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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: None. Railways should be operated as not-for-profit public services run by co-operatives because shareholder and other commercial pressures will always trump the public interest in having fast, reliable, sustainable transport

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

Q2 comments: n/a as they should remain publicly owned and operated, as with the East Coast min line

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

Q3 comments: using jargon like this alienates and prevents passengers from participation.

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

Q4 comments: not-for-profit co-operative in the public interest and for the common good

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

Q5 comments: as above with at-cost prices, legally enforceable

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

Q6 comments: if there has to be a commercial arrangement, then the operator should not be allowed to compete only with itself; eg First runs both Dalmeny's bus service and its rail service; this acts against the interests of passengers on ticket prices, and there is no incentive to integrate services either

7. What level of performance bond and/or parent company guarantees are appropriate?

Q7 comments: enforceable ones

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

Q8 comments: money can't motivate everything we do. The franchisee should be a co-operative of people motivated by desire to have a modern, fast, efficient and reliable sustainable transport network. There are many people in Scotland who believe passionately in delivering a fair system, that provides healthy transport choices and isn't run by suit-wearing bureaucrats with scant respect for environment or social justice

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: incentives might not be necessary if the right franchisee model is agreed. The incentive is to avoid the mistakes of the past, and that means ending the old models, old attitudes and ailed transport policies. Rail needs to be expanded, integrated and improved, and incentives will present themselves through civic and national pride and respect for a new way of meeting travel needs

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 system

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

Q11 comments: ask and listen!

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

Q12 comments: reliability

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: regime is a tainted term! How about a charter for good transport? Yes, it should extend to all stations and services

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

Q14 comments: local user groups must have the power to obtain the services they need

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: The Forth Bridge needs a new signal to allow better sequencing of trains. All trains should carry ample cycle space to encourage more passengers to integrate their journeys

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: ask the experts – the European operators with the best networks; why re-invent the wheel?!

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: passenger demand ('customer' is the wrong term, as we don't choose whether we travel or not!)

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

Q18 comments: existing but with emphasis on integration and reliability

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

Q19 comments: as above; incentives should not be financial but professional, on the basis of good public service delivery and not profits. Gongs and badges usually do the trick, but if you get the right people, they won't need incentives, just respect and the means to get the job done. But respect will be limited while politicians favour private motorists/roadbuilding. The government needs to abandon its addiction to roads and petrolheads

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: affordability through subsidy from central funds. Roads are massively subsidised through central taxation; so should rail.

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: if the above model is adopted then flat rates would apply everywhere

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: you assume fares should increase when the economy is at or near flat growth. How can rises be justified? We already have 'stagflation'; don't make it worse please!

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: yes, a good system, but some subsidised travellers (eg students) need to travel during 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: If private motoring (anti-social travel) is penalised and integrated rail/bus/cycling/walking is incentivised, all residents will want to travel on the new, reliable, fast alternative. Rail investment should be developed quickly as road is steadily shrunk.

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: see above; local users (and potential users) should have a strong say

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, but it should be a co-operative organisation and not a shareholding commercial one

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

Q27 comments: by allowing them to easily buy a through ticket which allows multi-mode use eg: rural bus/train/tram/urban bus – London has had this for years

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

Q28 comments: The central belt is not much bigger than the greater London transport authority's area. We could have the same transport integration here, and so each station would be part of that network, with the same ticket machines, secure cycle parking, bike hubs and bus links as every other station in the network. Car parking only for those without a nearby bus link to the station, and charges would rise steadily as an incentive to switch to other modes. Lifts big enough for laden cycles.

Local user groups could develop their own stations in other ways, such as news-stands, cafes, cycle maintenance bays, etc.

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: long-distance rail must be developed and air travel discouraged, as it is the fastest-growing source of CO_2 emissions. Continental direct rail services should be introduced rapidly; the distances are no greater than many European routes. We need to catch up with the rail network in Europe following the flawed doctrine of motorway investment. There needs to be ministerial and democratic accountability, not handing everything to an arms-length quango with little public service ethic

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: How is a Scottish connection an opportunity?! For a passenger having to change trains it's a pain in the neck, not an opportunity. Edinburgh already is a hub for passengers to connect with long distance services.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: Local manufacture, maintenance and development (spin-off benefits for local engineering etc.) Electrification will allow more efficient technology with lower energy waste

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

Q32 comments:

Consistent with Scottish government transport policy which encourages integrated sustainable transport:

Allow online booking for at least 6 cycle spaces for every carriage; this may be over-provision at present, but we need to plan for increased integration and much higher cycle use in future.

Allow tandems.

Better accessibility for disabled or encumbered passengers

An excellent co-operative-run catering service, with a buffet, high quality food and drink and enforced rules on alcohol sales to inebriated passengers. No throwaway packaging.

Seats for everyone and plenty of room.

A video-view of the track in front and rear.

Ample luggage space. Don't laugh! Why shouldn't we have this once more? We used to.

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: Broadband providers need to be levied to pay for content. Too much free content is provided free online, to the huge benefit of ISPs. The co-operative transport franchisee must either set up its own, or insist that ISPs contribute towards content. Have one conversation coach on each train, where gadgets are discouraged and passengers encouraged to converse normally

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: No more First Class. It is anti-social and unfair, as much of

this is business travel, paid for by companies offsetting the cost against tax

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

Q35 comments: Try enforcing the law on sale of alcohol to inebriated passengers first. I have frequently seen buffets staff too fearful to refuse drink to drunk passengers (usually football/rugby supporters). Guards must eject drunk passengers. Consumption should not be banned

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

Q36 comments: print timetables in local newspapers and freesheets delivered to households. Only print timetable changes in loose-leaf format to save waste paper every 6 months. Simplify the complicated ticketing system and improve access to reduced fares. Why can't you search for a fare, instead of searching for a date?

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, specify sleepers (including proper reclining seats as well as bunks) in view of Q29, cross border comments above. We need to support and encourage long-distance rail travel and discourage air travel

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: Include in co-operative 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:

Appeal of sleeper is the convenience of sleeping while travelling sustainably; the romance of this type of travel;

All long distance destinations should provide sleeper accommodation; some travellers would like a berth even if not overnight, for privacy

As suggested, recliners would be cheaper and therefore fairer than sleeper cabins. Security cannot be an issue, because many passengers sleep in dayseats anyway

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:

Key performance indicators should be devised to measure the achievement of the following Scottish Government Active Travel policies:

1. Cancel the unaffordable and un-needed Forth replacement crossing which will encourage private motor transport and divert £1.7bn funding from essential public services including sustainable transport schemes, and replace the old cables by 2019 for £122m (2006 prices)

2. Commitment to increasing levels of walking & cycling as transport modes and as leisure activities.

3. Transport Policy commitment to "increase the proportion of short journeys made on foot and on bikes to reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality, reduce congestion and contribute to a healthier Scotland thus contributing to the sustainability golden rule to enhance the environment and reduce emissions".

4. Cycling Action Plan for Scotland target that 10% of all journeys should be by bike by 2020.

5. National Transport Strategy statement that "We aim to further increase funding for cycling and walking overall and will place more emphasis on the promotion of them as sustainable forms of transport …focusing on …and the carriage of bicycles on public transport."

6. Integration of all transport modes to achieve a more sustainable network, reducing CO_2 emissions and atmospheric pollution, and reducing reliance on anti-social private motoring

7. Increase and incentive-ise railfreight capacity and encourage multi-modal goods transport to reduce reliance on private lorries and roadbuilding, with benefits listed in 5.