

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: Yes, there may be merit in this. Sleeper an obvious candidate for dual focus, and Long distance/express services eg, Edinburgh – Glasgow QS via Falkirk, and Edinburgh/Glasgow – Aberdeen/Dundee.

All could be run on economic grounds, provided that slower social services for local use also run on same and/or parallel routes

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: Not sure of terms but could apply to catering, hosting of Sleeper etc

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: Refunds/compensation to directly affected passengers especially Season ticket holders who get a poor deal compared to one off travellers under current National Conditions of Carriage

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: the former

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

Q11 comments: create an effective body for listening to passenger issues

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

Q12 comments: Journey times are important, as is punctuality . Needs to be competitive with road travel and so should not be disincentivised by extended journey times. Regular travellers have noted with disapproval the recent trend in the rail industry to constantly extend journey times, in order to make it easier to meet punctuality targets eg Glasgow Central – Motherwell is 15 mins for Southbound Anglo Scottish services but 25 mins for Northbound; lenzie to Glasgow QS is 10 mins longer at peak times to allow for delays getting into QS tunnel, etc etc

Optimum target is to improve journey times while maintaining punctuality / 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:.....

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: Should be NO standing on long distance services and no more than 10-15 on local/suburban services. Only suggestion for improving capacity is to get more rolling stock. (see later, re this) as removing seats to create more standing space is unfair to paying public and there is NO spare capacity at present, as evidenced by empty train yards every morning at peak periods.

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: Direct services are more desirable. Interchanges with other transport eg bus, subway is desirable but frequent change of train is not, unless a well structured network of local services connecting in to fast long distance services. Current track system probably won't permit that. Changing with luggage at places like eg Perth between Aberdeen and Invenness bound platforms is not good. Undesirable to add to the list of existing interchange stations per Table 4 in consultation paper

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: Govt

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:.....Avoiding increase over inflation, realistic fares for business users and a range of saver tickets for families and for advance purchasers.

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: Strathclyde and Fife commuter areas should have multi transport Zonocard type tickets allowing change from train to bus etc all at capped rates. Commercial rates ok on busy business routes but not to penalise commuters.

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:While content to preserve difference between peak and off peak fares, this should not be an excuse to fleece commuters . It is not easy to see how to incentivise a change to off peak travel, when most of the workforce have to travel at peak times. I can't see my employer letting me start later each day, so I can get a cheaper ticket!!!!!!

If, of course, more people can be encouraged to change to train travel during off peak times, this will increase revenue and perhaps justify the expense of increasing rolling stock availability for peak periods

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Aim should be NOT to close any stations. Those which appear to be underused should be promoted locally, thro' advertising promotions, fare promotions, and involving local communities.

Scotrail have been guilty of marginalising certain small stations, rather than promoting them, presumably with a view to eventual closure, EG local stations

between Dundee and Carnoustie , some have only one train per day, at an ungodly hour, and it used to be a thro' service to Glasgow which was well used, but in recent years was split into an unreliable stopping service which often doesn't turn up, and a wait at Dundee for the Glasgow service, and the most recent timetable change made the local service 10 mins earlier and the wait for the Glasgow train longer, for no apparent reason – other than to deter passengers???

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: No issues that I can see, other than franchise demarcation. Bring it on! A bit of local flavour is preferable to the recent wasteful ScotRail dual language rebranding. How many people in Central Scotland actually speak Gaelic?

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: Franchisee should liaise with local authority re running of stations

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

Q27 comments: Imaginative ideas to promote it's use. Shared control with franchisee

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

Q28 comments: Tourist attraction stations should be identified.

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: Don't know who is best to specify these services, but I firmly believe they should be maintained, as a vital link to London and rest of UK. These services vastly benefit travellers from/to England, inc tourists, and are far better suited to carrying several hundred passengers and luggage for long distances.

Forcing passengers going north of Edinburgh off Cross border trains on to overcrowded Scotrail services will discourage tourism and business travel and disincentivise train use against air travel.

Scottish ministers should realise that Scotrails all DMU fleet is more suited to fast turn around flexible local services and is inadequate – and in terms of Class 158s, not fit for purpose – for long distance travel. It is noisy, uncomfortable and inadequate in terms of seating, toilet facilities and luggage capacity.

If I can, I will always travel by East Coast or Crosscountry services, in preference to Scotrail, in view of the far superior product offered.

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: There are no benefits from having an Edinburgh hub. To suggest that this would make Edinburgh like Glasgow ignores the fact that Glasgow always involves a change of train due to the Victorian legacy of how Glasgow's termini stations were constructed. IF Crossrail had been built, as it should have been, we wouldn't be having this discussion!

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Replace/ supplement Scotrail's current all dMU/EMU stock with loco hauled trains. Providing a stock of unpowered passenger vehicles must surely be cheaper than powered vehicles and therefore involves less of a capital investment, in order to have a surplus of passenger capacity to deploy at times of need.

Wear and tear could be reduced by only deploying a few of the vehicles at off peak times.

Advantage too that they are far more relaxing – quieter- for long distance travel

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 in all. Catering and WIFI on all services over 1 hr and WIFI on edin-Glasgow services, but no need for a catering service there due to short journey time.

Good quality CCTV in all trains for crime detection/prevention

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: WIFI now much more of a priority – even the buses can do it! As business people can now stay in touch with ipads, etc, mobile phone use which is most annoying to other passengers should be banned, or restricted to certain parts of train only

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: see 31

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

Q35 comments: disorderly conduct/rowdy behaviour on trains is now commonplace and a reason quoted by many for not using public transport. The public just don't feel safe on board. There is nowhere to go to escape the aggressive passenger or the habitual overfriendly drunk and on train staff are understandably reluctant to get involved. Calling police is cumbersome and leads to massive delays for all passengers, so general reluctance to call them. I have recently experienced inappropriate sectarian behaviour on train and am totally frustrated and disappointed at lack of effort by Scotrail and BTP to do anything about it.

Should be train inspectors operating in pairs as in Europe, with power to impose on the spot fines and/ or removal from train of all fare dodgers and abusive/drunk passengers. All intoxicated passengers should be removed from trains forthwith.

Alcohol should be banned completely from suburban local services and allowed on long distance services from catering staff only – no bringing on big carryouts!

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

Q36 comments: By provision of relevant up to date helpful information. Half of the prerecorded stuff from Scotrail is pointless – look out for unattended bags, look out for wet platforms etc. Tell us something useful, or not at all.

Scotrail mobile phone app, and text alerts are generally good

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 train MUST be preserved. An iconic brand, and a tour operators dream, there should be more of them, properly run and properly promoted.

When I was young, there were two a night from Aberdeen, another from Perth (with Motorail) and three from each of Glasgow and Edinburgh!

I'd prefer the Sleeper franchise to be taken away from ScotRail, who have failed dismally in recent years to properly promote the Sleeper. Get someone with innovative ideas like Virgin to do it, let's see more services and a premium product for the business travellers with ensuite facilities, desks WiFi decent catering etc. The sleeper should be a preferred option to red-eye flights

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: see above 37

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: This valuable and underused brand should be totally revamped and run as a premium service for business travellers to rival air travel to London.

A budget option for standard class should also be provided – continental style couchettes to replace the hopeless seated Sleeper.

Earlier/later conventional trains not the answer – they couldn't really start much earlier or run much later than they already do, and there is the problem of just how do you get to Glasgow Central for the London train at 4 o'clock in the morning – Expensive taxis usually, as no local trains! Much better to have

gone to bed on the Sleeper ay 11 oclock!

And it should run on Saturdays, possibly with little/no first Class.

The differnce between Fist and Standard needs to be widened. First at the moment is not a premium product and is of too poor a qulity to seriously entice business travellers.

Aberdeen and Inverness services worth retaining, tho how about splitting/joining at Striling rather than Edinburgh?

And Oban probably a better start for the deerstalker as a bigger centr of population than Fort William and a ferry port. Other passengers can link in at Crianlarich.

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:.....