

**Owen Rudge**

## **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: I would support this proposal if it does offer better value for money for the taxpayer, and result in investment in the railway network and safeguarding of our quieter rural lines.

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

Q2 comments: Franchises need to be able to have time to invest and see the benefits of those investments, so I would suggest at least 10 years.

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: Passengers want to see money going back into the railway, rather than lining the pockets of railway executives, so a mechanism that reflected this would seem appropriate.

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: I think standing time should be limited as much as possible – if I get on a train, I expect to find a seat, particularly on longer journeys. I'd

prefer to see investment in extra carriages instead.

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: I do not think direct services should be reduced – passengers appreciate direct services and do not like having to change trains. If we want to see rail usage increase, we should be making the service more attractive, not less.

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: I would say the government should set minimum standards for frequency and journey time, particularly on some of our less economically viable but nevertheless lifeline railway lines.

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: Distance and quality/frequency of public transport links to the nearest station should be taken into consideration, as well as the quality of roads to the area. Where practical, I would suggest that station closures should be avoided, as often the train is one of the only reliable means of public transportation in quieter rural areas, where station patronage may be lower.

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: For the most part, this should only be a good thing, although consideration does have to be taken into account as to how such a station would integrate with the existing timetable – certain longer-distance intercity services are already relatively poor competitors, in terms of time, with the car, and adding more stations is only going to make them slower.

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: Yes – changing trains can be a significant inconvenience, adding time as well as the potential risk of a misconnect to journeys. Additionally, the long East Coast and CrossCountry trains offer more space

and, in my opinion, a more pleasant environment than the often cramped ScotRail trains, so being able to get on such a train in Aberdeen and travel all the way to London (for example) on it is much more pleasant than having to get onto one train, then move all my luggage, etc, to a new train in Edinburgh.

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 think it would be bad for all passengers north of the central belt for trains to stop running in Edinburgh. Passengers value direct services, and removing these services from these communities where good transport links are vital will definitely not be an improvement.

## **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: At a minimum, all trains should feature comfortable seating (a choice of table and airline-style seats), adequate luggage space and working toilets. A trolley service would be desirable on the majority of services, certainly of an intercity nature.

## **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: Adding wifi capabilities would make rail more attractive to both leisure and business travellers. Long-distance coaches often have these capabilities now, as well as some airlines (internationally), so having such features on our railway network would keep the train competitive.

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: Business travellers will often choose first class seating if it is available, for a quieter, more comfortable environment. As long as that demand is still there, I would support keeping at least some level of first class provision on intercity trains, as their fares help subsidise the rest of the service.

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

Q35 comments: I do not believe alcohol consumption in itself is a bad thing, and I see no reason to ban it on trains – indeed, the vast majority of the population can enjoy a beer or a glass of wine without trouble. ScotRail and the British Transport Police should take a strong line on any anti-social behaviour, however, whether as a result of alcohol or not. It makes sense to continue maintaining bans during sporting events which are known to suffer from these sorts of issues, but I would not support a general ban.

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, I believe the Caledonian Sleeper is a service that is valued by many who patronise it, and provides a valuable alternative to domestic flights. It is also particularly valuable for the more remote destinations (Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William), where the journey time is longer.

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: If the main franchisee is able to provide a service at least matching current levels, I see no reason to separate it out. There could be benefits by having a separate operator, but I fear it may just result in more administrative overheads and hence higher prices.

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 think the sleeper is very valuable for those who are pushed for time (it effectively takes a full day to travel from Aberdeen, Inverness or Fort William to London), or who don't want to take a flight south. It's also a service that attracts tourists from the south to Scotland, which should be valued – for busy Londoners, the idea they can go to sleep on a train and wake up in the Highlands is an attractive one. I certainly think Aberdeen and Inverness should remain as destinations; I can't comment on 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: