

Geoff Thomas

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 do not feel qualified to answer Q1 – Q8

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

Q2 comments:

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:

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

Q5 comments:

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:

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

Q8 comments:

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Just penalise bad performance.

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: One size does not fit all!

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

Q11 comments:

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

Q12 comments:

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: All aspects.

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

Q14 comments:

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:

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: Direct services should be kept, as changes are disruptive to

those getting off to change and to those remaining on the train.

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: Government should direct it. Otherwise the service could be manipulated and run down by franchisee

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

Q18 comments:

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

Q19 comments:

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: To encourage people to use the railway instead of their car

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: First class should be set on a commercial basis. Maximum pence/mile fares should be set by government for the different types of journey.

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: A bit above inflation. I don't think it would be fair to charge higher fares for enhanced lines. How long would you keep it up for? And would you then decide to reduce fares for folk whose line was long overdue for improvements? How would you decide that one?

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: There should be a difference, for that very reason.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Certainly not by footfall in rural areas! Not by setting a minimum distance apart. Both negative comments, I'm afraid.

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: More stops for the train will slow trains down and lead to more congestion on the lines – but a train station at a big works could be a tremendous boost to rail traffic and a big relief on the roads. But how do you cope when the big stores all want their own station in their own carpark?!!!!

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: yes, only one.

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

Q27 comments:

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

Q28 comments:

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: Why stop them at Edinburgh – give a decent through service to other communities as well. I used to live north of Aberdeen. Why should they be penalised for being so far from the central belt?

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:

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: They should vary. Long distant routes need more toilets than commuter trains. Some areas need more provision for bikes. Both these are applicable to the West Highland line and the Far North and Kyle lines, for instance.

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: Fairly low. Better comfort, and more controllable heating are more important

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: Is evidence of disturbance to other passengers and staff from foulmouthed and inconsiderate drunks not enough?

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

Q36 comments: By getting it **right!** The Glasgow – Mallaig and Oban service has difficulty with the train splitting and since the introduction of the automated announcements and LED screens passengers joining at Glasgow have been greeted with an incorrect message. (Eventually, this has now been improved but it is still not right.) The using of the rear door at certain stations plays havoc with it, too.

And how many stations have incorrect info on the 'forward travel' noticeboards? And on the website? I can only use Arisaig as an example. The board is wrong and, until recently the website tells you (and maybe still

does) that there is access to the station through the Howard Centre. This must be through a little known tunnel about 450 miles long, as that info should be on the WELWYN GARDEN CITY entry in the website!!!

Information provided needs to be accurate and reliable. Not just to look good and tick the boxes on the SQIRE report.

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: Can you imagine the TOC running sleepers if it was left to them? They need specifying and advertising.

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: Either - provided they are kept. Contracted is an ambiguous word.

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: I don't think that additional later or earlier trains would mean that the sleepers were not needed – you cannot sleep so well sitting up in a carriage.

There are airports at Aberdeen and Inverness which may provide alternative means of reaching London and the South of England. However, Fort William is several hours away from the nearest airport and realistically does not have this choice. Oban could be an alternative terminus - whichever is used there is a joining point at Crianlarich. I would expect more passengers to be generated from Fort William than from Oban, mainly because of the hills. That is simply my opinion – I haven't done any research.

I don't think that it needs many more facilities than it has at present. It may appeal to more people if they had a single cabin – but they are available in

first class at present – at the extra cost. Certainly I don't see the need for all-night entertainment; after all, it is designated a sleeper. If people don't want to sleep, maybe more trains later or earlier may be the answer for them.

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 had difficulty with the response form. I could not get the boxes to take a tick, hence the enlarged print to give you the answers required.

Many questions I have left unanswered because I feel that I am totally out of my depth with them. As you will realise, there are areas where I do have strong feelings. I may have expressed them unusually, but they are heartfelt answers.

Having spent two hours filling in this form for electronic transmission, I now find that there is no way of submitting it.