



Scottish Natural Heritage Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

Rail2014
Transport Scotland
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23 January 2012

Dear Sir/Madam

Rail 2014 – Public Consultation

Thank you for consulting SNH as part of the development of Scotland's future rail services.

SNH is a non-departmental public body, funded by Scottish Government, set up under the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991 to secure the conservation, enhancement, public enjoyment and understanding of the natural heritage in Scotland.

We have provided detailed comments in the attached response form on some of the questions in the consultation (questions 16, 17, 20, 23, 24, 25, 32, 36 and 40) – we have no comments to make on the other questions. However, we would like to emphasise some key points on the future of rail services in Scotland:

- We support the Scottish Government's aim to reduce Scotland's emissions of greenhouse gases – and so welcome the key messages in the document about encouraging modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.
- Strong links are needed between Scotland's approach on transport (including rail) and the planning system – especially links with the National Planning Framework. The transport sector working in isolation will not be able to reduce its emissions beyond a certain point – planning policies have a major role to play if we are to significantly reduce transport emissions. The planning, siting and layout of the built environment strongly influences transport choices. The emphasis should be firstly on locating developments as close as possible to existing sustainable public transport links and then on extending public transport provision to service new developments. 'Planning for sustainability' should be a key principle in siting new developments to secure modal shift.
- We see improving the links between public transport (especially rail) and active travel (cycling and walking) as a key way of reducing reliance on travel by private car. In order for people to choose to use this combination of public



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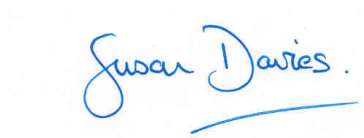
transport and active travel it must be as easy as possible for the travelling public. Key issues to consider are straightforward and safe interchanges between public transport and active travel routes, the safe and secure carriage of bicycles and large items of luggage on trains and coaches (and buses where appropriate), and the secure storage of bicycles at rail stations and bus stations.

- The consequences of actions taken to achieve one objective (for example, increasing passenger capacity at peak hours) on another (for example, reducing the space available for luggage and bicycles may encourage more people to use their cars), need to be worked through. A flexible approach may be needed so that the same service can accommodate both commuters at peak hours and 'active travellers' at other times of the day.
- As highlighted in the consultation document, people want to know (with a degree of certainty) the length of their whole journey and that any connections are likely to be reliable. If we are to encourage people to choose public transport over private cars – whether travelling for their day-to-day business, or for leisure – they need to be confident they can get where they need to be with the minimum of complications. It is key, therefore, that train timetables are co-ordinated as much as possible – both with other train services and with connecting bus and/or ferry services. In addition, the interchanges between train services and other forms of public transport should be as straightforward as possible – especially for those with luggage and/or bicycles.
- Traveline Scotland is a useful source of information to help people plan their journeys by both public and private transport. It is good to see continual development of the service, although there may be lessons in usability to learn from the implementation of similar services in other countries. A particularly useful service is provided by Germany's Deutsche Bahn via www.bahn.com – this enables searches for travel directions between different addresses within Germany straight from the front page. In addition, you can search for train journeys anywhere in Europe from the front page of the website.
- Tourism is one of Scotland's key economic sectors – and many people visit Scotland because of its high quality natural environment. Many of these visits are to the more remote parts of the country, where public transport is not as universal as it is in some of our cities. If we are to make our tourism sector more sustainable we need to encourage more use of sustainable public transport, and this may require new services to be introduced in some areas. Examples include trains running early enough in the day and connecting with local buses to enable visitors to make day-trips without a car and spend a reasonable length of time at their destination before returning. Many of these services may see low levels of usage – at least initially – and may need to be heavily subsidised for a reasonable period of time to help usage increase.
- The construction, upgrading and maintenance of rail infrastructure should be done in a way which minimises impacts on the natural environment – and, if possible, enhances Scotland's natural heritage and people's enjoyment of it. Some routes pass through or alongside internationally-designated areas which are special for a variety of reasons and often unique to Scotland. Any development in these places should be sensitive to the importance of these areas. New rail infrastructure should be attractively designed – and routes

should be managed in a way which enables people travelling to appreciate our countryside. In some places, for example, vegetation at the side of tracks may need to be cut back to provide better views. Another way to help visitors and other travellers better appreciate Scotland's countryside is to provide more information on trains about 'what to see' along the route. In addition, stations could include more 'information points' to let people know what to see in the area – this approach should be joined-up across the natural, historic and cultural agendas.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact Daniel Gotts (daniel.gotts@snh.gov.uk; 0131 316 2674).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Davies." The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

SUSAN DAVIES
Director of Policy & Advice

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:

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:

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:

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: We would like to see as many stations as possible provide a

straightforward interchange between active travel (walking and cycling) and travel by rail. There are number of aspects to this – but two key ones are the need for safe active travel routes to run right to stations, and the importance of secure cycle parking at stations for people who are only taking their bike with them for part of their journey. The interchange between rail travel and other modes of transport (especially public transport) should be as straightforward as possible. In addition, good information should be provided about other modes of transport available at each station – both timetable information and live updates. We comment further on this in our response to Q36.

