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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 think there should only be one franchise. If you separate the economic and social elements into two separate franchises, one automatically becomes less attractive. To get value for money, they need to be kept together.

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

Q2 comments: I have no firm views on length. However, too long and the franchisee may become complacent. Perhaps a 9 year franchise with a review after 5 years.

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

Q3 comments: No Comment

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

Q4 comments: No Comment

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

Q5 comments: I like the idea of 3rd parties spotting opportunities that the franchisee may not have. I also like the idea of 3rd parties competing against the franchisee. Competition is good for us customers. It should help keep prices down and stimulate better performance.

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

Q6 comments: No Comment

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

Q7 comments: No Comment

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

Q8 comments: Early termination of franchise or financial penalties.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: A bit of both may help. It's also important that figures are accurate and not necessarily based on final destination.

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: No Comment

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

Q11 comments: Engagement with passengers through a web portal.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times should not be increased to make performance statistics look better.

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: No comment

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

Q14 comments: A government franchise website would be a useful tool for customers to leave public comments, suggestions and ideas regarding the franchise as a whole. This would obviously be moderated. This website should be independent from the franchisee to encourage customers to come forward and also help promote trust and impartiality.

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: There is a massive difference between standing in comfort during a journey and standing in a cramped environment. I have spoken to many friends who commute daily and the common theme is that the trains are overcrowded. Not just because you have to stand, but because you could be standing whilst pressed up against a door or a fellow passenger. Greater train capacity in peak times is the answer. You pay more to travel during this period, so you should be able to travel in comfort. I think 15 minutes is acceptable. The truth of the matter is that many commuters travelling during peak periods can stand for more than 30 minutes.

I would also like to see trains running later. In our modern society and when I compare to rail services in other cities and countries, I find it ridiculous that the last train from Glasgow to Motherwell on a Saturday is twenty past eleven and the last train from Edinburgh is twenty past nine. This is just one example. Later trains would allow 'revellers' to get home safely and quickly, potentially cutting the anti social behaviour experienced in our cities late at night.

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 has to be a good level of direct services or you will simply lose passengers. I prefer to travel by rail whenever I can, however even I would think twice if I had to change services where I didn't really need to. As for other modes of transport interchanging with hubs, this is a great idea. Better use of park and rides and better integration with buses is key to a better transport system for Scotland.

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: A bit of both. All stakeholders should have an input to this.

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

Q18 comments: No Comment

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

Q19 comments: Possible bonus for reaching certain specified increases in passenger numbers which would be independently audited.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: To get more people off of the roads should be the key rationale. Making tickets affordable would help promote this.

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: I think all stakeholders should have an input to this. Make fares too high and the services will not be used. Regulated train fares increased by 6% this year. My wage rise was 0%. Last year was the same. If rail prices keep increasing, you risk losing passengers to the road, or simply not making the journey in the first place. This surely must have an impact on the wider community, for instance retail.

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: I don't think you should have to pay more for sections of the network that have been enhanced. Road users do not suffer similar penalties. Higher fares will lead to less use of the railways.

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: I think the difference in cost is already too high. I don't think that there should be peak or off-peak fares. I think it should be one fare for all times. Commuters are punished for having to travel at certain times of the day. Commuters generally travel at certain times because they have to. If I was travelling by train for leisure purposes, I would generally travel outwith busy times to ensure that I get a seat. I would assume that this common sense approach would suit most non commuters.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: All stakeholders should have an input to this. The franchisee, government and an independent public body made up of train users should all have a say.

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: I like the idea of 3rd parties spotting opportunities that the franchisee may not have. I also like the idea of 3rd parties competing against the franchisee. Competition is good for us customers. It should help keep prices down and stimulate better performance. I think that more money should be spent increasing the Scottish railway network, perhaps reaching places that have a high population, but no railway. New stations, new services and better interchanges may also arise from 3rd party involvement.

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: Providing better interchange opportunities is one way. E.g. Bus service arrives at station X. Train departs shortly afterwards. Passenger is able to travel completely and seamlessly by public transport. This would also apply to the return leg.

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

Q28 comments: I agree with the categories listed.

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: Cross border service should continue north of Edinburgh.

Passengers do not like to change trains. You risk losing passengers if this policy is implemented.

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. I can see no benefit in making passengers change trains when they don't have to.

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:

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:

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:

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: