

Respondent Information Form and Questions

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

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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

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

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- (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?
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Consultation Questions

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 comment: A single ScotRail train franchise will best serve all Scotland's rail needs.

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

Q2 comments: A 7 year franchise with the option of a further 3 year extension if felt beneficial (which has been done with the current ScotRail franchise) would seem best.

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

Q3 comments : Relatively low risk level to potential franchisees is acceptable, providing their revenue income stream (profit) is primarily geared to increased passenger carryings. This is preferable to punitively high bids being submitted by franchisees, whose initial outlay could only be recouped by maximising fare revenue at the expense of passenger numbers, and sometimes accompanied by a desire to 'hand back' the franchise to Government in times of financial stringency.

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

Q4 comments:

A mechanism should be devised for allocating part of the train operator's profit (above a certain level) into better services, to encourage more use of the railway eg more trains and stations and more innovative fares policy as further discussed in response to Q20.

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

Q5 comments: Investment and responsibly innovative proposals to run new train services, provide or operate stations, should be encouraged to supplement and enhance the service and facilities provided by the train operating company.

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

Q6 comments: A system of penalties related to failure to deliver agreed franchise specification, should also be matched by rewards to the train operating company for improving on the specification eg punctuality and genuine commitment to resolving or mitigating persistent areas of passenger dissatisfaction.

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

Q7 comments: Too high a performance bond may discourage franchise bidders.

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

Q8 comments: The existing Service Quality Inspection Regime (SQUIRE) with its penalties and sanctions would seem to have adequate powers to terminate the franchise and applied in cases of major failure.

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

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

Q9 comments: Good performance, coupled with imaginative and well thought out proposals to carry more passengers at lower and radically simplified fare structure should be rewarded, but with penalties for failure to adhere to franchise specification

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: The 'threshold' of on-time train punctuality (arriving no more than 5 minutes late for regional services, and 10 minutes for long distance services) seems reasonable. But the number of (or recognised average) of passengers carried on the late running train/s and the daily frequency of trains on any particular route (important in rural areas of low frequency) should also be factored in as a 'graded deficiency' for different situations and locations throughout Scotland.

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

Q11 comments: There needs to be a more visible way of indicating how customers can make known their concerns with perhaps some form of strengthened guarantee that they will at least receive a detailed explanation of why this deficiency has arisen,

and measures to reassure customers it will (hopefully) not happen again.

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

Q12 comments: Published timetables showing attractively short / competitive journey times should be capable of reliable and consistent delivery. But those should not seek to imply that the actual train running was longer than actually required on 'routine operational conditions' and improperly utilised as a franchisee's 'safeguard cushion' against being penalised for late running.

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: The SQUIRE regime seems a reasonable framework covering trains / stations and other aspects of the rail operating regime. It must be capable of adaptation / extension / modification to meet changing issues and passenger expectations etc.

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

Q14 comments: Passenger Focus needs to have a higher profile on trains/ in stations with more prominent notices over how passenger concerns/complaints can be more easily registered at the time eg greater use of a freefone call number, e-mail, Twitter, as well postal contact details.

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: Passengers expectations of a seat within 10 minutes is reasonable and this time should not be increased. Passenger Focus should take a more active monitoring role over instances of persistent /gross overcrowding with ScotRail having a mandatory duty to investigate ways in which this can be resolved.

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: Interchange stations and coordination with other rail/bus/subway/tram routes has a distinct value in certain situations, but direct (no change needed) trains are a much valued factor encouraging rail travel with freedom from hassle /insecurity /inconvenience imposed by a journey interruption involving a change of train. Rail management have themselves confirmed a 25-30% of loss of existing passengers when a 'break of journey' is imposed by any requirement to change train.

Direct through (no change) trains from Aberdeen/Inverness to London must be maintained.

Offering a direct rail journey from Ayrshire / Inverclyde / Renfrewshire to Edinburgh /Cumbernauld-Stirling via the planned Crossrail route would capture, for ScotRail, the massive daily tidal flow (both ways) of commuter demand travel between those areas of central Scotland. The negligible level of commuter rail traffic in this central Scotland corridor route, is inevitable so long as the massive handicap of change of trains / stations remains across Glasgow. This renders train travel a hopelessly uncompetitive rail services against the road alternatives.

Without completing this short 'missing Crossrail link' derisory levels of rail usage will still persist across this important central Scotland corridor commuting corridor, which will derive no benefit from the £1.2 bn EGIP electrification/modernisation programme.

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: A minimum service specification (frequency and first / last trains of the day) must be retained, particularly for social reasons.

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

Q18 comments: A high level of specification is needed, but supplemented by incentive opportunities for the franchisee to improve on the minimum service requirement.

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

Q19 comments: Some mechanism for increased rewards on the basis of every additional passenger carried (by route) could form a basis for usefully encouraging innovation by the franchisee.

Scottish rail fares

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

Q20 comments: Fares structure should seek to maximise train usage, which is currently throttled by excessively high level of 'walk-on' fares with discouraging complexity, and inflexibility of the current structure.

There is also a need to end the perverse policy of disproportionately high single fares and the irrational, and price discrimination against those who do not return the same day, but have a requirement to return the next or subsequent day.

Examples of those two discriminatory fares can be illustrated by comparing the current Glasgow Queen St - Edinburgh off-peak single fare of £12.00 which is now 99% of the off-peak day return at £12.10. And for those requiring to return from Edinburgh to Glasgow the next or subsequent days, the off peak return is £24.00, which effectively represents a £12.00 'penalty charge' for failing to return the same day.

