

## SAYLSA

### 2014 ScotRail Franchise Consultation Questions

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#### 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:

The consultation document suggests that there could be two key elements to the ScotRail franchise; an economic driven element and a social part. The Stranraer line is likely to fall within the social element.

However, concern must be expressed at what the service level for socially procured services will be. The specification for the Stranraer line in recent years has been poor, indeed woeful and retrograde, a view supported by the low growth rate compared to other lines in Scotland.

There is currently no mechanism to obligate the rail industry to engage with the local communities at all, instead it only deals with the two Regional Transport Partnerships neither of which have as their prime focus the Stranraer line and are deemed remote from it. This is understandable, though totally unacceptable, since the line is peripheral to both SPT and SWestrans.

There remains no mechanism for genuine community engagement despite the existence of a community partnership, instead the rail industry would appear to rely on external consultants opinions and the community is viewed with disdain. As an example, from a survey of over 1800 rail passengers who use the Stranraer line. over 25% of passengers found the timetable changes inconvenient, the highest being in Girvan and Stranraer, the busiest stations on the line, and 17% travelled less often as a consequence. Yet at the current time these people, who effectively finance the railway through fares and taxes, have no voice to air their views and when they have been conveyed their contributions are dismissed and there is no effective feedback. As a consequence the latest timetable offering has alienated workers and students who have now found other ways to travel to Girvan and Kilmarnock respectively and no attempt was made to safeguard the carriage of 60,000 rail and sail passengers, in contrast to a scheme proposed in the north of Scotland, where rail's contribution was safeguarded. This has had the disastrous effect of making the railways even more expensive and poor value for money, since fewer people are travelling.

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

Q2 comments:

Given the current economic and political climate, it is likely to be prudent to go for a shorter franchise than a longer one. The first reason for this is that owing to the economy, bidders are likely to be even more risk averse than normal. Eighteen months away from submitting a bid may not be sufficiently long for the economic outlook to change much and in such times the franchise is likely to cost the Scottish Government more than when the economic climate is more favourable.

The second reason concerns devolution or independence. Whilst actual separation from the UK may be some years away, should such a decision come about then five years would be sufficient time for an independent Scotland to consider if the current franchising model is right for Scotland and pass legislation for a different approach if that is the view. It may well be that if Scotland does not become independent, greater devolved powers will ensue and here again lies an opportunity to re-evaluate the rail franchise process. If the Scottish Government is locked into a 12 or 15-year franchise this may not under differing conditions be the best way forward and could cost significant amounts of compensation to rescind.

Under the existing arrangement the length of the franchise is probably not a major factor for most communities, however there is an emerging community view that after 7 years one is getting somewhat tired of First Group. Discussions and dealings have not always been straightforward and it would appear that the current culture within ScotRail is purely brand and profit driven with little thought for the customer or much creative thinking. At an individual level there are examples of genuine customer care but corporately there is the perception that everything is process driven. How much this is the staff and how much the culture of the managing company it is difficult to say and it maybe that a change of franchisee makes no difference to the culture encountered. However, the effect is to inhibit innovation for a railway that desperately needs it and this is poor value for the Scottish Government.

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

#### Q3 comments:

There have been a couple of high profile franchise failures notably those affecting the Inter City East Coast franchise. Whilst in both cases it could be argued these have come about because of over optimistic bidding it should be noted that re-franchising then took place in relative prosperity whereas now we are in a severe economic downturn. It may be that an element of sensitivity analysis could be introduced leading to a cap and collar arrangement linked to economic performance and incentivisation. Otherwise bids may come in at a high level leading to a lower standard of service specification as bidders respond to a difficult economic climate. Overall this is a matter for the Scottish Government to determine.

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

#### Q4 comments:

As the Stranraer line would become part of the social element it is assumed

that the financing would be on a minimum subsidy, where the franchisee takes the risk or a cost-plus financing arrangement where the franchisee has already built a rate of return into the price of the bid. On a social railway we would expect profit maximisation to be minimal as would the opportunities associated with it.

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

Q5 comments:

With the difficulties faced by the Stranraer line, the next round of franchising offers the opportunity for a very real experiment. The line is self contained with no foreseeable freight traffic and could be used as a basis for a more integrated operation with significant community involvement.

