

Ken Thomson

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:

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:

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:

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:

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: Opportunities – better integrated public transport. Challenge

– Inconvenience, especially when carrying luggage or for elderly or infirm customers

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 service provision or some rural services will simply wither and die.

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:

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:

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:

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: Horses for courses here – loading peak fares is ok when there are plenty of alternative services but on rural long distance routes a set

proportion of seats should be retained at lower fares even at peak times.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments:

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:

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:

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: Yes. As well as providing "local" services within Scotland these services principally allow non Central Belt customers to reach directly or indirectly major destinations within England without changing trains – a major plus point for families, individuals with more than hand luggage and the elderly or infirm. These services are already sparse and limited to an East Coast bias especially from Inverness. They should be specified by Scottish Govt.

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. See Q29. If passengers wish Scottish connections they already have the option to change at Edinburgh.

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: Trains on rural routes with long journey times need upgrading to make them fit for purpose. The West Highland Lines units are woefully inadequate – they are cold/drafty in winter (even more so after internal doors were removed following safety concerns after the Loch Awe derailment) and hot in summer, toilets are too few and inadequate, often failing, luggage and bike space is poor. Catering trolleys are essential and current facilities on rural Highland routes are actually quite good.

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: Scottish society has an issue with its drinking culture but it is this that should be addressed. The well behaved silent majority should NOT be punished by banning alcohol on our trains. More robust “policing” of bad behaviour (of any sort) should be carried out. Ad hoc banning of alcohol for sporting events or rock concerts (say T in the Park) seems to work well and should continue.

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: Yes, these are fundamental services especially for areas North of the Central Belt, in addition the Fort William service provides early morning and late evening seats especially for “local” use by leisure travellers (Scottish or “external” tourists). Ticketing purchase for Sleeper services are poor and should be improved, booking especially for internal journeys on the Fort William service often don’t appear as journey opportunities on National Rail or ScotRail websites.

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: No, these services are for customers to or from Scotland and should be part of the main 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: Earlier or later trains will not help North of Central Belt destinations (and perhaps even Glasgow or Edinburgh customers).

Highland sleeper must be retained.

One of the main advantages especially for Highland Sleeper customers is the ability to entrain at a reasonably civil hour of the evening/night and arrive early, especially in London, with the benefit of not losing a days travel/holiday and gaining same on arrival as a full day is available on detraining. Both business and leisure travellers benefit from this. I’d rather travel overnight at relatively reasonable times than get an 04:00 (and having got up even earlier with no public transport around) departure from Glasgow to reach London pre 10:00. [not practicable from non Central Belt stations].

Yes Oban tends to generate more daytime passengers than Fort William and perhaps is worthy of a sleeper service but not to the detriment of Fort William. Serving both with sleeper trains would be expensive and logistically very hard, however a connecting service to/from Crianlarich could be possible.

Current shortfalls of on board service on sleepers - no en suite in cabins,

sharing cabins with strangers, temperature control is poor. En suite provision would be very expensive and reduce already limited capacity dramatically, perhaps this could be done in conjunction with increased lower level services such as more/better overnight seating and/or couchette provision to offset reduction in beds to accommodate en suite units.

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: