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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: No view

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

Q2 comments: No view

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

Q3 comments: No view

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

Q4 comments: No view

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

Q5 comments: No view

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

Q6 comments: No view

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

Q7 comments: No view

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

Q8 comments: No view

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: no view

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: no view

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

Q11 comments: no view

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

Q12 comments: no view

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: no view

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

Q14 comments: no view

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 10 minutes standing rule does not seem to be working on a number of journeys, including Glasgow- Edinburgh and Glasgow – Stirling. Does it need more rolling stock? Or should all passengers that have to stand for more than 10 minutes receive a refund?

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: more road and rail interchange would be good. But the quality of the waiting place and the ease of interchange are essential, especially for those with mobility difficulties. The amount of time that is required to wait for interchange could affect decisions to take the train or the car.

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: both – sensible planning by the Government taking an overview of travel patterns (not just rail) and customer demand

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

Q18 comments: no view

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

Q19 comments: no view

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: to make rail travel at least as competitive with car driving, and to challenge buses – e.g. some form of discount to compete with bus pass (over and above railcard)

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: all fares should be regulated by government; the issue is that people should be encouraged to use rail travel rather than road – particularly in suburban areas. The bus pass is a subsidy to bus companies – rail cannot compete (e.g. Inverness to Glasgow/Edinburgh where the time is similar). Bus passes are essential where no rail services exist. It could be, of course, that there is a policy to discourage older people to use the train by ensuring that bus services are more attractive financially and thus reduce overcrowding on the trains! Maybe railcard users should get even more of a discount on off-peak services.

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: depends on the purpose of the subsidy. If it is to get people off the roads (particularly in urban areas) then the subsidy could be considered as part of the Carbon Challenge. There is the question of a rail equivalent of RET in rural areas. Simply to increase fares because of enhancements to the network would be wrong unless these enhancements could guarantee shorter journey times, more comfort (including no standing) and particularly perfect performance.

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: This depends on competing costs of car and bus travel, and therefore the attempt to get people to switch travel modes. Really cheap off peak might fill more trains!

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comments: some more serious studies on local travel patterns should be carried out. For example, Gleneagles would be used more if there was not the huge gap in services from Glasgow in the middle of the day. (No north bound train stops at Gleneagles between 10.56 and 17.02; thereafter arrivals are at 17.39, 18.06, 18.35, 19.02, 19.26, and 19.58!) And a bus connection between Auchterarder and Gleneagles would make train travel more attractive. Before any station is closed, the issue of making the connections easier between modes of travel should be investigated.

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: Merits – encourages locals to think 'rail'.

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 – it should be possible for community or business owned stations

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

Q27 comments: better train service (see Q 24 above) more flexible approach to ticket sales (e.g. community selling tickets)

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

Q28 comments: smaller more rural stations could become community stations

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 – cross border services are essential particularly for elderly and disabled people. Otherwise it is easier to go by plane. Changing trains at Edinburgh from an intercity quality train to a Turbostar is full of

problems – platforms being the same, seat allocation, luggage, etc. Not fair on the north of Scotland. If the wires were up in north of Scotland this would not be being suggested. The number of cross border trains are relatively few – 1 a day to/from Inverness; 4 a day to/from Aberdeen. This question looks as if it is technology driven – the problem of diesel trains under the wires, and the question of what happens to the ageing 125 fleet. Other countries drag electric trains – no reason why this should not happen in Scotland – would not take long for putting a diesel on the front of an electric train (Virgin do it for Holyhead)

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 – Not all trains should not terminate at Waverley – it is already a hub (not a very good one – not designed or managed as a hub.)

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: no view, but there is no other place for this – the possibility of a better quality train than 156s on our important tourist routs. Surely it must be possible to design a train that can be used on a number of UK tourist routes that can exploit the views.

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

Q32 comments: all trains should have clean toilets. Trolley service on the important routes.

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: there should be an App for 'Live Departure Boards'. Those of us who live near an unmanned station should be able to buy our tickets online and either print it off or have it on our smart phones. At present I cannot buy a ticket online and then pick it up at Gleneagles – another disincentive to travel by train (since I cannot get advance fares that way)

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: Yes

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

Q35 comments: seems about right just now

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

Q36 comments: At Gleneagles, can we have some passenger information (live departure board)?

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: Specify

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: Option within the main 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: allows me to have an evening at home and get into London early. But leaving from London so early in the evening and arriving at Gleneagles at 5am is not attractive! Would pay for shower and a better breakfast.

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: low carbon; more electrification