At the next round of franchising we wish to see the CRP fully engaged in the process and opportunities explored to reduce costs. These could take place across the spectrum ranging from undertaking station maintenance, marketing and SQUIRE/quality control audits on behalf of the franchisee/Transport Scotland to a full blown vertically integrated community owned sub-sector franchise co-operative comprising Network Rail, the ScotRail franchisee, a charter train operator, track, signalling and telecommunications maintenance contractors and the CRP (which would comprise the RTP's, local authorities and local community representatives). Such a model could be used as a five-year test bed for enhanced vertical integration. The industry would deliver the service and the community would help shape and manage the product.

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

Q6 comments:

There is clear evidence that the current arrangement broadly works but travelling on the Stranraer line one doesn't have to look far to see that things look tatty. Station maintenance is poor, which may be the responsibility of Network Rail as much as it is the franchisee, train interiors are dull and very tired and trackside litter is a problem particularly in Maybole. There is thus scope to broaden the range of outcome measures to achieve greater improvement.

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

Q7 comments:

This is a matter for the Scottish Government.

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

Q8 comments:

The present sanction regime seems to work in ensuring that the franchisee fulfils its franchise commitments. The only known drawback is that passengers do not get any recompense, only taxpayers.

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

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

Q9 comments:

In a commercial environment companies are motivated by maximising revenue and minimising cost. Many of the measures currently available often seem remote from the end user, the passenger, who derives little benefit if things go poorly or well. If a journey is seen as poor, the passenger can be left frustrated and have a bad experience of rail, whereas if it is viewed as going well it is merely a journey completed as stated in the timetable. If the experience is good perhaps passenger numbers will increase and one must ask is that not sufficient reward for good performance. In most commercial contracts satisfactory delivery of the product is reward enough, it is not normal for instance in local bus contracts for operators to be rewarded for delivering anything above what is required in the contract. Indeed to do so might lead to a seesaw in performance where a franchisee can offset poor performance one month with an exceptional month the next with little to incentivise stability.

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 current performance regime is too broad. It is unhelpful that the Stranraer line is lost amongst the other southwest Scotland routes when so many of its services are in the SPT area. There is currently no incentive to improve matters on the Stranraer line so long as the southwest Scotland grouping is meeting its targets. In future we believe that there should be two groups for the Stranraer line. One for services calling at Maybole and Girvan the other for services calling at Barrhill and Stranraer. In that way all services will be in the former category and some services will be in the latter. It is bizarre that under the current regime to get any recompense the public are reliant on what happens to a line they may not even use. If passengers have bought a season ticket from Girvan to Ayr the performance they are seeking satisfaction with is what happens on that route not what happens between Carlisle, Dumfries and Glasgow.

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

Q11 comments:

As stated in Q10 the current service groups are not that well aligned to passengers needs. What would work better for the passenger is something that combines service groups and station stops. Passengers are travelling between stations, not necessarily on a particular service group.

To broaden the alignment further then perhaps a length of delay factor incurred for various incidents particularly where passengers have to wait up to two hours for the next service or are transferred by road following a failure to deliver a service.

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

Q12 comments:

The current regime is too liberal and it is not acceptable that a train arriving at its destination 7 minutes late can be considered on time yet the standard connectional allowance might be only 4 or 5 minutes. Thus at Ayr a passenger arriving from Glasgow Central travelling to Girvan may be advised to travel on a train with a 4-minute connection, but if it arrives 1 minute after the Girvan train has left, the journey from Glasgow is not considered late. There is a need to re-align performance in order to cater for this anomaly.

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:

There is a need for some kind of quality control mechanism, however we are aware there are occasions where the operator would be penalised for undertaking procedures that actually bring about passenger benefit. A particular incidence is that of recording non-fare paying passengers, in particular youths who travel one stop at non-barriered stations.

There also needs to be a harmonisation between the infrastructure sub leased to the franchisee and Network Rail. There are many instances where areas sitting outside the station lease impact on passenger perception, for example the cleanliness of the track bed (litter, human waste) and redundant platforms. These areas should be brought under the SQUIRE/quality control mechanism too.

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

Q14 comments:

It is not known what the regularity of SQUIRE inspections are but observations would indicate that overall quality remains poor. One possibility is to engage the local community to undertake more regular SQUIRE type audits. It seems strange that whilst SQUIRE covers the appearance of

prescribed posters it clearly doesn't cover the condition of station buildings as at Girvan the paint has been peeling off the walls and ceilings in the main building for many months and nothing has been done about it. We can't accept it has not been noticed, but perhaps there is no mechanism within SQUIRE to deal with it.

### **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:**

One of the concerns of SAYLSA is that rolling stock is provided to some SPT services merely to strengthen them so that passengers do not have to stand, whilst on the Stranraer line passengers have no service at all to get to work or college. This is now true of workers wanting to get to Girvan and students to Kilmarnock.

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:**

With respect to the Stranraer line, surveys indicate that when ferry passengers used Stranraer, Glasgow was just slightly less popular than Ayr as an origin/destination or interchange station. Without these passengers the demand to/from Glasgow is just over half that to/from Ayr suggesting that running more through trains to/from Glasgow is not cost effective. Indeed quite a reasonable service can be offered with a Kilmarnock – Ayr – Girvan – Stranraer pattern utilising three train sets.

The opinion of those in Stranraer is that re-connection with ferry services is a must and in this instance trains should run to/from Glasgow and ideally on to Edinburgh offering economic benefits to the region. Connections can then be provided at Ayr for Kilmarnock and the GSW route and service frequencies determined to provide a higher frequency to/from Girvan in between services to/from Stranraer.

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:**

On a social railway it is absolutely imperative that train frequency be specified in the franchise. It would be untenable for the franchisee to specify this. It may be however that in a route-by-route discussion a potential franchisee may offer more than another but Transport Scotland must be the final arbiter

in determining the minimum level of service.

First and last trains should be agreed by Transport Scotland with the local communities prior to letting the new franchise but overall journey time is not an issue on the Stranraer line since there are standard journey times between Kilmarnock and Ayr, Ayr and Girvan and Girvan and Stranraer and it is unlikely these will change. However it has been noticed that journey times north of Girvan are deteriorating due to poor timetabling and increased time set aside for train crosses at Kilkerran. In contrast to further south the time allowed for this, a semi-automated process, has increased in recent years. There remains some scope for journey time reductions if bi-directional semaphore signalling was installed on the Down line at Barrhill, Glenwhilly and Dunragit. The section between Barrhill and Stranraer could then operate as one long section with signal boxes at Glenwhilly and Dunragit switched out being opened on the half a dozen occasions each year when charter or maintenance trains operate. This would then preserve the unique heritage of the line, which ought to be safeguarded and maintain operational flexibility with retention of the passing loops.

There is a need to provide some direct trains between Stranraer and Glasgow. Having canvassed local opinion it is felt that connections should be provided between the ferry service and Stranraer and that these should go at least to Glasgow. Whether that operator should be Stena or P&O is up for debate. Without ferry traffic a local timetable can be devised but these should offer two return journeys per day between Glasgow and Stranraer, one in the morning and one in the late afternoon. The present timetable is in effect “worse than useless” in this regard failing totally to meet local needs, contrary to what was promised when the 2011 timetable was being recast.

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

Q18 comments:

For the Stranraer line this must be prescriptive and not left to the franchisee. Times should be agreed with the local communities. The franchisee would have a degree of flexing but this amount would be tighter for say peak time services than for off peak services.

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

Q19 comments:

Incentivisation on the social railway is unlikely to revolve around rail service provision except at the bidding stage. It is likely that other services associated with the railway may be incentivised but in an area where the economy is weak and wages low there would be resentment if passengers felt their experience of rail was being exploited.

## Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments:

Rail fares are a very sensitive issue. The other major problem area is moving from an existing structure to an alternative one – not an easy process. The rationale for and purpose of the fares policy should be to incentivise rail and sustainable transport. In an ideal world fares might be correlated to distance but so many market factors have been brought into play over the years that one is not starting from a uniform position.

An obvious place to start is a comparison with alternative prices and invariably these will be the car, bus or coach since this is the competition to virtually all ScotRail services save the sleeper services and some services to the islands.

Off peak fares should be broadly in comparison to the marginal cost of car travel but with allowances for factors such as parking, comparative distances and car occupancy rates. From the off peak fares, peak fares can be derived with factors such as congestion, journey time and the additional marginal cost of production put into the equation. If the Scottish Government is to make any inroads into its carbon emissions target for transport, then it must make it far easier for people to use rail. The Stranraer line is a classic example. The road to/from Stranraer is shorter than the corresponding rail journey but off peak rail fares are deemed high. Conversely the fare from Girvan to Ayr is thought to be reasonable which is hardly surprising since journey time to Ayr is comparable to road and considerably better than the bus alternative, which takes nearly twice as long and is more expensive.

