

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

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Scottish National Party- Aberdeenshire Council 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 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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 <input type="checkbox"/>
	or
	Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address <input type="checkbox"/>
	or
	Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address <input type="checkbox"/>

(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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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: There are concerns about splitting the franchise into Economic and Social parts. There is a need to ensure an appropriate balance between economic and social railways, recognising the role of providing access to towns and cities and enabling a choice of transport options. Multi franchisees could add unnecessary complexity and cost.

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

Q2 comments: Longer contracts , with pre-specified contract break periods would be most appropriate.

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: It is difficult to see any advantages in involving third parties in rail operations.

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

Q6 comments: Clear targets should be specified. These should include efficiency, quality and safety as well as reliability and punctuality.

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: Both.

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: There is a strong case for a local service based on Aberdeen that is not sacrificed in favour of services in the central belt.

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

Q11 comments: Overcrowding on certain services is a concern in the North-East. Extending the Inverness to Aberdeen service south to Stonehaven or Montrose would help. An increase in passenger capacity from Edinburgh and Glasgow is needed.

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

Q12 comments: Reducing journey times is less important than punctuality and reliability.

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: Every passenger should be entitled to a seat on journeys over 10 minutes-this needs to be regularly monitored and rolling-stock added to accommodate this.

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: No. Rail travel should be point to point if possible. This is especially important for disabled passengers.

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: Scottish Government should specify a minimum level of service, anything extra provided by the operators is welcome but the main aim is to increase usage of the network.

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: The fare structure should be simplified and made easy and attractive to car-users. Tickets from main stations should not be cheaper than tickets from smaller stations. To enable a modal shift there remains a need for subsidy from the tax-payer.

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 need to be regulated by a cap set by government. Operators should be allowed to reduce fares to generate demand and promotional pricing at quieter times should be encouraged.

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: Rail fares need to remain competitive with car-travel. They must also be fair across the country regardless of the condition of the network.

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: Increasing the price of late ticket purchasing does not seem to achieve any objectives. Dearer tickets for busy trains seems fair and promotions for quieter ones should be encouraged.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Extending the Inverness to Aberdeen service beyond Aberdeen to Stonehaven or Montrose and Glasgow to Aberdeen trains going on to Inverurie would provide opportunities for stations at Kintore and Newtonhill and increasing use of Portlethen station. A crossrail system for the Aberdeen area remains a target- the patronage of Laurencekirk has been very encouraging..

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: Local authorities and NESTRANS have the information on the desirability of station openings. They also know the strength of feelings that locals have on train capacities and reliability.

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: Communities can be encouraged to “adopt” their station and Aberdeenshire towns have won awards for their work on flower beds and signage. This can only be cosmetic but does enhance the train experience.

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

Q28 comments: In Aberdeenshire, secondary stations are Inverurie, Dyce and Stonehaven. These should be enhanced by longer staff cover (important for disabled passengers requiring ramps etc.) and more facilities provided (toilets, heated waiting rooms and possibly a shop/café) Adequate cycle lockers and car parking should be provided at all stations. Another minimum requirement has to be CCTV, telephone helpline, information points and ticket machines.

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: It is imperative that cross-border journeys continue north of the central belt. Changing trains at Edinburgh should not be contemplated. Train travel to England should compete favourably with air travel-changing at Edinburgh will set this back. This is so important.

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: Definitely No!

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: Clean, functioning toilets, disability access and catering should be a minimum requirement on every train.

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: Will Wi-Fi be needed with network mobile 4G services being introduced?

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: There could be a problem on certain routes only - train staff will have that information

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

Q36 comments: Real-time information, fed by mobile technology.

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, if trains are going to compete with air travel, they must be retained. Introduction of enhanced comfort rolling-stock is a must.

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:

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: Overnight sleepers provide city centre to city centre connection- a big advantage over air travel. Early morning arrival is another plus.

The sleeper service is essential to Aberdeen and the energy business.

Private rooms and showering facilities would be attractive to users.

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: