John Roger Stapleton

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:I see a dual focus franchise could be a disadvantage. There could be disagreement on the social/economic divide delaying contract agreements.

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

Q2 comments: Probably about 7 years. Long enough to encourage investment, but short enough to get a change within a reasonable time if things go 'wrong'.

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: If interchange hubs are used (which I hope they are not) the performance of 'connecting services' should be given higher priority and perhaps considered as separate regime.

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: While reduced journey times are nice, having enough slack in the timetable to be able to keep to time is much nicer. The Edinburgh-Aberdeen service was slowed by a few minutes through Fife with the last timetable. This is, for me, a significant improvement as the train is much more often on time at Leuchars and so I can predict which bus I will catch to St.Andrews. The previous, unreliably fast, timetable made this connection unpredictable.

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:Yes, and it should cover all aspects. This may be difficult with the present fragmented rail industry but should be attempted.

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: The acceptable standing time on an urban service is potentially longer than on an extra-urban service. For example standing for two or three stops on a Glasgow suburban service is no real problem, standing for two or three stops on an an Aberdeen service from Waverly may be for over an hour and is not acceptable. The time to wait to get a seat on a crowded train depends on the stopping frequency and a fixed time has very different implications on different routes.

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. Changing trains is a major disincentive to the use of trains. The present timekeeping penalty system rules against trains being held so that connections may be made.

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: Service frequency should not be completely in the hands of the franchisee. Minimum frequency limits should be given to prevent gaps appearing in the timetable when trains are lightly loaded. An irregular service is yet another disincentive to rail travel.

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:

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:The regulation of all fares would reduce the headline grabbing increases of unregulated fares. This publicity suggests to the general public that rail travel is an expensive luxury.

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:Fares should not be increased where the network has been improved. If the improvement has brought a section of the network back up to 'acceptable' status, this should be used to increase revenue by increasing passenger numbers and not by increasing fares fares.

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:

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:The closure of one of a pair of close station may have a large impact on passenger numbers. While the stations are close together on the railway map they may be a long way apart on the road or social maps.

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:

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: If the railways are to regain public credibility each station must be the responsibility of a single organisation.

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

Q27 comments:By using the trains!

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:Yes. Cross-border services should continue north of Edinburgh. Because current policy inhibits trains being held to make a connection with an incoming service, a change of train in Edinburgh is a major disincentive to the use of the train.

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:If cross-border services do terminate in Edinburgh there must be guaranteed connections between services. These connection must not require the passenger to travel more than about 15 mins earlier than required assuming all trains are running to time. The inability of the present rail network to hold a train for even a few minutes to make a connection with an incoming service is a major disincentive to rail travel. This is in part driven by the desire to reduce journey times to the detriment of punctuality.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments:The removal of the ROSCOs, and their need to make a profit, from the rail industry is the only hope I can see. Could the Government become a not-for-profit ROSCO?

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

Q32 comments:Any train not operating on a short-haul urban route needs a toilet. Two are needed on longer services in case one fails.

Passenger information systems and CCTV are very useful for passenger morale and safety.

The provision of cycle racks/space will encourage cyclist to use the train and should be made flexible enough to absorb larger groups during off-peak times.

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:Could this service be provided for First Class passengers as part of the upgrade bought by travelling 1st?

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 demand for first-class will be influenced by economic trends in the future that we cannot predict. If business travel returned to the railways the extra space/services available in first-class could be in demand again. If the facility is not there for the early adopters to use and publicise this traffic could be missed.

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:Information about delays/problems needs to be readily

available to train crews to pass on to passengers via a tanoy system.

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: A sleeper service should continue to be specified. This is a valuable service. The loss of the cross-country sleeper service from Edinburgh/Glasgow to SW England some years ago cost me a days work each time I attended work related meetings near Oxford. With the sleeper I could travel overnight, otherwise I had to spend much of the previous day travelling.

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: This could be an option. However it would further fragment the running of UK rail services, which are already too fragmented.

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:My own experience of the sleeper service is that travelling from north of Edinburgh it is the only easy way to spend a whole day in the London area and not have to travel the day before &/or after.

The lack of sleepers on a Saturday night is a problem if your business in London continues after early afternoon.

The provision of a sleeper to Oban would provide a link to the ferry services to the isles. This may become attractive is air travel to the islands becomes more expensive.

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: