

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: No comment

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

Q2 comments: No comment

3. What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?

Q3 comments: Risk register / risk pot

4. What, if any, profit share mechanism should apply within the franchise?

Q4 comments: Pain share / gain share

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

Q5 comments: Open access opportunities should exist to foster competition to the benefit of passengers

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: Removal of franchise, withdrawal of "gain share"

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Both reward good performance and penalising poor performance (pain / gain share)

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: Principally by route

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

Q11 comments: Currently cancellation, short running or missing out scheduled stops are utilised to “improve” performance figures and reduce penalties: this practice should be stopped and both the operator and asset steward heavily penalised for any deviation from the scheduled plan. Passengers (customers) should be the priority.

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

Q12 comments: Journey times should be realistic (no excessive “recovery” time allowance) and poor performance should be heavily penalised.

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: should cover entire product experience.

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

Q14 comments: Comfort, standing times, facilities

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: Increasing “standing time” will only drive more people to use other means of transport: why pay to stand in a train when you can travel in

comfort by car?

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: EGIP and other current plans are opportunities lost to provide better and more diverse routes: The more changes the less attractive train travel becomes.

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: Customer demand is clearly a higher priority than “government aspirations”: give the customer what they want not what you think they should have!

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

Q18 comments: No comment

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

Q19 comments: Through pain and gain share

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares should be pitched to make travel by train more attractive than other means.

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: Regulate all: Strathclyde area is a shining example.

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: Fund enhancement through high patronage / usage: charging premiums for enhanced services will drive customers to use other means.

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: No difference: most people travelling at "peak" times really do not have the choice or ability to change working times.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: Take a pragmatic and balanced view: need to balance journey times with patronage.

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: Opportunity must exist without obstacles.

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: Infrastructure under the control of one organisation stifles initiatives and leads to poor asset stewardship (Network Rail is a fine example of poor asset stewardship)

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

Q27 comments: Making funds available and removal of petty restrictions. Encourage enterprise.

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: Cross border services must run beyond Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is parochial to dictate that the likes of Aberdeen and Inverness cannot have a direct service to the nation's capital and other parts of the UK. Additionally the quality of the "cross border" trains is far superior to the internal services therefore are for many the trains of choice for "internal" longer distance Scottish journeys.

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: If this were the case it would discourage rail travel and drive more to use road or air: not a good idea.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Buy “off the shelf” products of proven reliability.

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

Q32 comments: Comfortable and plentiful seating with good leg room. Room for luggage: particularly on longer distance services.

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: Not a high priority: reliable clean and comfortable trains a higher priority.

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: Longer trains! There is a market and a demand for a “First” or “Business” Class.

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

Q35 comments: Clearly this is being driven by the PC zealots: throughout the civilised world there is the opportunity to enjoy a drink while relaxing on a long journey: is this to be denied in Scotland? Is the problem not really excessive consumption before joining the train?

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

Q36 comments: Tell the truth would be a good start: facebook, sms alerts etc useful too

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: The sleeper service is essential for both business and leisure travel (and Scotland's tourism industry) and its continuation and enhancement should be a government priority

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: separate contract

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: a combination of earlier and later trains would be complementary to the Caledonian Sleeper. While there are "early" trains between Edinburgh / Glasgow and London they are of little benefit to those of us not living in these cities as we cannot make use of these services.

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: Forget "environmental KPIs" and concentrate on improving the service and reducing the cost. The biggest environmental consideration is taking traffic off the roads!