

## 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

SCOTS

Title Mr ☒ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ *Please tick as appropriate*

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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:** In the absence of more detailed information it is not possible to comment effectively on whether this proposal has merit. It is unclear whether “economic” services are those which would be operated without public support or require some defined lower level of public subsidy. If the former it is questionable whether significant proportions of the network are sufficiently “economic”. The associated bureaucracy of operating two separate franchise elements is also questioned.

Most services in the ScotRail Express network perform both an economic and social function and it is difficult to understand how these could be simply categorised/separated. Within the context of a national rail network it is reasonable to expect cross-subsidisation within and between services either geographically, over sections of route, or by time of day. It is essential that Scotland has a unified and integrated national rail system, not a two-tier network. The suggested “dual focus” could risk increasing the need for public sector financial support and/or deterioration in levels of service on those routes and regions where passenger demand is lower. Experience from the bus sector, where pressure on public support for socially necessary services has generally increased and/or services have been reduced in a number of areas, suggests that any proposal to separate “economic” and “social” rail services could have serious unintended consequences and should be viewed with extreme caution.

At a network level it is also important to recognise the importance of integration and the role of rural services feeding into or out of inter-city services and also the need to improve wider public transport integration with the local bus network.

It would, however, be beneficial to have increased clarity on the various operational aspects of the rail system (e.g. operating costs, access charges, patronage, income) as this would assist RTPs, Councils and others in both monitoring the strategic contribution rail makes to NTS, RTS and other objectives and assessing the potential for promoting and investing in future network and service enhancement proposals.

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

**Q2 comments:** This matter has been considered previously in some detail by the House of Commons Transport Committee and DfT. Their conclusions were that, in

general, longer franchises deliver greater benefits through additional incentive to invest by the franchisee.

Longer franchises will encourage greater stability, increase the willingness by TOCs to invest, and reduce the cost of refranchising. It is acknowledged that longer franchise terms will require adequate safeguards being built into agreements, including taking account of future growth in the national economy and sharing any commercial benefits with the public purse.

The end of CP5 in 2019 could be an argument for a short 5-year franchise to coincide with that timescale, but it would seem more appropriate to align the next franchise termination with future Control Periods – either the end of CP6 in 2024, meaning a 10 year franchise period, or CP7 in 2029 meaning a 15 year franchise, with appropriate built in ‘break- clauses’ making continuation beyond each Control Period dependent on acceptable performance.

The consultation document appears to imply a preference for less detailed franchise specification, with bidders coming forward with innovative bid proposals. It is considered that this would only be realistically achieved with the offer a longer franchise term. In general, shorter franchise terms and more frequent franchising processes increase the potential for abortive investment of staff time and scarce financial resources. It is understood that the cost of bidding is around £4million. This money would be better invested in rail service and other economic improvements.

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

**Q3 comments:** This is primarily a matter for Transport Scotland to determine, informed by the DfT’s experience gained from the East Coast Trains franchise. There should be a link between operational and revenue risk and national economic performance, to encourage operators to explore ways of reducing taxpayer subsidy burden, with protection against unreasonable transfer of burden to passengers through fares parameters set by Transport Scotland.

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

**Q4 comments:** If future profits emerge or are generated then a mechanism should be applied to cap these, adopting similar profit sharing principles to the Scottish Futures Trust. As a general matter of principle any excessive profit generated through the operation of the franchise should be re-invested in improving rail services and infrastructure and to restrain fare increases.

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

**Q5 comments:** Other than enhancing station facilities, the concept of ‘Community Rail’ has not been tried in Scotland. In light of the apparent success of some schemes in rural England, there may be a case for trialling a scheme in Scotland to establish whether sufficient capacity exists within communities to successfully support this model.

The option of third parties to promote enhanced rail services and facilities as suggested in paragraph 3.20, with the caveats outlined, would be supported. Any third party involvement should not result in additional complexity for rail users, particularly with regard to ticketing, timetables, connectivity and travel information.

Third party resources should not be seen as means of a substitution for existing public sector investment but as a potential supplementary source of additional rail

investment. The public sector should always be fully consulted on proposals affecting rail matters (operations and infrastructure) in their area.

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

**Q6 comments:** This is a matter for Transport Scotland to determine. As a general principle outcome measures should be focused on improving passenger service standards and ensuring “best value”.

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

**Q7 comments:** This is a matter for Transport Scotland to determine. Experience from the East Coast Trains franchise should inform decisions on this.

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

**Q8 comments:** Franchise break-points should be inserted where contracts may be terminated if performance is unacceptable. Financial penalties should also be used to deter serious breaches of contract, safety and service quality standards, linked to the SQUIRE regime. The service measures listed in paragraph 3.26 seem reasonable.

### **Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

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

**Q9 comments:** Both. Penalties should be proportionate to the nature and level of failure and also incrementally increase in the case of recurrent failure. Sanctions and penalties should be set within a performance framework which encourages continuous improvement and development of the rail network. There may be circumstances where incentivised payments are justified. However, this should not result in excessive profits being generated at public expense. See also answers to Q4 and Q19.

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:** The performance regime should be aligned with actual routes. One system for the whole of Scotland would potentially allow poor performance in one area to the obvious detriment of those passengers to be offset against good performance elsewhere.

The relevance or importance of specific performance indicators may vary between routes so there may be advantage in applying flexibility to address these differences within performance regimes.

The performance regime must also recognise the wider contribution that rail makes to achieving and supporting national economic (e.g. through quality and reliability), environmental (e.g. through modal shift) and social (e.g. through accessibility) Outcomes.

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

**Q11 comments:** The key performance related issues of most concern for existing and potential passengers are likely to be service reliability, quality and capacity. These, along with other issues addressed by Passenger Satisfaction surveys undertaken by Passenger Focus should form the main focus of the Performance Regime.

The Performance Regime should also seek to take account of potential user issues – e.g. those who could make a journey by train but choose to use the car instead. Paragraph 4.7 comments that “relative journey times matter and therefore shorter journey times will increase patronage”. The present pre-occupation with reducing end-to-end journey times as a means of improving performance and often used as a reason for not allowing additional halts is challenged. For users the overall “door-to-door” journey time, including travel to and waiting time at stations is also important. A train service will offer a more effective alternative for a car journey if a more frequent service with consequently shorter waiting times is offered. The notion that in-vehicle time is “lost time” is becoming obsolete with passengers making more use of their travel time through Wi-Fi etc. Other than where there is the potential to effect a “step change” in journey times, frequency, reliability, punctuality and capacity are more important than speed of journey.

With regard to the definition of lateness, performance should be monitored along the length of route including key intermediate stations, rather than simply arrival at the ultimate destination. Recovery times are frequently added in to timetables and the current system masks the potential for significant “in journey” late-running which can cause disruption for users boarding/alighting and interchanging at intermediate stations.

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

**Q12 comments:** Both are of significance, however, performance should be weighted more heavily as this will ensure trains operate to time, consequently reducing average waiting times and contributing to improved overall journey times. Marginal improvements in journey time are likely to be much less important to passengers than reliability. See also answer to Q11 above.

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:** Some form of Service Quality Incentive Regime is required. The existing SQUIRE regime has generally encouraged maintenance of and improvements in service standards during the current franchise. To ensure consistent standards across Scotland all stations should be included in the regime, together with all aspects of station condition and facilities. The system could usefully be extended to include any issues identified through the National Passenger Survey as priorities.

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

**Q14 comments:** This is a matter for Transport Scotland to determine.

## 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:** Passengers should not be penalised by any increase in the current 10 minute standing time as a means of increasing theoretical capacity on already crowded trains. Existing off-peak travel promotions should be developed further to promote peak spreading where this is possible. As a general rule the franchise and TOC should seek to minimise overcrowding and standing to allow passengers to travel in reasonable comfort and make most productive use of their travel time by providing sufficient capacity to satisfy demand.

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, an increase in the use of interchange stations at the expense of direct rail services is not supported. Interchange often acts as a disincentive to travelling by public transport by adding concern and uncertainty about reliability. Paragraph 5.16 fails to consider the “penalty” for interchange in terms of cost, longer journey times due to having to change trains, and the inconvenience for all passengers. A major attraction of train travel for business people is the ability to work during the journey and this would be reduced by having to change. Leisure and tourism passengers with accompanying luggage and those with disabilities and other mobility encumbered travellers would be similarly inconvenienced.

Greater incentivisation to improve integration of interchange with other modes, including improved rail-bus interchange, through-ticketing, etc., is supported.

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:** Recognising the level of public subsidy involved Scottish Government should ensure that the franchisee supports broader Government objectives by directly determining aspects such as minimum frequency and maximum journey times. However, sufficient flexibility should be included to allow the trial introduction of new services or service changes which have a wider economic (i.e. not solely commercial) case. Allowing the franchisee to determine services on a purely commercial judgement of customer demand would likely preclude consideration of services that could provide wider community benefits. In addition to guaranteeing current levels of service the Scottish Government should ensure there is a defined strategy and programme to deliver essential enhancements to the rail network and services, as identified in the STPR, during the next franchise and beyond.

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

**Q18 comments:** As indicated in the answer to Q17 the specification should be focussed on ensuring that Government transport and wider economic and

environmental objectives are realised. The Scottish Government must ensure that the railway is customer focussed. The “targeted specification” in paragraph 5.21 would be supported though direction should be more than a “minimum” to ensure that services meet broader social, economic and environmental aims rather than narrow financial targets.

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

**Q19 comments:** The franchisee should be incentivised to maximise revenue through innovation. Where this is achieved profit-sharing mechanisms should ensure that additional generated revenue contributes to reinvesting in the rail network and services for the benefit of taxpayers and passengers. The franchisee should be required to work with Transport Authorities and other bodies in identifying opportunities to innovate.

## Scottish rail fares

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

**Q20 comments:** Passenger Focus research identifies fares as the top priority and concern for passengers. Fares policy must strike a sensible balance between offering good value and affordability (so that fares are not a barrier to travel or act as a disincentive to modal shift) and maximising revenue in the interests of limiting the cost burden on the taxpayer.

Fares should be regulated to achieve wider social, economic and environmental objectives. Rail must play a full role in alleviating urban road congestion and reducing carbon emissions by offering a competitively priced alternative to the car and other modes, particularly for commuting. Fares regulation must recognise that rail is particularly important in meeting commuter demands around Scotland’s key strategic transport nodes.

The existing rail fares system is overly complex and contains significant anomalies and geographical inconsistencies in pricing policy, with some areas enjoying much lower travel to work fares than others. The need for “fairer fares” across Scotland must be addressed within the next franchise, including issues such as offering promotional discounts only from “main” stations, thus disadvantaging users of smaller stations. There is a pressing need for rationalisation and simplification of fares but solutions must not penalise passengers or discourage use of rail as a mode of choice.

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:** There needs to be greater transparency, openness and equity in the level of fares throughout Scotland. In a heavily subsidised railway there is an argument that most fares should be regulated with the aim of achieving wider economic, social and environmental objectives. A primary consideration should be ensuring that fares make rail travel an attractive option relative to car travel,

particularly for shorter distance suburban travel. It is important that commuter peak fares (including season tickets) are regulated to protect passengers from excessively high fares.

Recognising the importance of inter-city travel for business, leisure and tourism markets standard single, day return and off-peak return pricing on these services should also be regulated. There is also a strong case for regulating fares on services which fulfil a significant social inclusion role.

The practice of two individual fares (A to B and B to C) being cheaper than the one individual fare (A to C) of the same 'fare type' must be eliminated in a way which avoids penalising existing users. The system must be sufficiently transparent so that passengers can always travel in the knowledge they are using the 'best value' fare for the journey in question.

There should also be an obligation on the franchisee to participate in relevant multi-operator ticketing schemes.

An anomaly regarding concessionary travel should be addressed. In keeping with the arrangements for national travel concessions on buses, Transport Scotland should nationally manage the provision of free rail travel for blind persons National Entitlement Card holders, rather than the franchisee negotiating reimbursement rates with 32 Councils on an annual basis.

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 balance between taxpayer subsidy and passenger revenue contributions will be determined largely by Government budgets, but these decisions should also reflect a balance between fiscal constraint and ensuring that wider economic, social, and environmental objectives are supported. Fares policy should be considered in relation to meeting these wider objectives and, in particular, having regard to modal shift issues such as relationship with generalised costs of motoring.

The suggestion of charging higher fares for routes where enhancements have been made is not supported. A broader approach to fares should include using fares regulation and review to better balance regulated fares throughout Scotland. This could be achieved by a range of fares increase differentials applied over a number of years.

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:** In general reducing off-peak fares encourages optional travel by passengers to be taken outwith peak periods. However, most travel in the peaks is by commuters who are likely to be less time flexible but may be mode flexible. Peak pricing must not act as a disincentive to commuting by rail and fares policy should not assume a "premium" approach to peak period pricing.



## Scottish stations

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

**Q24 comments:** Stations should be provided where existing and potential demand justifies provision. As with other policy, decisions should be based on a wide appraisal of contribution to economic, social and environmental objectives, including potential to serve and capture generated demand from new housing and commercial development. In relation to proposals for station development, a sensible balance needs to be made between end-to-end train journey times and additional stopping time. Marginal increases in end-to-end journey time should not be a sufficient reason alone to prevent consideration of either introducing additional/improved services at existing stations or introducing new stations.

New stations should be considered where there is a positive business case for doing so, again having regard to wider objectives, and should not rely on a “no increase in the current quantum” approach. RTPs and Councils have identified a number of positive opportunities for new or re-opened stations. The franchisee should be required to work with Transport Scotland and Transport Authorities to maximise the economic and local potential of existing stations, including new station proposals which can demonstrate a positive business case.

Station closures should only be considered following a full assessment of the wider benefits of retention. Any closure proposals should be the subject of discussion with the relevant RTP/local authority, in terms of fully exploring options for potential development, and also formal consultation with Transport Authorities and local communities. Often, where existing levels of demand are low, this is due to lack of an attractive rail service or infrastructure rather than lack of demand per se.

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 principle, initiatives by third parties to propose, promote and fund provision or maintenance of stations or services is supported and should be encouraged. Locally based third parties will often have a better appreciation of local circumstances and opportunities and may be able to attract or provide additional funding. Whilst this would include RTPs and Councils, current public sector funding constraint is likely to limit the potential for Transport Authority funding for the foreseeable future. Private sector involvement should also be encouraged, particularly where major housing and commercial developments are proposed close to the rail network.

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:** In terms of achieving potential economies of scale and transparency of responsibility within a complex rail industry environment, placing responsibility for all aspects of station maintenance and operation with the franchisee as the norm would seem preferable. Placing responsibility for larger hub stations, such as at Edinburgh and Glasgow, with the franchisee would only be practical with a

longer term franchise. This should not necessarily prevent sub-contracting or leasing where these options may be economical, particularly for remoter rural stations or where a station could form part of a wider development. In such circumstances any sub-contractor must, as a minimum, be required to satisfy the same standards as set for the franchisee and any other terms within the franchise.

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

**Q27 comments:** First ScotRail's "Adopt a Station" scheme is an example of good practice in this regard and could be developed. There should be a requirement on the franchisee to work with communities, Councils, RTPs and other bodies to support local stations. Mixed use of station properties along with good multi-modal interchange facilities should be encouraged. The development of Community Rail Partnerships, as in England and Wales, should also be considered.

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

**Q28 comments:** The concept of categorisation of stations is supported in principle, though it requires careful consideration and needs to reflect the multiple roles of many stations, as well as consideration of the number and range of traveller needs served. The categories listed in Table 6 are not unreasonable. Facilities considered must also be linked with level of usage and should include staffing levels, waiting/shelter facilities, toilet facilities, ticketing systems, information provision and help points, CCTV (particularly important at unmanned or partially manned stations), accessibility, car parking and cycling facilities.

The franchisee should be required to develop Station Travel Plans, working with RTPs and local authorities to ensure that travel to and from stations by various modes, including walking and cycling, are considered with appropriate modal split targets.

### 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?

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?

**Q29 & Q30 comments:** It is essential to maintain cross-border services north of the Central Belt at no less than current levels. SCOTS strongly supports retention of cross-border service operation north of Edinburgh, both now and when HS2 reaches Scotland. Maintenance of direct connectivity between the northern half of Scotland and key destinations in London, the East and West Midlands and South West England is economically critical for business and tourism. It is unacceptable to expect passengers from north of the Central belt to change in Edinburgh for cross-border services. In addition to increased passenger inconvenience this would also put greater strain on the operational and circulatory capacity of Edinburgh Waverley

station, which is unsuitable for the amount of transfer that would be required.

Retention of cross boundary services is also compatible with Scottish Government Planning Policy. NPF2 refers to strengthening Scotland's UK and international links through the East Coast Corridor between Aberdeen and Newcastle and current cross border rail connectivity contributes to this.

At a time when air services and connections between Scotland and London are under increasing threat due to airlines using London slots for long haul routes, it is essential that need for rail access and connectivity between Scotland and London particularly is considered as part of wider UK economic and transport policy.

The specification of cross-border services should be undertaken jointly by Scottish Ministers/Transport Scotland and the Department for Transport, having specific regard to the important role these services play in relation to network connectivity within Scotland and with the remainder of the UK.

The concept of an Edinburgh Hub, as an alternative to direct East Coast and Cross Country services, is not supported for the reasons outlined above.

## Rolling stock

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

**Q31 comments:** Based on recent trends and the implications of wider transport and environmental policy objectives, further growth in demand for rail travel must be assumed and planned for over the next decade and beyond. To cope with this increase there is likely to be a need for additional rolling stock. Consequently cascaded diesel rolling stock which becomes available upon introduction of new electric rolling stock for the EGIP enhancement should not be scrapped.

There is a strong case for refurbishing cascaded diesel rolling stock to enable these resources to be re-invested in strengthening of existing services and to support the potential which exists to introduce new services to meet increased demands, as demonstrated by various studies and proposals which have been undertaken and developed by RTPs and Councils in their own areas. Lack of availability of rolling stock is currently constraining development and implementation of a number of regional rail enhancements which, if implemented, would support NTS, RTS and wider economic and environmental objectives.

In the longer term additional electric rolling stock will also be required beyond that provided through EGIP to meet added demand and provide further electrified services on the remainder of the ScotRail network extending northwards to Aberdeen and Inverness, as proposed in the STPR.

The optimum mechanism for procuring and maintaining rolling stock is a matter for Transport Scotland to determine having regard to, amongst other considerations, the length of franchise offered.

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

**Q32 comments:** Facilities should relate to and be appropriate for the type of service provided (e.g. urban local service; inter-city; rural), but consideration must be given to

the wide range of facilities that passengers expect in a modern rail environment, including trolley service; space for luggage; cycle storage; Wi-Fi provision. Specification of these ought to be included as part of the franchise contract, with provision to require improvements during the franchise. Luggage and cycle provision is of particular importance for trains serving tourist areas such as the West Highland and Highland Main Lines.

## **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:** These facilities are essential in a modern day business, leisure and social media environment and are particularly useful in encouraging younger people to travel by train. Free Wi-Fi is standard in many public places, cafes/restaurants, etc., and should also be on trains. This would also eliminate any administrative costs incurred in charging for Wi-Fi. Ensuring consistency of provision on all ScotRail Express inter-city services should be a first priority and, where technical capacity exists, also on rural services and those used for longer distance commuting. Improving data connectivity via on-train Wi-Fi should be a priority within the next franchise.

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:** There is a strong case for the provision of first class seating on inter-city services, particularly for business travellers in terms of providing a quiet environment for working and generating additional revenue. There should be a requirement on the franchisee to monitor and report on this provision regularly to ensure that the capacity matches demand and prevent over-provision so that standard class capacity is also optimised.

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

**Q35 comments:** Issues that should be considered are passenger safety and security; passenger perception of the importance of access to alcohol; and disturbance caused by intoxicated passengers. British Transport Police should advise on whether strengthening existing controls are justified in terms of reducing actual crime or annoyance.

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

**Q36 comments:** The provision of consistently accurate information at stations and during travel, particularly at times of disruption, is crucial. Provision of on-train information appears to be variable and requires to be accurate 100% of the time. Staff should also ensure that full and accurate information is made available to passengers on late running.

Provision and accuracy of information prior to travel is also important, particularly when services are likely to be disrupted. Current information supplied via radio

stations is frequently incorrect and does not seem to be updated.

On-line information is an increasingly important source and websites must have sufficient capacity to cope with peaks in demand, particularly when services are disrupted. In December 2011 and January 2012, when strong winds and winter weather adversely affected travel and train services the First ScotRail and Traffic Scotland websites crashed.

Greater emphasis should be placed on multi-modal journey planning with better use made of mobile phone technologies, such as QR tags and NFC, for both live data and scheduled timetables. The greatest opportunities probably lie within the mobile phone market.

### **Caledonian Sleeper**

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

**Q37, Q38 & Q39 comments:** Sleeper services to/from Fort William, Inverness, Aberdeen and including the many other important intermediate stations which are also currently served must be retained. Minimum levels of service and quality standards should be protected and specified within the franchise process and not left solely to commercial discretion. It is understood the UK and Scottish Governments have now committed to retaining the sleeper services and to investing in their refurbishment.

Sleeper services provide a vital economic link for business in the regions served, providing a convenient early arrival and day long stay for meetings in London. These services are also vital to the Scottish tourism industry, serving Scotland's two principal cities and many key visitor destinations in the Highlands, North East, Tayside and Central Scotland (e.g. Gleneagles, home of the Ryder Cup in 2014). The operation of additional early or late trains to/from Edinburgh would not address the overall long journey times from the regions of Scotland lying beyond the Central Belt to London, therefore through sleeper services to Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen, are considered to be an essential element of the national rail network.

The issue of who operates the service is probably of less significance than ensuring that it forms an integral part of the rail offering to passengers, including inter-available fares with daytime trains. Currently First ScotRail provides limited information on sleeper services in their printed timetables. This is an area of operation where a separate franchise could be considered, though the whole rail industry should be required to promote Sleeper services. Facilities on sleeper trains need to be significantly upgraded. As a minimum these should be on a par with standards commonly delivered by “budget” travel accommodation. The improvement of marketing and quality standards are areas where a separate franchise, with added commercial focus, may be beneficial.

## **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:** Indicators should be included for environmental aspects including carbon consumption, waste and biodiversity. Primary indicators should relate to passenger usage (e.g. passenger kms; passenger kms/metric tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>) and also modal split between rail and road. The franchise agreement should include targets to achieve modal shift from car to rail.