# Respondent Information Form and Questions

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

### 1. Name/Organisation

**Organisation Name**

Starlink (St Andrews Rail Link) campaign

**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 A single focus franchise is best for Scotland to avoid a two-tier service.

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

Q2 comments: 10 years will encourage the franchise holder to invest in service and provide stability for passengers.

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: Profits should depend upon increased passenger numbers, increased services and new stations, such as St Andrews.

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

Q5 comments: Open access should be encouraged, to let third parties provide services which the main franchise holder is unable or unwilling to provide.

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: Not too onerous to rule out smaller companies.

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

> Q8 comments: The existing SQUIRE system seems a satisfactory tool, provided it is applied sensibly.

## Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

> Q9 comments: The carrot is needed as well as the stick; the definition of good performance should include more passengers, more services and lower fares.

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: Performance regime should depend upon the number of passengers carried and the length of the journey.

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

> Q11 comments: Listen to what the passengers are telling you and act upon it.
>
> This is perhaps also the place to raise the matter of obsolete signalling affecting performance. From a situation which had pertained for many years, where all trains stopped at Leuchars, it being the stop for St Andrews, recently one or two have been running straight through due to the constraints of the semaphore signalling north of Ladybank. Immediately an element of dount is introduced; one can no longer assure a potential rail passenger that all trains stop at Leuchars, and this uncertainty acts as a disincentive, particularly is the passenger could use a car instead. Despite the 'passenger-friendly' nature of semaphore, which gives advance warning of a train's arrival, it is time these systems were upgraded so that capacity can be increased, and the missed stops at Leuchars restored.

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

> Q12 comments: The definition of lateness being defined as 10 minutes or more is not one which would be recognised in most workplaces; after all, Network Rail's definition, as far as fines are concerned, is much stricter.
>
> NB: We do not accept the claim in 5.11 that 'journey times on commuter services will be more crucial than on tourist routes'; tourists may be under equal or greater pressure to be somewhere at a certain time, for example to catch a ferry, an aeroplane or even another train.

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 apply to all aspects of stations and service delivery but must be applied in a sensible manner.

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

Q14 comments: Passenger Focus could be used, with contacts advertised at stations as those of the former RUCC used to be.

## 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: Particularly given the level of fares, it should not be assumed that passengers will have to stand at all, although clearly there will be occasions where this is unavoidable. However it should be very much the exception rather than the rule.

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: There should be no reduction in direct services. As is well-known, introducing a change of trains loses a quarter of passengers, and a change between modes of transport, such as from train to bus, at least a half.

Even worse than having to change trains is having to change stations, especially if encumbered with holiday luggage, such as one encounters at Glasgow. Despite the small bus service, which is completely unsuitable for suitcase-bearing passengers, one still has to get from the train and down the length of one concourse to the bus-stop, and then from the next bus-stop across another sizeable concourse to the next train. A Glasgow Crossrail should be seen as a priority.

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: The basic specifications should be kept for social reasons.

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

> Q18 comments: The same as at present, or better.

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

> Q19 comments: The contract should reward the franchisee for additional passenger miles.

### Scottish rail fares

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

> Q20 comments: To encourage the use of the railway; more passengers will offset increased costs.

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: For decades the fare structure has been a mess and worsening. It almost seemed that the rail industry at all levels was hoping it would somehow go away, so reluctant were they to attempt to disentangle it. There are instances where buying tickets from A-B and B-C is cheaper than a ticket from A-C (for example, Aberdeen, Stonehaven and Leuchars) and others where the shorter route, going away from the busy Central Belt costs more than the long way round via Edinburgh (for example, Leuchars-Glasgow via Dundee rather than Edinburgh). The historic reasons which brought about these anomalies, such as the use or otherwise of Winchburgh junction, have long since ceased to have relevance and all that such anomalies do is make those with the option of driving instead more likely to take it. There is no excuse; the fare structure should be rationalised. This must not mean increasing prices to remove the anomalies, which will lose passengers, but rather decreasing them, which will increase use and so compensate for the theoretical loss of revenue. The concept of 'reasonable routes' should be reinstated; a Leuchars-Stirling ticket, for example, should be valid either via Dundee or Edinburgh, thus giving maximum choice to the rail traveller, just as they would have if driving.
>
> On a more mundane level, a single fare should be no more than 60% of a return; there are instances where a single journey is almost the same as an off-peak return, which again discourages travel by train.
>
> Price should mainly be based upon the distance of the journey and, ideally, related to the cost of a car journey of the same length.

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: Increase use, and therefore increase revenue. Raising fares always results in a drop in use, especially as most people have an alternative. Rationalising fares (see Q. 21, above) must not mean increasing them.

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: It is unlikely that a difference between peak and off-peak fares makes as much difference as one might at first suppose. People travelling on business, not just going to work, have to be in a certain place at a certain time so do not have the flexibility. Even leisure travellers might find themselves on a peak-hour train, because the time they reach their destination depends upon when they start; for example, holidaymakers going to catch a particular ferry or aircraft.

**Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments: New stations could depend upon several factors, such as the catchment population and the number of people travelling to and from the location. A recent ATOC document suggested that a settlement of 15000 would indicate that a station should be provided, as would specific attractions to a particular place, such as a tourist destination or a university. It should be noted that St Andrews is a prime candidate, falling into all three categories, and being the only Scottish university town without a railway, as well as an economic generator. It should be noted that the present criteria for re-opening seem unduly pessimistic, and so should be revisited, given that all new openings since 1995, again according to the ATOC report, both in Scotland and in England have attracted many more passengers than were predicted: for example, Alloa, Prestwick Airport, Edinburgh Park, Laurencekirk, Airdrie-Bathgate. The message is clear; people like travelling by rail, despite all the obstacles the industry throws in their way.

There is already a procedure to decide upon station closures; we are pleased you are not proposing to carry out any.

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 other organisations will be more aware of local requirements than a head office in Edinburgh or Glasgow.

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: By running trains when the local community wants and where they want to go. In that way, local people will feel that it is 'their' station and duly support it. A station where most trains rush through with only one or two stopping per day is unlikely to be looked upon with affection by its community.

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

Q28 comments: We do not see the need for categories such are suggested, if for no other reason than some stations fall into more than one, and it is not

clear which would take priority. It would be better to categorise stations according to the number of passengers that embark and alight and/or the number of trains that stop.

All stations should have toilets; although trains have them, sometimes a service is delayed resulting in a longer than anticipated wait, which can pose a particular problem if the station is not in a town centre. Passengers with valid tickets should be able to use these free; access could be controlled via the magnetic strip, as happens at ticket barriers. The establishment of cafés, restaurants, bars and shops should be encouraged, by reasonable not extortionate rents, to utilise redundant spaces at stations, thus providing more facilities for passengers and the safer environment that goes with the presence of more people.

## 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: Of course they should continue to go north of Edinburgh! We are amazed that this question is even being asked, after the successful campaign over a year ago to persuade East Coast to continue running their services through to Aberdeen and Inverness. It is not clear upon which trains the people who claimed that they are little-used north of Edinburgh were travelling; the East Coast and Cross Country trains are extremely popular with Leuchars passengers, who are mostly travelling to and from St Andrews of course. As mentioned earlier, terminating cross-border services at Edinburgh would cut passengers by at least a quarter, but there would still be so many extra milling about at Waverley to cause overcrowding. It is not clear whether Scotrail would be able to run services to compensate, or if there would simply be a loss of services. If necessary the train could be split, as happens for example at Tyndrum, but passengers should not have to physically move from one train to another.

East Coast's proposal last year to terminate services at Edinburgh was driven by the age of the 125 diesel services which are currently used on the King's Cross-Aberdeen/Inverness routes. Of course, if the line between Edinburgh and Aberdeen were electrified, the problem would be greatly reduced.

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: No; see above. Extended rail journey times, a crowded concourse at Waverley and a loss of passengers cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered benefits, except by bus companies, airlines and car manufacturers!

**Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: As electric rolling-stock is cheaper to lease than diesel, electrification of the lines from Aberdeen to Edinburgh and Glasgow would make sense.

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

Q32 comments: Toilets (that work); heating (that works, particularly on the Northern Line in winter) and a view out of the (clean) window, also adequate cycle provision and luggage space. It should be remembered that not everybody is tall enough to use the overhead racks; some foreign rolling-stock has a luggage space under the seats. NB – Scotland is the Home of Golf, yet far too many coaches do not have spaces either long or tall enough for golf-bags.

**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: Wi-fi and power-points should be included as a matter of course. If mobile phone reception is to be included, please remember the passengers who really do not want to hear other people's trivia shouted into a handset, and provide a quiet coach.

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 offer of off-peak 1st class, akin to Weekend 1st, would make better use of seats.

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

Q35 comments: Most people can and do drink alcohol without causing a problem. It is one of the attractions of rail travel that one can enjoy a relaxing glass of wine while admiring the scenery. It would therefore be a great pity if it were to be banned. The analogy with coaches is not exact, because on trains the driver is physically separated from the passengers. Banning the consumption of alcohol would not solve the problem of disruptive passengers who board the train already intoxicated. If train staff cannot deal with a situation, the British Transport Police should be involved. Similarly, if there be

trains frequently used by intoxicated, disruptive passengers, the BTP should establish a visible and regular presence.

A ban in Scotland would introduce anomalies for cross-border trains, including the sleepers and remaining dining-services, whereby people would have to 'drink up' in the vicinity of Berwick or Carlisle. There is also the lucrative excursion/charter train market, where alcohol is part of the experience, and the Starlink campaign would certainly envisage such trains coming to St Andrews.

There might be a case for only allowing the consumption of alcohol purchased on the train, though that would probably mean more provision being required. However, any bans are likely to be flouted, with alcohol being added to soft drinks beforehand, and surreptitious recourse to the hip-flask. It would be a sad day indeed if one could not enjoy Scotland's national drink on a Scotrail train.

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

Q36 comments: The simple act of highlighting the 'home' station on the station timetables with a coloured pen would make these very much easier to read. Unfortunately, this helpful practice has fallen foul of the SQUIRE system. As we said, commonsense is required in its application.

The display screens tend to change too frequently. While one is still reading the train information, all too often a warning about unattended baggage flashes up! The time a screen is displayed should be proportionate to the time it takes to read the information displayed.

There is a problem with the National Rail website display for Leuchars. As you know, people can take a bus from St Andrews to Leuchars to catch a train, and vice-versa, and the bus times are also displayed on the website. Unfortunately the screen that shows train departures from Leuchars, also show bus departures from Leuchars to St Andrews, and vice-versa, whereas a passenger wanting to travel from St Andrews for a train leaving Leuchars needs to see the bus times arriving at Leuchars along with the trains departing from Leuchars. Upon reporting this, we were told nothing could be done, which we do not believe this. It would greatly help potential passengers to only have to check one screen rather than two. The present set-up is only convenient either to someone wanting to travel by bus to meet a train arriving, or someone sitting at Leuchars station who is undecided whether to catch a train or just to catch a bus to St Andrews; there cannot be very many in either category, compared with those who are changing between bus and train.

**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, sleeper services should still be specified. They reduce

road and air journeys and as such are environmentally-friendly.

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: It should be included with the main franchise, and information about it made easier to find than at present.

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: If you want to know the appeal, why not ask the users? Clearly, travelling while asleep makes good use of otherwise unproductive time, rather than wasting the best part of a day in a car. Also, passengers arrive on central London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Fort William or Inverness at a civilised time. Changing times, for example so that the train arriaved in London at 05.00, would discourage use.


Again, ask the users as to the value. You will recall the vociferous campaign in the 1990s when it was proposed to stop the Inverness sleeper. These services are particularly valuable to the tourist industry, and especially to places such as Fort William which do not have many rail services. Oban could be a useful destination, especially if it connected with an early ferry for the islands, but it should be an additional rather than an alternative service; perhaps you could split the Fort William sleeper at Tyndrum.

Perhaps this is also the time to look again at overnight Motorail, which also has environmental benefits.

**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: A KPI should be the modal shift from the more polluting road and air services achieved. Another should be the number of bicycles carried,

as each bicycle potentially indicates a car journey saved.