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 fares set within the Strathclyde area are deemed to be about right and perhaps this is a basis from which to start from.

For the rural social railway all fares should be set by Scottish Ministers as there is no place for profiteering from franchise holding companies. The issues really arise when demand for services is too great or very low and leads to the use of pricing mechanisms to affect demand.

On the Stranraer line overcrowding is no longer an issue and the converse is true for the most part. ScotRail have hitherto flatly refused any local pricing mechanism to stimulate demand and therein lies part of the problem. It seems beyond the comprehension of the local business community that ScotRail either willingly or contractually refuses to offer any lower priced products and thus seem happier “playing trains” than carrying people. Until this changes the outlook must remain bleak for rail travellers in this part of Scotland.



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 is a political decision for Scottish Ministers.

Crude and blunt mechanisms have hitherto been used to regulate fares usually on a RPI +/- a percentage ratio. This in itself is totally arbitrary for unless local RPI indices are used how does a national UK figure reflect on what is happening in Girvan or Stranraer? It could be argued the south west of Scotland is faring badly during the economic downturn and fares should be reduced not increased.

The concept of higher fare increases for lines seeing increased investment has some merit, but to be fair the converse must also hold true. Journey times on the Stranraer to Ayr line have got worse owing to a re-timetabling of trains but fares have still risen. Such a linking must not be a safeguard for Network Rail to play a sleight of hand either. Since journey times have got longer, under this option a re-instatement of what was provided before would be seen as an improvement, but not so, it would only be returning to the status quo.

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:

The standard fare should be the off peak fare and the peak fare derived from it, for it is at peak times that extra cost and resources are incurred to deliver the surge in demand.

It seems a little simplistic to suggest that people could be encouraged to switch to travelling in the off-peak; clearly there are those oblivious to the realities of rural railways! Often passengers on the Stranraer line have no choice of when they travel. There is not the luxury of switching from peak to off-peak travel that say travellers on the Cathcart Circle have. Unless exemptions are made, the recent decision by SPT will make it all but impossible for concessionary fare travellers to go to Glasgow from Barrhill and return the same day without being penalised.

### **Scottish stations**

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

Q24 comments:

The process for determining stations is fundamentally flawed with respect to

the Stranraer line and any other social railway since it is very unlikely that any rural station will satisfy a conventional business case. However, there is often a degree of clamour to see some of the line's stations re-opened and there may well be a case for possibly four re-openings. The Stranraer line is desperate for passengers but the slavish adherence to journey times is what is helping kill the line. Compared to other tertiary routes it has the lowest number of stations per mile (1 station per 14 miles) compared to an average of one station per 7 miles on other routes. It is eminently possible that line speed and signalling enhancements could mitigate the effect of additional station stops.

A much better approach would be to look at the issue in environmental terms, particularly the opportune cost of carbon. With large distances between key settlements it is likely that higher volumes of carbon are expended in rural areas to access services than in less rural areas, yet the methodology for station appraisal is the same.

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:

The fundamental issues in proposing, promoting and funding a station or service are geared around risk and safety. SAYLSA would envisage a project team comprising the appropriate RTP, Network Rail, the ScotRail franchisee, SAYLSA and Transport Scotland to take these issues forward. The key elements would be appropriate and robust research, an agreement that trains would call, an estimation of revenue and overseeing the construction of any station by Network Rail to an agreed project management fee. There is no reason why suitably qualified teams could not construct a community station, with the workforce being derived locally if the resources are there. After all heritage railways are perfectly capable of constructing stations and we believe this experience should be bought into.

Service funding is a little more difficult. Given that ultimately much of local government funding comes from the Scottish Government anyway, one wonders if there is any advantage in pursuing this model. One exception is through windfarm gain, however the competing needs of local communities is such that it is doubtful whether the high costs required, even for match funding, would be realised through such streams.

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:

On the Stranraer line SAYLSA are seeking the exploration of a Community Transport Company model, which would comprise representation from key stakeholders to ensure safety, operational, financial and qualitative standards

are adhered to. The organisation could offer the industry scope for considerable cost savings and deliver a local focus with local support. Investment in new facilities would be undertaken as at present following dialogue with the relevant parties and Transport Scotland.

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

Q27 comments:

ScotRail have for some years been developing their adopt a station programme with some notable successes but the main disadvantage is that it is a bit of a scatter gun approach and no local cohesion and all the station adopters are to some extent working in isolation to each other. Thus there is no local co-ordination.

There are some exceptions and the Stranraer line is one where SAYLSA have adopted all the stations. Only one station, Girvan, has capacity for the re-use of buildings and gardening is carried out at all of them by a volunteer grouping that has no inter-action with the Community Rail Partnership.

The key to local involvement is community engagement and both ScotRail and Transport Scotland have so far failed to effectively engage with the local communities. The development of Community Rail Partnerships is an obvious way forward.

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

Q28 comments:

There are probably five different grades of station on the ScotRail network;

- the three major stations at Glasgow Central, Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh Waverley,
- primary stations based on throughput and inter-connectivity such as Aberdeen, Ayr, Paisley Gilmour Street,
- secondary stations such as Kilwinning, Dumbarton Central which often a high frequency of services and a couple of interconnecting services,
- tertiary stations such as Girvan which have a moderate throughput of over 100,000 but a less frequent service
- local stations, which have a low throughput and may serve villages or suburbs e.g. Barrhill

The facilities will depend upon the circumstances surrounding each station. An urban station on a commuter line may have a high throughput of passengers but have no real identity other than the immediate vicinity, whereas a town station may be of regional importance but have a limited service. In some ways the larger the town and the poorer the service frequency the greater the range of facilities required e.g. Stranraer, whereas the urban station with a higher frequency of service may need fewer facilities. What is important is that communities and RTP's are actively consulted about changes to the facilities proposed whether they are upgrades or a withdrawal of facilities.

## **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:**

SAYLSA's interest in cross-border services north of Edinburgh is minimal. However we do have interest in cross-border services to/from Glasgow. It is not really acceptable that there are no Inter City type services operating via the GSW (Nith Valley) route via Dumfries and Kilmarnock.

Given the paucity of population on the West Coast Main Line north of Carlisle re-routing a couple of trains a day via the GSW would benefit the region and improve passenger numbers. With a catchment area 3 to 4 times greater than the WCML this is an important oversight by the transportation authorities and would assist the Scottish Governments aspirations to see journey times improved on the GSW route.

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 comment not relevant to south west Scotland.

## **Rolling stock**

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

### **Q31 comments:**

The Scottish Government could acquire rolling stock and lease it to the franchisee, the assumption being that the rate of return would be lower than charged by a RoSco. There are already a number of different market mechanisms including RoSco's, banks, finance houses and manufacturers and toc's will already be well versed in securing the appropriate deal for the franchise.

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

### **Q32 comments:**

SAYLSA wish to see a radical approach taken for the Stranraer line. We wish to see a designated sub set of the class 156 fleet allocated to the line and refurbished which would allow bespoke modules to be fitted. The class 156 are well suited to the Stranraer line and are more environmentally friendly

than class 158. We wish to see a dedicated fleet of 3 or 4 units allocated to the line ideally part of a Community Transport Company initiative where some seats are replaced by mini-buffets and if ferry traffic can be enticed back increased luggage provision. These would be staffed during the journey and offer not only refreshments but also information on the locality for tourists and up to date travel information. The modules could readily be removed and seats refitted if the unit was transferred away from the region.

### **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:

One of the unfortunate issues surrounding mobile phone and wi-fi access is that the differentiation between a necessity and a perk is blurred. With the advancement of mobile phones the former is now a necessity whilst the latter is useful for many business and some leisure travellers.

On the Stranraer line mobile phone access is poor owing to the local geography. There are blank spots around Kilcarran in the Girvan valley and between Girvan and Challoch. With the roll out of GSMR along the Stranraer line there may exist the opportunity of utilising these structures to provide some semblance of mobile phone coverage. Overall we think the matter is not really a rail franchise issue as phone services are a utility and should be dealt with under the appropriate department such as Rural Affairs.

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:

On the Stranraer line there is considerable anger and frustration that passengers have had their services removed, ostensibly to provide additional carriages for places such as East Kilbride or Paisley Canal so that passengers don't have to stand. It does seem totally inequitable that for some people in the region they now can't get to work or college by rail just so someone in Glasgow doesn't have to stand for very long. As a consequence further pruning of whole services could now take place. The present system is flawed and a core values and services specification needs to be agreed across the network before issues such as additional seating capacity are addressed.

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

Q35 comments:

The issue of alcohol is sensitive. Survey work undertaken by SAYLSA indicated that one of the reasons some young people choose rail is that they

can have a drink. Invariably drinking appears to be more of an issue when group size increases or late at night. There has been a failure of British Transport Police and ScotRail to adequately police services to/from Stranraer when important regional or international rugby and football matches are taking place. ScotRail management seem to be poor at recognising this putting too much emphasis on the conductor of the train. A better mechanism would be to allow local non BT Police to intervene and monitor the situation on trains conveying passengers around the time prior to and post such sporting events given that the resources available to BTP are very limited.

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

Q36 comments:

The rail system generally performs very poorly at times of disruption and this is one area where the franchise needs to be strengthened significantly.

There are broadly three types of disruption, one which is pre-planned i.e. engineering works, the second where it can reasonably be predicted e.g. weather and major events, and the third unpredictable e.g. suicide, equipment failure.

The first is usually dealt with effectively though for some strange reason Network Rail and ScotRail agree to increase disruption more than necessary when routing trains from Glasgow via Kilmarnock when the Paisley route is shut by leaving at the same time as normal thus on arrival onto the Stranraer line this causes disruption and late running. It would be much more sensible to start such trains earlier thus leaving Ayr in their correct time slot with no knock on delays to up trains.

The second type of disruption is poorly handled by ScotRail. In adverse winter conditions ScotRail just abandon people on the Stranraer line. SAYLSA have suggested to ScotRail that a pre-planned emergency timetable is agreed with the communities at the outset, involving just one train based at Stranraer, that shuttles up and down to Ayr. This timetable is published in the marketed material as the Emergency Weather timetable and everyone then knows what is happening. Should the weather deteriorate rapidly or the line becomes blocked the disruption then becomes an unplanned event and is dealt with accordingly.

The unpredictable event naturally is the most difficult one to manage since resources could be just about anywhere on the network and management needs to decide what if any service is to be provided taking allowance of the conditions (line blocked, train set failure, no crew). Here there should be an absolute guarantee that the franchisee will provide alternative transport if the delay is to be longer than one hour. ScotRail are particular bad in this regard and it is disgraceful and unacceptable.

A more minor but equally irritating issue is small-scale alterations, usually in platforming. This is often an issue at Ayr and arises because of the lengthy chain of command from Control to the signallers and Control to station staff. The one person who knows which platform the train is routed to is the

signaller and the signalling system should be directly connected to the on station passenger information regarding platform occupancy.

### **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:

The Scottish Government should continue to specify these.

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:

These should remain part of the 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?

Q39 comments:

The main interest in the Caledonian Sleeper so far as the Stranraer line is concerned is connections in and out of the Glasgow portion. There would be considerable merit in re-routeing the Glasgow sleeper via Dumfries and Kilmarnock with potential for greater use and in such case connections could thus be afforded at Kilmarnock for Ayr, Stranraer and Northern Ireland.

In terms of service a two-tier service should be operated. One utilising cabins and beds and one utilising drop down bunks. It would be possible to have compartments re-introduced with four drop down bunks fitted as common on overseas railways. In the day time these act as seats (6 to a compartment 3 per side with a further 6 above acting as luggage racks). At night these can act as bunks for 4 passengers. This way rolling stock is better utilised. Indeed an extra round trip to London could be accommodated. These are likely to be popular with families and tourists.

## 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:

SAYLSA have experience of using carbon emissions as a basis for judging project effectiveness. The amount of carbon expended in tonnes on Stranraer line services within a year was compared with the road alternative. The difficulty with a ScotRail wide figure is that it is fairly meaningless because it is unknown what one is measuring against. It is possible that carbon data aligned with service groups could be ascertained and this would assist local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships more effectively in road/rail comparisons.

SAYLSA would like to see much more work undertaken on fuel efficiency. We still have diesel engines left on tick over when trains are idling between duties for up to 30 minutes. This is wasteful. We wish to see more work done on alternative fuels such as bio-fuels or even hydrogen power as a trial since we do not believe that electrification is appropriate south of Ayr on cost grounds.

We feel that the UK rail industry is poor at re-cycling. On rural stations in Norway for instance there are four bins for different types of waste. On Scottish stations perhaps two bins one for cans and one for other waste would be appropriate.

The state of the track bed is unacceptable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Having an open sewer is not environmentally friendly. Whilst exceptions may be allowed for charter train operators using Mark I stock modern rolling stock should not be discharging human waste onto the track bed.