

Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

1. Name/Organisation

Organisation Name

Visit Glenfinnan Marketing Group

Title Mr > Ms Mrs Miss Dr *Please tick as appropriate*

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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual / Group/Organisation
Please tick as appropriate

- (a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

- (b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis
Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available

or

Yes, make my response available, but not my name and address

or

Yes, make my response and name available, but not my address

- (c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate Yes No

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?
Please tick as appropriate **Yes** **No**

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:

Both are fundamental. Rural routes are hugely important to the remoter communities not only for the locals but also for tourism one of the few industries left in Scotland. To make this realistic, investment must be made to ensure travelling by train is an attractive alternative to the bus, the easier option for the tourist

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

Q2 comments:

The contract period needs to be of suitable time to attract investment by the franchisee to ensure, even a few years into the contract, they still see it as economically viable to invest in the rolling stock and stations, and to develop their service products. The contract period should be at least 15 years with offer of continuing the contract made after 12 years.

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: No comment

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

Q5 comments:

The actual operation of the train i.e. staff, rolling stock and to a lesser extent timetabling, should remain solely within the remit of the train operator. Local tourism Marketing groups and individual tourism businesses have an understanding of the importance of rail transport. This can be done with marketing partnerships to attract tourists to their area. If the businesses groups feel involved with their own railway line they will promote support and most importantly use it.

Dedicated heritage and luxury train operators should be welcomed, particularly to the Highlands. They provide a wealth of exposure and publicity for the whole network. On the Mallaig Line, tourists flock to the area not only to travel on the Jacobite steam train, but to watch it - choosing instead to travel by the normal service train. They also come to travel the routes all the year round.

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

Q6 comments: If timetables are integrated with all public transport (bus ferries etc) with a bit of leeway in time added for unforeseen delays or distances to maybe elderly people have to walk, then passengers would talk freely and approvingly of what a fine service is offered.

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: Sanctions must be imposed, depending on the nature of the commitment that the operator has failed to fulfil. These should range from penalties to franchise termination.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Good performance is the basic requirement of any contract. If the experience is good then people will be happy and the operators will be supported. If government incentives are offered it should only be done to fill a gap within the system e.g. to achieve an integrated public transport for the

benefit of the travelling public.

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: In the first instance there should be one system for the whole of Scotland as a base standard. Some allowances for more rural routes should then be considered. These should be built in to accommodate a landslide, flooding etc However, This can be easily achieved, as the frequency of trains tends to be less.

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

Q11 comments: Presently the performance regime is very strict to the nearest minute; a 5-minute regime is ample as unforeseen circumstances happen.

While time is money to many passengers using the train to attend meetings, especially in the central belt, it is important to recognise that delays to rural / long-distance services can frustrate passengers connections, whether they miss their onward rail connection or to the airport or the last ferry to a Scottish island. Indeed some ferry services, especially in the winter, are infrequent. The effect of coming 10 minutes late to work because of a late-running commuter train is nothing compared to travelling for hours and be unable to arrive at your destination for days.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times on the West Highland Line are already slow and punctuality is reasonable. Performance, while important, should not detract from the experience..

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: Yes to SQUIRE and it must cover all aspects of stations and service delivery service.

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

Q14 comments: No comment.

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: No standing should be acceptable for travel on the West Highland Line. If the train is heavily pre-booked the franchisee must be required to take appropriate action

The Line is a showpiece for the Scottish tourist industry, (Harry Potter Wanderlust Magazine etc) and people come from all over the world to experience the journey. Travelling in cramped conditions on long journeys with passengers standing generates negative publicity worldwide.

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: No comment

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 set the base requirement, which must be adhered to. If the franchisee had determination there would be no winter service. The winter service on all the Highland lines will tend to have a greater socio-economic than commercial benefit. The West Highland line needs at least four daily services each way minimum.

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

Q18 comments: The contract should clearly specify minimum service but allow for sufficient flexibility for additional services to be added.

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

Q19 comments: An innovation fund to incentivise the franchisee to introduce say additional services on an experimental basis. If successful, these would be incorporated in the franchise.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20: The fares policy must ensure that the cost of rail travel is not prohibitive. The paramount benefits of rural rail services are of a socio-economic nature. It is therefore essential that rail travel is considered affordable and inclusive. An affordable ticket price will boost the use of the train (increasing the operator's commercial benefit), but will more importantly encourage a change from car to train.

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: Rural fares, should be regulated because the rail service is of a socio-economic rather than commercial nature. It is important to safeguard successful initiatives such as the Highland Railcard and Club 55.

On lines where the commercial benefit outweighs the socio-economic benefit, government regulation may be more relaxed.

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: No comment

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: Where the train is historically quieter, on the rural lines, off-peak offers should be made. If the train is running nearly empty why not offer two for the price of one. Buy two tickets in a month get the third free. Offer accommodation operators reduced ticket prices for the operator to include in their holiday package.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: No comment

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: No comment

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: No comment

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

Q27 comments: No comment

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

Q28 comments: No comment

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: All cross-border services continue to go north of Edinburgh. Otherwise, journeys to the West Highlands would require two changes of train (in Edinburgh and Glasgow), which would be a disincentive to travel long distances by rail.

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 none

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Rolling stock should be in the hands of a not-for-profit organisation. Seasonal variations in the Highlands are pronounced and there is a need to be able to hire in appropriate coaches as required without incurring prohibitive charges.

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

Q32 comments: Many years ago someone said why do they send a sprinter on a long run? Trains should be suitable for the type of line they serve. West Highland Line trains need to match those on main line routes due to the length of the journey times involved. Extra comfort is required, such as reclining seats, appropriate heating, a catering facility, adequate toilets, laptop plug-in points, ample leg room and adequate customised storage for luggage, skis and bicycles. A rubbish recycling point would also be appropriate.

On the West Highland Line passengers expect to be able to enjoy the view. Can we not therefore reduce the number of the trees? If not for the views then for the preservation and look of the rolling stock?.

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: On the West Highland Line it is important to be able to plug in a laptop by your seat for locals to be able to work en-route and for tourists (children) to watch DVD etc. A Wi-Fi connection would be good. Tablets are now part of many people's lives and they expect them to work wherever they are. Orange and Vodafone are the only service providers that work properly in the Highlands and Islands. Another chance of Cross Marketing? Or could you use the radio frequency used for signalling along the West Highland line to provide a WIFI service?

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: First Class seating should be available on all trains, to meet tourism expectations. If additional seating is required then place another carriage on, leased from the not for profit company.

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

Q35 comments: Alcohol provides income for the franchise companies running the buffets which are essential. Maybe only alcohol purchased on the train can be consumed?

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

Q36 comments: E-mail operating problems to interested parties. This can be read in accommodation providers or on individual tablets. Information on the

web can also be displayed with appropriate web page contact details displayed in the carriages.

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: Sleeper services must be specified in the new franchise. The service is an essential long distance operation, vitally important to the West Highlands because of the area's lack of air services.

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: The Sleeper services should be part of the overall franchise. While they provide part of the normal daytime service on their routes through the Highlands they also provide a cost effective way for tourists, businessmen, locals to visit the Highlands or London.

(A separate Sleeper franchise could be seen as an asset ripe for development by a specialist operator who would cherry pick the funding which has been set aside and leave.)

39. We would be interested in your views in the level and type of service that the Caledonian Sleeper Services should provide. Including:

- 1 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?
- 2 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?
- 3 What facilities should the sleeper services provide and would you pay more for better facilities?

Q39 comments: While the timings are acceptable, the appeal and value of the Caledonian Sleeper are

- The sense of an adventure sitting in the Lounge car drinking a cup of coffee or a glass of wine
- Early arrival at the destination ready for a full days work or sightseeing
- Ease of access to the Highlands and saving a travel day by travelling overnight.

- If travelling north on the Fort William sleeper leaving grey Euston and waking up the middle of Rannoch Moor

The service would be even more appealing if it provided

- a greater variety of accommodation ranging from en-suite to reclining seats (comfort is worth more to some than others)
- If in the seated section someone to wake you up in Edinburgh to let you know you have to change train.
- On the West Highland line the sleeper package should include onward connections at no extra cost to the Mallaig and Oban lines.
- In recent years the savings have become petty. While you can ask for toothbrush, toothpaste etc unless you are a regular passenger you would not know. So it would be good if the small toilet bags were reintroduced to enhance the experience.
- On the web page it is impossible for a mixed gender couple to book a berth.
- In the wintertime more reduced fares on off peak days (Monday, Tuesday Wednesday) Can work both ways. Star gazers paradise in the light pollution free area of the Highlands. Bright lights for the Highlanders who suffer from 'Sad' disease!

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: No comment