



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rail 2014,  
Transport Scotland,  
Buchanan House,  
58 Port Dundas Road,  
GLASGOW  
G4 0HF

14<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

Dear Sirs,

**Rail 2014**

I enclose herewith a response to the above consultation. I have restricted my comments to the subject of the cross border services, which are of great importance to this area.

Yours sincerely,  
Mike Weir MP

**MIKE WEIR MP**  
Member of Parliament for Angus  
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## Annex D - 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

Title Mr  Ms  Mrs  Miss  Dr  Please tick as appropriate

Surname

WEIR M.P.

Forename

MICHAEL

### 2. Postal Address

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ANGUS

Postcode DD11 1NG Phone 01241 874522 Email weir.m@parliament.uk

### 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

There is an electronic form with all of the questions, on the website at:  
[www.transportscotland.gov.uk/rail2014](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/rail2014)

### 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:

## 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: *See detailed comments attached*

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*

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:

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:

## 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: NO - SEE ATTACHED

## **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:

## **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:

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:

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:

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:

#### 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:

MIKE WEIR MP

16 Brothock Bridge

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I would restrict my response to the issue of Cross Border rail services, which are currently the responsibility of the UK Government's Department of Transport.

Whilst recognising the point made regarding fewer passengers travelling on direct services north of Edinburgh I would oppose the suggestion that such services should terminate at Edinburgh.

If this was to be done then it would mean that all passengers travelling from the North East would require to change at Edinburgh.

The passenger journey time is likely to be increased. It is already a very long rail journey – six and half hours from my own local station at Montrose to London – and any increase in time due to changes would likely result in a reduction in those using the service.

The East Coast direct service is an important element of the local economy of Angus and Aberdeenshire allowing direct access by rail from London and other major English cities for both businesses and, importantly, tourism. If those travelling north had to change at Edinburgh it is likely that this two would lead to a reduction in numbers.

The net effect would likely be an increase in air traffic which would impact adversely on the Scottish Government's targets of reducing carbon emissions. At present someone travelling from Edinburgh to London is probably as quick, taking into account boarding times, in taking the train as flying since the existing service by rail will reach London in around four hours. It is a very different situation from Aberdeen where the difference between the time taken to travel by air and that taken by the train are already substantial. Any increase is likely to result in more passengers making the journey by air than by train.

I have long argued for upgrades to the line north of Edinburgh and that if any High Speed rail system is really going to make a difference to carbon emissions then it needs to tackle the longer internal journeys within the UK, which Aberdeen to London is clearly one of the longer and busier routes. The construction of high speed rail between London and Birmingham for example is unlikely to make much of a reduction in air passengers in favour of rail. A high speed system that significantly reduced the travel time between Aberdeen and London is much more likely to produce a positive outcome in carbon reductions to the benefit of both Scotland and the rest of the UK>

Whilst appreciating that the development of High Speed rail is not currently a matter solely for the Scottish Government and any cross border service would also, in any event, require the participation of the English authorities I do feel that any reduction in direct services north of Edinburgh would send the wrong message to rail passengers and the general public regarding both the importance of rail to these areas and the determination of the government to reduce travel times and give a real alternative to air transport.

I would, therefore, urge that the current cross border services to Aberdeen be retained and efforts be made to shorten the travel time on such routes.