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: In some areas where (from a policy point of view) demand may not currently be high enough, or appear to be high enough, for franchisees to provide a cost-efficient service. In these situations there may be a need to provide a service with the expectation that, in time, this will attract enough customers to make it viable (or less unviable) financially. This implies taking a strategic view and linking with other policy aims, such as making Scotland's tourism sector more sustainable. There may be a need, especially, to direct aspects such as timetabling to ensure that rail services co-ordinate with other public transport services – in particular, buses and ferries.

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: One of the key drivers for the fares policy is the need to encourage modal shift to encourage people to use public transport in preference to private cars, especially where this leads to significant savings in emissions. The fares policy should be designed so that the modal shifts leading to the greatest emissions reductions can be achieved first.

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: Some people have to travel at peak times of the day – so it is important not to make these fares so expensive that people choose to travel by private car instead. However, it may be necessary to encourage those who can travel at off-peak times to do so. One approach may be to offer cheaper season or multi-journey tickets for people time travel to attract regular travellers, but make the standard fare relatively more expensive. Obviously, there is a balance to be struck here between the need to achieve optimum distribution of the times at which people travel and maximisation of revenue.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: The location of stations should be informed by both current local demand and a strategic view of how the transport network needs to be developed. The development of the transport network will, in turn, be influenced by both transport policy objectives and by demand as a result of other policy and planning decisions. Given this, there needs to be a link between work to plan new stations and the planning system – especially the National Planning Framework, Strategic Development Plans, Local Development Plans and development management decisions on individual cases. In addition, the location of visitor attractions – including those most closely linked to the natural heritage – should influence where stations are located.

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: This would seem a good way of determining the likely demand for a new or retained station. However, it is important to maintain a strategic overview of the network to provide a balance between the number of stops on any service and the length of the overall journey.

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:

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:

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: It is important that active travel (cycling and walking) is encouraged by providing adequate and safe space on trains to carry bicycles and large items of luggage. This will help people choose public transport instead of going by private car. In encouraging people to choose to make their whole journey by more sustainable means, if that is by a combination of cycling and train travel it is important that they can be certain of getting a space for their bicycle – even if they have to pay a small amount for it.

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: There is a real need to have more effective Wi-Fi connections and power sockets in all carriages – possibly for a small additional charge on the main routes, such as those linking Edinburgh and Glasgow with Aberdeen and Inverness. This would enable staff working for public bodies, such as SNH, where there is a strong presumption in favour of travel by public transport to make more productive use of the time they spend travelling. In addition, it would encourage others to travel by train for business purposes as they would be more confident in being able to keep in touch with colleagues and other contacts. For example, in recent years the trains on the West Coast line have been modified to improve both mobile phone and Internet connectivity. Any such work should be prioritised first towards routes where there is a strong likelihood of encouraging modal shift in significant numbers from private to public transport.

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:

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

Q36 comments: Providing information on both available services and real-time travel updates is very important in encouraging people to use public transport services. It is important to provide this information at stations and other public transport interchanges. However, it is important to also make this information available to people while they are travelling on one leg of their journey – especially to keep people informed about the next and subsequent parts of their journeys. Connection information and real-time journey information is increasingly available via the Internet and people can access this via smartphones. However, it still may be necessary, for example, to provide more information on a train about the bus connections available at each station.

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:

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:

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: The key operational issues which we feel should be addressed are emissions reductions targets, the level of modal shift achieved, and a reduction in the environmental impacts of rail infrastructure construction and maintenance. It is important to avoid unintended consequences whereby focussing on one objective leads to a deterioration of performance in another policy area. While not strictly covered by environmental targets, it may be desirable to have some way of encouraging rail services providers to work with those involved in tourism to help reduce the environmental impact of Scotland's tourism sector. This might be thorough the development of more products such as integrated holiday packages (of which there are already some good examples) or piloting new train services to service particular events or destinations.