

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

Organisation Name

Scottish Churches Rural Group

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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.

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 feel that one franchise would be better covering both economic and social elements.

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

Q2 comments: We feel that 10 years would be a good length of contract. It would give the company time to make investments.

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

Q3 comments: We do not believe there should be any as the company is bidding for the franchise to make a profit.

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

Q4 comments: The Government should set a cap for profits to enable them to recover money invested.

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

Q5 comments: Third parties should not be involved.

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

Q6 comments: Outcome measures should be judged on service provided and capacity, quality of trains and stations, numbers carried. If punctuality is used as a measure then we should know why the train was late.

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

Q7 comments: We see this to be the Governments role to set this.

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

Q8 comments: Loss of franchise would seem to be the ultimate sanction.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Under the franchise there should be incentive for good performance.

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: One system would make it easier to measure, clearer to transport users and also to those who operate the franchise.

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

Q11 comments: Relate this to competitive pricing as well as reliability and punctuality.

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

Q12 comments: There should be the need to justify why each train was late or cancelled. Allowing 10 minutes of timetable performance needs to be judged on the individual route.

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: Retain SQUIRE but focus on clear priorities. Only cover those managed through the franchise.

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

Q14 comments: Volunteer (unpaid) panels from localities to train and local station quality.

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: With long distance services we need to have at least one extra carriage on the services (North of the Central Belt).

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: Please do not do away with direct services going over the border from northern stations. Do not use interchange stations.

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 Government should direct aspects of service provision and journey time consulting local parties.

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

Q18 comments: Targeted specification.

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

Q19 comments: There should be a need for the franchisee to consult local parties to determine how to improve services.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: It is clear that there should be a regulated cap examining each rail route. The Netherlands has a clear price of travel 1st and 2nd class with reductions for rail card holders this should be introduced in Scotland. There should be a clear price for travel not one with vast differences in price.

Within a new structure the franchisee should be allowed to offer discounted travel.

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: All fares should be regulated by Government in consultation with the franchisee. Each route should be looked at.

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: The Government needs to tell the franchisee, annually, what they will give in subsidy. Fares should not be increased by negotiation with the Government. The franchisee having to make a case for any increase.

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: All long distance routes should be regarded as off-peak. The difference between off-peak and peak should be 5%. It is clear that general price is the guide to people travelling and not time.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: There should be ongoing consultation with local parties to determine need for stations. As a general policy stations should not be closed.

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: In the financial climate it is unlikely that local authorities or businesses would be able to fund their stations or services.

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: It would be better if only one organisation should be responsible for maintenance and management of stations. The franchisee if operating stations should be allowed to let buildings out to produce revenue.

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

Q27 comments: Local communities should be asked how they could support their local station.

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

Q28 comments: Do not like the idea of labelling stations. We need to get local views on local stations.

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: Cross-border services should continue you north of Edinburgh. Scottish ministers should specify these services in consultation with local parties.

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: This should not be allowed to happen.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: No comment.

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

Q32 comments: More carriages on long distance routes.

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: As long as the franchisee bears the cost this would be welcomed as a medium investment.

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: The 1st class provision needs to be looked at on all routes and reduced.

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

Q35 comments: There should be no alcohol on trains.

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

Q36 comments: Clear times of travel and price are a priority.

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: This is a public service and should continue. It should be a matter for Government who should consult local parties.

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: There should be no change from the existing 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: Sleeper services are used by people as it saves them staying overnight in hotels. We should not alter these services. Usage would decrease if prices were increased. Could Oban and Fort William be used on alternate nights?

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: Provided there is no reduction in existing services to rail users the three principals set out in 12.8 seem to be goals to aim for.