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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: No comment

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

Q2 comments: Rather than suggest an 'absolute' time, I strongly recommend that the length of the franchise period should be sufficient to allow the franchisee the basis for sound investment, in parallel with Government investment, (Treasury or Scottish Government), so as to allow be able to achieve a reasonable rate of return on investment made.

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: It is important that the franchise should be flexible enough to allow for this if franchisee profits from a Government supported franchise were excessive. A formula should be devised, agreed and applied.

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

Q5 comments: As necessary to achieve success. But what/who are the third parties you are talking about? Network Rail? Local authorities and others may well have an active part to play in securing adequate provision at stations.

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: No comment**

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

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

**Q9 comments: Both.**

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: It should be aligned with actual routes or service groups.**

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

**Q11 comments:** By ensuring that passenger views and experiences are effectively brought to the attention of both the TOC and Transport Scotland, who should insist on some degree of penalty for failure to reach adequate standards. But this must also take account of failures by the track authority to make any route or service viable for the TOC/franchisee.

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

**Q12 comments:** Ideally, performance should be adequate over any distance, and appropriate timings agreed so as to enable these to be met. However, over longer distance it may be necessary to introduce a small variable so as to allow for the unexpected, but this should not extend beyond 10 minutes.

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 should be a negotiated link between the two because one can massively impact the other. If the track authority cannot deliver the

track to the TOC at the right time and in the right condition, there must be no adverse impact on the TOC/franchisee in either operational or revenue terms.

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

Q14 comments: There is currently a tendency for lack of attention to detail at some stations, perhaps the smaller ones, not fully manned in the evenings. Some form of effective, independent inspection and consequent reporting on adequacy should be developed, either announced or un-announced, with reports sent to Transport Scotland who should REQUIRE follow up and improvement if any inadequacy is revealed. Similarly, good 'service' should be rewarded.

The same applies to train service quality.

### 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: Not qualified to comment in detail but up to 10 minutes at major interchanges involving crew changes seems sensible.

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: Yes, probably, but not at the expense of all direct services. Amongst the challenges would be the need to ensure sufficient regularity of service to match connecting modes, and access from non-rail modes to stations and vice-versa.

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: Perhaps the Government should set a minimum degree of service provision, but ultimately it must be the franchisee who should determine this, based largely on demand. There is little point in Government funding sparsely used services unless a way can be found of limiting cost by using, for example, trains with fewer coaches at times of little use.

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

Q18 comments: Not able to comment

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

Q19 comments: I cannot comment on the method, whether it be financial or otherwise, but it would be wise to establish how the franchisee COULD be innovative and to what extent they currently feel that they are inhibited in so doing.

### Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares should be structured so as to be broadly comparable to the cost of travel using other services (road, air etc), but also so as to take account of any variables such as social need, commuters, distance etc. They should not be a disincentive to either the franchisee, by being held deliberately low and so unable to allow the franchisee to achieve financial targets, or so high that the travelling public are put off. Ticket prices should have the same degree of variation reflecting off-peak, APEX, etc as now. Fully flexible tickets, at greater cost, should be reflected in quality of service provision for the passenger, and should be easily interchangeable through provision of a suitable IT system when changed routings/timings are essential for individual passengers. At present the system is unduly cumbersome, long winded-and 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: See 20 above. My recommendations would take account of eg the Strathclyde area and suburban. Intercity is where the alternative modes are available.

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: There should probably be a RPI/CPI increase regularly, but not necessarily to allow for enhanced fares where sections of the network have been enhanced. Unenhanced sections have been a cause of passenger dissatisfaction for years

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: Yes, it might if, for example, more 'home working' becomes the norm. But many will still have to travel at peak times irrespective of any policy which encourages off peak travel. But there should be a fare differential devised which would need to be substantial in order to achieve its aim.

## Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Stations are used for a variety of purposes: short commuting, local convenience or to join medium or long distance intercity trains. Communities in Scotland are often well spread out, especially in the North, and station provision should take account of this

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 am sure there could be many advantages. To that extent, provision of a 'service' should where possible take account of all stakeholders who should be encouraged to take an interest and even 'sponsor' particular stations or services.

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: Interesting. I suspect that a franchisee might be able to suggest ways of making the 'whole experience' of travel better if they managed stations. Stonehaven, at 10 pm on a cold night with no waiting room available is a bleak and miserable place.

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

Q27 comments: You should consult local and community councils and give them some kind of stake in their success through publicity etc.

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

Q28 comments: Designated as what? I am unclear. All stations should be able to provide WCs, warm waiting rooms, TV monitors for train times/delays, and access to a system to enquire if information on problems is not explained by PA announcements. Larger stations should have newspaper stall and light refreshments available. There should ALWAYS be someone on duty and available from ,say, 6 am until the last arrival/departure in the evening.

## 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: This is a very key question. Without doubt there is a need for cross-border services to go North of Edinburgh, and probably Glasgow. Aberdeen, Inverness and Fort William are all areas of either economic/industrial strength or tourist growth and potential for either, or should be encouraged to be so. For the business user, for example to Perth from London being unable to get a through train at all, when almost certainly working all the way, is a big disincentive. And Aberdeen is a hugely successful area economically, well served between Dundee and stations further North by many smaller stations for use by both commuter and long distance trains picking up or disembarking passengers. A move to stop through trains at Edinburgh would be a retrograde step of huge proportions and a substantial disincentive to long distance rail travel. Rail must COMPETE with air travel in terms of destination availability. These services would be/ are cross border, and provide for passengers from all parts of the UK. The responsibility should be shared between D o T and Scottish Ministers.

