

Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

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Railway Engineers Forum (REF)

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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual

/

Group/Organisation

Please tick as appropriate

(a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

(c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

- (d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

Yes

No

Consultation Questions

The answer boxes will expand as you type.

General Introduction to REF response

The Railway Engineers Forum (REF) is a multi-disciplinary body drawn from those Professional Institutions with strong railway interests:

- *The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)*
- *The Institution of Engineering & Technology (IET)*
- *The Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMechE)*
- *The Institution of Railway Operators (IRO)*
- *The Institution of Railway Signal Engineers (IRSE)*
- *The Permanent Way Institution (PWI)*
- *The Railway Civil Engineers Association (RCEA)*
- *The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT)*

The aim of the REF is to harmonise the various strengths of the constituent Institutions in devising and implementing their programmes of activities in support of the railway community. This will encompass conferences, seminars, lectures, training, information services, publications and statements of policy to Government and other Regulatory Bodies. The harmonisation process will aim to avoid duplication of effort and/or duplication of events, to promote joint ventures whenever this is advantageous and to maximise the visibility of such activities to the widest possible audience.

The REF provides informed comment on railway issues, both in response to government and transport industry proposals and to matters of more general concern.

The REF has prepared the attached response to Transport Scotland's Rail 2014 consultation, focussing on those areas where the Professional Institutions are most able to make a contribution. The REF would be pleased to facilitate further discussions on particular areas with appropriate representatives if Transport Scotland would find this useful.

We note that the current consultation focuses on Passenger Services as a separate consultation has already been undertaken on the vision for rail freight in Scotland. For both passenger and freight services the challenge is to enable increased, efficient use of the railway network and to realise the environmental benefits that rail travel can deliver. It may be appropriate to consider the possibility for additional electrification, beyond current projects, so that the current reliance on fossil fuels can continue to be reduced.

Although not specifically included in this consultation, overly high requirements in standards (both GB and European) have sometimes been blamed for excessive

costs in managing and upgrading lower-use railways and this could be thought to apply to some of the Scottish routes and services. In our experience these concerns can relate to inappropriate application of the standards rather than to the standards themselves and informed consideration of the issues at an early stage of a project often leads to much more cost effective solutions. The REF institutions would be happy to facilitate discussion of such issues if that would be useful.

N.B.: the REF requires member bodies to approve consultation submissions. Where not approved by a member body, the paper is endorsed accordingly. In this instance the IRO is not associated with this submission. Corporate or individual members of the IRO may choose to make their own submissions.

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:

We support the idea of offering a dual focus franchise to enable the different incentives and aims of the two types of service to be properly recognised without losing the synergy and identity of one railway for Scotland. Two separate franchises, perhaps with differing timescales, could be considered as an alternative. These could be a shorter franchise for the socially funded network, more precisely specified, and a longer franchise for the inter-regional services with more flexibility for the franchisee to innovate.

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

Q2 comments:

The life of railway assets (both infrastructure and rolling stock) is long compared to normal franchise lengths and so some allowance for residual asset value will always be required if a franchisee is to be encouraged to invest. However the franchise length does need to be long enough for the franchisee to see some operating benefit from new or upgraded assets after completion of the implementation phase, during which time some disruption to services is inevitable. Longer franchises also enable the franchisee to concentrate on meeting passenger expectations rather than preparing for the next round of franchise competition (which is expensive for both government and bidders). Shorter franchises are more likely to have to be run on a management-fee basis with less scope for innovation.

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

Q3 comments:

No specific response.

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

Q4 comments:

No specific response.

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

Q5 comments:

In principle permitting interested third parties, potentially including community groups, to support enhanced services or facilities could be a useful method for promoting innovation. However care would be needed that this was not at the expense of ideas or investment directly from the franchisee.

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

Q6 comments:

No specific response.

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

Q7 comments:

No specific response.

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

Q8 comments:

No specific response.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments:

No specific response

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:

As there is such a wide variety of types of routes within Scotland it is unlikely that a 'one size fits all' regime would be appropriate.

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

Q11 comments:

No specific response.

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

Q12 comments:

Care needs to be taken to avoid perverse incentives.

For example measuring arrival time only at the end of a journey, and not at intermediate points, encourages the inclusion of generous recovery time before the final station so that a train can be late for much of its journey (with the consequential inconvenience for passengers of missed onward connections) whilst still arriving 'on time' at the end station.

Overemphasis on 'on-time' arrival also tends to lead to increased timetabled journey times and the resultant reduction in available capacity. In a capacity constrained system (which will apply to much of the Scottish network for different reasons) this is an unfortunate consequence which needs to be avoided.

Some tolerance on the published timetable is required to define 'late' otherwise the 'working' arrival time is merely moved to a few minutes before the published time with the same consequential loss of capacity.

It may be helpful to monitor performance across a service group rather than for individual routes, especially if the routes are interconnected and some account can be taken of whether advertised connections have been maintained or missed. Including some measure of the impact on passengers would be useful if this can be accomplished without over-complicating the assessment. Generally simpler measures are to be preferred as complex measures tend to have un-intended perverse side effects.

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 seems that the current incentive regime (SQUIRE) has produced steady improvement in performance and could perhaps be used as the basis for the future. Developing a more flexible application and/or concentrating on key aspects are also worth considering as would be extending the regime to include aspects not directly covered by the franchise. The potential transfer of additional responsibility for stations from Network Rail to franchisees may facilitate this.

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

Q14 comments:

No specific 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:

No specific response

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:

Some issues to consider in potentially increasing the use of interchange stations are:

- *Passengers with luggage (including tourists) find changing trains difficult*
- *Visitors and in-frequent travellers find changes stressful and are concerned about missed connections*

However the principle of interchanges works well on other railway systems and can permit improved usage of assets. Some railways provide limited numbers of through journey opportunities to alternative destinations so that passengers who prefer not to change do have this option.

Clear communication and signage is a key aspect of managing interchanges both within rail and between modes. Availability of information before and during the journey is important and becomes critical in times of disruption. It is often much easier to obtain information about taxi companies than it is about local buses, for example.

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:

The proposed 'targeted specification' seems an appropriate methodology to cater for the differing requirements on different route types.

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

Q18 comments:

No specific response

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

Q19 comments:

No specific response

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

We support the rationale described in the consultation document sections 6.11 to 6.14.

Season tickets frequently offer very good value to regular commuters but are of less use to those who travel on fewer days. Bus companies are increasingly offering 'carnets' of tickets at a discount from the face value for travellers who regularly make the same journey but for whom a season ticket is not good value. This may be worth considering, perhaps in rural areas, to encourage train usage?

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:

Regarding de-regulating 'inter-city' fares it is not clear to us which route sections this would cover and whether some of the rural routes might inadvertently be included. Encouraging modal shift towards car transport by increasing inter-city fares would appear to be contrary to environmental policy.

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:

No specific response

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:

No specific response

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

No specific response

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 specific response

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:

No specific response

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

Q27 comments:

Community rail partnerships seem to work well in the right locations.

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

Q28 comments:

No specific response

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:

See comments in Question 16 regarding through services. Requiring a change at Edinburgh is likely to deter certain passengers and encourage use of alternative transport modes. These services are potentially of interest to both the Department of Transport and Scottish Ministers.

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:

If this is to happen, then the provision of connecting services must have an element of guarantee. Should an Edinburgh terminating train from England or within Scotland be late, then rules must in place on how connections will be held or re-arranged and made robust. Communicating this to passengers on the delayed train should use the best of modern technology to a) ensure the information is accurate and b) broadcast both visually and audibly on the train

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:

The long life of rolling stock assets, as noted in the consultation document tends to lead to leasing as the most appropriate solution. Most of the fleets mentioned will be less than 25 years old at franchise renewal and could effectively be refurbished. Most passengers do not distinguish between a good quality refurbishment and new trains! There are issues around emissions requirements for new diesel engines which will need to be considered carefully in taking forward options for the diesel fleets.

Franchisees are generally not experts in rolling stock specification and procurement and the timescales for this are generally longer than practical for all except very long franchises. If new rolling stock is procured then, as far as possible, it should be of a generic type and not specific to particular operations, to minimise the design costs.

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

Q32 comments:

We make no specific response on the facilities required but note that the need to tailor passenger facilities for a particular application should not be seen as a contradiction to use of generic rolling stock types. For example some longer distance journeys require larger amounts of space for passengers' luggage but this can be managed by changes to the internal layout which are not fundamental to the rolling stock design.

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:

Provision of mobile phone and/or Wi-Fi services on board trains can also be used to

keep staff informed in times of disruption. There have been examples, outside Scotland, where passengers have been better informed through their personal contacts than the staff themselves!

The provision of mobile phone coverage along rail routes is spasmodic since the mobile network providers concentrate on urban areas and motorways / trunk roads. However Network Rail is rolling out its GSM-R network borne upon the FTN transmission network. This will establish reliable radio coverage along rail routes. The technology is similar to the public networks and the FTN transmission system has ample bandwidth to allow public providers to access signals to the radio transmitter stations. It would seem that a joint venture between NR and the likes of O2, Vodafone, etc. might be encouraged by a Scottish initiative

Similarly the provision of WiFi or WiMAX services might be encouraged by ScotRail in partnership with such organisations as Nomad Digital or 21Net. This would embrace fitting the trains in a similar way to what has been achieved on other franchises.

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:

No specific response

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

Q35 comments:

No specific response

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

Q36 comments:

Many (though not all) passengers now have mobile devices with internet access. Provision of consistent and correct information through web sites etc is a key method of communication. This information should also be made available to on-board and station staff.

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:

No specific response

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:

Whilst not an engineering issue, the separation of the sleeper services into a separate franchise would seem to have benefit in that it could bring focus and innovation to the services

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:

No specific response

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:

Recycling of waste paper should be considered as a minimum both on-board trains and at stations. Clear signage of recycling locations seems to work on other railway networks but systems must not be overly complicated.