance indication.

Carbon reduction targets for rail operation need to be measured not only in terms of the operation of rail services but taking into account the impacts (both positive and negative) on the whole transport system.