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! And no benefits would accrue to the long distance passenger.

## **Rolling stock**

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

Q31 comments: Involve the TOCs so that they can closely advise on provision, including manufacture/leasing, and be incentivised to invest in what they feel their passengers require.

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

Q32 comments: Sufficient WCs, light refreshments for shorter journeys, power points for lap tops/mobiles, WI/FI; business class seating for those needing to work, and on longer day time routes and some longer early morning or early evening routes, the opportunity for more substantial refreshment. The loss of breakfast/ lunch/dinner on East Coast Main line is a great shame. Try to make travel by train more of an experience to be enjoyed rather than dreaded. Remember that all travel is pretty good hell and try to relieve the misery...but charge accordingly.

## **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: Yes. These are increasingly used on travel for both business and personal reasons. Their availability has moved from the 'desirable' to the 'essential' category. But you should also consult the IT community as to what is expected to be the next IT revolutionary advance and try to incorporate that too, at least in terms of infrastructural and electrical capacity at the 'build phase' so as to avoid the need to re-engineer equipments. Built in early, there should be no massive increase in construction costs, either on trains or track side.

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 most obvious way is by ticket price and facilities on board. There will always be a need for the business passenger to require quiet and comfortable facilities, and for others who can afford it, the same. If track capacity exists, there would perhaps be scope for 'all tourist class' long distance class trains at certain times. But this is less than ideal. For example, Aberdeen is about 7-8 hours from London on the fastest through train. To fly, having travelled from central London, one has to allow about 4.5 to 5 hours so as to allow for security, increased flight (mostly airfield taxiing and holding)times and onwards journey to home or office. Airlines on this route

use second class facilities for all passengers irrespective of fare paid. Rail should differentiate by, amongst other things, providing a less stressful and more peaceful journey, even if rather longer.

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

Q35 comments: There will always be those who drink too much and cannot behave. They should be rooted out and banned from travel if they are guilty of any disruption. But to forbid a person from buying a couple of drinks as he or she relaxes over a book after a long day, or passengers travelling by sleeper and relaxing in the lounge car or in their sleeping compartments, is a ridiculous suggestion. How would you police a first class sleeper passenger bringing his own wine onto a train and drinking it in his compartment? Or a passenger coming on board with an innocent looking bottle of water, but one topped up with vodka? Train staff must be empowered to prevent excessive drinking which leads to improper behaviour, rather than making rail travel a misery for everyone simply by penalising responsible passengers. But it MAY be wise to ban alcohol on 'football special' trains.

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

Q36 comments: Through adequately informative on-board train staff announcements, spoken clearly and with authority, at regular intervals in the event of problems or delays, and similar information at stations. But people responsible for doing all this must be TRAINED and suitably informed so that they can disseminate news.

### **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: As a regular user of these services, which I know currently require a large degree of Government subsidy, I believe you should continue to specify these services. However, given a sufficiently advanced, comfortable, better marketed and operated service, I think that a good operator should be able, over time, to instil so much confidence and reliability in his 'product' that the service can pay more of its own way and allow for a drop in subsidy. Lack of reserve, or even sufficient, rolling stock, (eg lounge cars), or their provision on some routes (Fort William, because the train would be too long at Euston and the engine beyond the signal if another carriage was provided), cause passenger dissatisfaction if technical snags emerge. Staff unavailability can sometimes lead to closure of a lounge car, thereby compressing passengers even more in available lounge car space.

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: As a passenger I do not mind who provides the service provided it is good. But there seem to be benefits to maintaining it within the ScotRail service, not least because of staff residence issues, number of Scottish stations called at etc., and interconnectability with further afield destinations on the network operated by Scot Rail.

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: Before the days of regular air travel, night sleeper services were the choice of many. They were almost the norm. Apart from driving, there was little choice. To those who now use them regularly, they remain a highly valued service. For example, those in the business community, and in other walks of life, can attend a function in London, or at Edinburgh or Glasgow, travel overnight and waste no time at either end. For those from further afield and using the Inverness, Fort William and Aberdeen services, the same applies but with rather earlier, but not inconvenient, departure times.

There may well be a case for later or earlier services, or for other routes: why not reinstate Euston, Carlisle, Dumfries, Kilmarnock Glasgow...IF you can attract the traffic? For earlier, it would be important to provide a proper dining facility, and similarly proper breakfast facilities for Inverness and Fort William. The current lounge car facilities are only barely adequate. And the Mark 3 sleeper coaches are worn out, rattle, difficult to clean and with a host of actual or potential engineering/maintenance issues which cannot be addressed for much longer without complete re-engineering/reconstruction. There must surely be scope for introducing much enhanced berth, washing and WC facilities.

It may well be the case that the 'sit up' coaches provide greater revenue than the second class sleeper berths. But they also take up the time of the lounge car attendant who could perhaps be usefully attending to the needs of the sleeping berth passengers in the lounge car. And the sit up coaches also lengthen the train, so adding to the engine/signal problem at Euston, although, as said above, there are no more available lounge cars.

But if TOCs are to be persuaded or encouraged to invest and operate

sleepers, they must also be persuaded to market their product. I am astonished by the number of people who have no idea that the current service exists, although glad to know at first hand that load factors are improving.

If the facilities and service were much better I am sure that passengers would be prepared to pay.

A market survey may well show that there are other potentially viable destinations, including Oban for the isles etc. But the current 3 northern destinations are essential, as are Edinburgh and Glasgow.

### **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: I am not qualified to comment, but eventual total electrification seems an obvious environmental target to be achieved .