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From: DSM []
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Cc: 8.Brian Murphy
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THE A82 PARTNERSHIP

FORT WILLIAM

PH33 6DG

Rail 2014
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow G4 0HF

Thursday 16 February 2012

Dear Sirs,

RAIL 2014 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The A82 Partnership have considered your consultation document and respond as follows. Please note that our responses have been restricted to the points on which we consider the A82 Partnership is qualified to respond.

Key Issues:

Rail services are one of the key building blocks for the West Highland economy. It is essential that the existing rail facilities provided in the West Highlands are not diminished. Additional opportunities should be built in to an investment programme to improve rail services and thus enhance and bolster the West Highland economy.

The Caledonian Sleeper should be retained and improved with new rolling stock to improve the overnight experience on these long distance trains. Sleeper trains to Fort William should be retained. This should be pursued through a separate franchise to the rest of the Scottish Rail services.

The marketing and the booking service for the Caledonian Sleeper must be reviewed. Improvements to these aspects of the service are seen as a major opportunity for the development and greater utilisation of this particular rail service.

Trains on rural routes on the West Highland line should be upgraded with new rolling stock with adequate provision for cycles and luggage. Immediate improvements to heating and toilet facilities must be implemented. This along with improved marketing will assist the local economy, tourism and development as well as encourage greater use and provide increased revenue to the franchise budget.

The West Highland line is considered to be one of the most scenic train journeys in the world. This journey could be significantly improved by cutting back the rail side scrub and allowing passengers to view the magnificent scenery.

An inadequate road infrastructure and a nonexistent air service emphasise the importance of a reliable, efficient and appropriate rail service to the West Highlands to the economic and social life of the community.

I trust you will take account of these comments when determining the franchise for future train services and your rail investment programme beyond 2014.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Maclean FCMA MBIM
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PH33 6DG

THE A82 PARTNERSHIP RESPONSES

Consultation Questions

CALEDONIAN SLEEPER

Q37 *Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?*

Q37 comments: Overnight sleeper services should continue to be specified. This is an essential a long distance service serving the full length of the UK providing an efficient service direct in to the centre of London. It is particularly important for the West of Scotland due to the lack of high-speed lines , the inadequate road infrastructure and the nonexistent air service.

Q38 *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: Yes the sleeper service should be contracted for separately from the main Scottish franchise. The main Scottish franchise covers services internal to Scotland whereas the Caledonian sleeper traverses the length of the UK.

Q39 *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: Prior to upgrading the rolling stock a passenger demand survey should be undertaken to identify on train facilities that will make the journey attractive. This survey can accommodate alternative timetables. The current timetable fits well with needs and arrives in London in good time for early morning meetings. A calling point in the Midlands would usefully increase the journey opportunities.

The current departure points in Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William are well located for the northern extremities of the UK and should not be changed.

The provision of improved catering for evening meals and breakfast along with lounge seating will improve the journey experience. Radio facilities in the sleeping accommodation will make for an attractive overnight trip.

Wi-Fi, mobile communications, power sockets for computers and mobile phones should be provided, and not only in First Class; this is of benefit to both business and leisure travellers.

Greater differentiation between First and Standard Class facilities could enable higher First Class fares to be charged while retaining an affordable Standard Class service for leisure travellers. i.e. the inclusion of showers and ensuite facilities.

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