

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

SRPS Railtours

Title Mr ☐ *Please tick as appropriate*

Surname

Robertson

Forename

James

2. Postal Address

Marchwell

7 Dalmahoy Road

Ratho

Midlothian

EH28 8RE

0131 333 1281

james.robertson@srps.org.uk

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 X ☒ 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 X ☒ 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?

No comment

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

No comment

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

No comment

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

No comment

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

The terms of the franchise contract should ensure that the regular timetable allows adequate paths for the running of charter and other special trains such as those run for tourists and the general public by SRPS Raitours for over 40 years. These trains run not only on scenic routes but also on many other parts of the network and do much to increase the number of visitors to the highlands and other parts of Scotland.

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

No comment.

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

No comment.

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

No comment

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

No comment.

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

No comment

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

No comment

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

No comment other than to propose that there be some scope for flexing timetabled services to permit charter trains to find a path. This would help avoid a situation where a charter train with a booked loading of around 400 has to be cancelled because a scheduled train operator refuses to delay their service even by a few minutes and when the knock-on impact will be minimal or zero.

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?

No comment except to note that whichever body manages station services and facilities they should be required to make adequate provision for the use of stations by charter and other special trains.

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

No comment.

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?

No comment except to note that, on trains serving tourist areas and likely to be used by tourists, sufficient seating capacity should be provided to prevent uncomfortable loading at busy times to the detriment of the tourist industry.

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?

In order to encourage tourists visiting the highlands and other parts of Scotland, through train services should be provided wherever practicable to avoid the risk of delays and missed connections and to minimise the transfer of luggage.

As an example of lack of adequate interchange, bus connections serving the Bo'ness & Kinneil heritage railway and the Scottish national railway museum (located at Bo'ness) from both Linlithgow (the nearest rail station) and Edinburgh are very poor. As a result few visitors visit these attractions by public transport.

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?

No comment

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

No comment

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

No comment.

Scottish rail fares

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

Fares should be reasonably affordable in order to give an incentive for both the general public and tourists to travel by rail.

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)?

No comment

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?

No comment

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?

No comment.

Scottish stations

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

No comment

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?

No comment

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?

No comment except to note that whichever body manages station services and facilities should be required to make adequate provision for use of

stations by charter and other special trains.

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

No comment

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

No comment.

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?

No comment

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?

No comment

Rolling stock

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

No comment

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

The design of the trains used on routes travelled by tourists should allow good visibility of the scenery, be comfortable and attractive with adequate luggage space and have refreshment facilities. Since tourism is one of Scotland's largest business sectors everything practicable should be done to maximise its growth.

Passengers – information, security and services

33. How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

No comment

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?

No comment

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

For over 40 years SRPS Railtours has operated an all-day bar on all its tours and has sold wine as an accompaniment to its meal service. In all that time we have never experienced difficulties due to the over consumption of alcohol. Furthermore we consider that such a ban would be very seriously detrimental to our business.

Whether or not there should be a ban on consuming alcohol on ScotRail trains is a public order matter. In our experience most unruly behaviour on trains is as a result of alcohol consumed before boarding but beyond that we make no comment. However any such ban should be a matter only affecting regular ScotRail trains and should not be the subject of legislation whereby it would apply to any other trains operating in Scotland. Any such ban should not apply to charter and other special trains on the Network Rail system nor to trains on heritage railways where there is a long experience of trouble-free operation.

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

No comment

Caledonian Sleeper

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

No comment

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?

No comment

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?

No comment

Environmental issues

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

No comment.