The continuation of this sort of discriminatory of fares regime is presumably based on a misguided and out-dated ScotRail management belief attempt that they can maximise revenue by those unfortunate enough to patronise the railway for only a single journey and/or not wish to return the same day. Whilst this sort of grasping policy might have been appropriate rail operated as a captive market today's this sort of curious pricing travel reality is a strong discouragement passenger and revenue loser to ScotRail with the potential customer simply is not prepared to consider rail travel at all with such unacceptable fares set against the cheaper and more flexible alternatives now on offer.

The potential rail customer simply cannot understand, or accept why outward and return journeys made on different days from the outward trip why are so astronomically expensive given that he / she can only occupy one seat in any train at any given time.

Persistence of those two discriminatory pricing tactics inflicted on this market sector, is also a poor marketing and public relations tactic which only reinforces the notion that rail is a 'generally expensive' form of travel, and to be avoided - even in other selected instances when cheaper / bargain prices fares may be on offer !

The amount of rail revenue theoretically 'lost' by substantially removing the 'price penalty' for purchasing a single journey ticket, or returning the next/subsequent day would probably be negligible, and more than compensated by additional passengers carried and revenue gains from higher loadings on existing trains.

For longer distance routes, some form of last minute 'turn up and fill up' of bargain price discount tickets should be offered on selected longer distance ScotRail trains routes habitually leaving with empty / non reserved seats for all or part of the total journey.

The National Concessionary Travel Scheme benefits should also be extended to include off-peak rail travel throughout Scotland on the basis that it is cost neutral to the Scottish Government and on the principle that it is the user/traveller who is being reimbursed and it should not matter whether the journey is being undertaken by bus or rail.

From the 2006 inception of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme, it has seemed arbitrary and irrational that ScotRail and their passengers should be totally excluded from the similar subvention available to bus operating companies, at 67% of the average single bus journey (reduced from 73.6%). Railfuture Scotland advocates this same Scottish Government subvention should be by given towards

the individual Concessionary Scheme passenger travelling by train.

This subvention amount would be deducted from the 'normally applicable' train fare, with the passenger only needing to pay the required 'topping up' amount to match this fare - if they thought the merits of rail travel merited this additional outlay.

On the basis that no additional rolling stock was required, implications for the Government would be broadly cost-neutral since a Concessionary Travel Scheme passenger cannot be simultaneously on a bus and train at the same time. Concessionary 'smart cards' and advanced ticketing technology now used by rail operators will easily facilitate the required 'topping-up' payments for individual journeys. Any rail 'capacity issues' can be resolved by very selective restrictions applied as and when perceived necessary.

Such equalisation of choice and opportunity would enhance customer freedom of choice and greater competitive equality between ScotRail and longer distance bus operators. Considerable loss of [concessionary related] rail passengers has already been experienced on several routes, with a substantial negative impact on ScotRail's revenue budget, with surveys indicating 30% of Citylink Gold bus passengers having been abstracted from ScotRail services.

Age-qualifying concessionary travel is recognised as an increasingly important travel sector. But use of ScotRail services (especially for longer distance routes) with above inflation ticket prices rises is likely to face further loss of passengers and revenue abstraction to increasingly competitive long distance bus services offering steadily improving journey times and comfort / on board facilities at zero fares to the concessionary passenger.

Under existing legislation [Section 40 (1) of the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005, Scottish Ministers are able to make the National Concessionary Travel Schemes available to trains, as well as buses and ferries. There is therefore no legislative impediment to extending the same level of concessionary benefit to train travellers as is currently offered to bus passengers, on the basis that 'the re-imbursment follows the passenger' and with the underlying principle that the concessionary travel operator was 'no better off and no worse off' from participating in the National Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Senior Railcards, requiring an annually recurring outlay (currently £28) and 66% payment of the normal rail fare thereafter, do not constitute any 'compensation' for continued denial of the very significant re-imbursment given to assist universally free Concessionary travel by bus.

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: Train fares should not rise by more than annual inflation. The rail fare cost for two persons should generally be related to the equivalent car / motoring cost for an equivalent journey over the same distance.

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: Political pressure to reduce current level of taxpayers subsidy to Britain's / Scotland's rail system should be set at some arbitrary level (taking account of improved efficiency gains and passenger fares income). But also related to the totality of economic / social / environmental / energy sustainability and land-use benefits resulting from for a widely accessible and affordable and well used national rail network. Lessons can be learnt from European railway systems with their higher levels of usage (and their lower levels of car dependency) resulting from higher levels of Government subsidy.

Passengers on recently enhanced rail routes should not be 'punished' by selectively higher fares, which would only seem counter-productive to attracting more rail patronage on to the improved services themselves !

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: Off peak fares should be significantly cheaper to encourage a shift to less busy times, often with spare capacity where there is an element of personal choice available. But this 'pricing mechanism', should not be used in isolation to unilaterally attempt to change national obligatory travel to work patterns. Or in isolation from wider consensual support from national government and involvement with employers / employees organisations etc.

Morning off-peak restrictions should be standardised at 9 am and generally without application of any pm restrictions (including concessionary travel) given the more diffuse travel pattern in the late afternoon / early evening 'peak'.

Scottish stations

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

Q24 comment: There is broad evidence to suggest desirability of retaining the current number of Scottish rail stations, supported by more innovative ways of encouraging greater use of those which are considered 'lightly used'.

Fairly close rail station spacing is a recognised as a legitimate and desirable transport feature in many urban/suburban areas elsewhere in the UK/Europe and the World. It is therefore very regrettable that Section 7.10 of Rail 2014 'Scottish stations' should employ an arbitrary criteria of 1 mile spacing to infer a thinning out of station access points to the ScotRail network is somehow 'desirable'.

This unwelcome suggestion mischievously overlooks the particular value of such stations to discrete and highly focussed local communities, often separated by geographical difficulties and aspects of the built environment which would discourage easy or attractive access to more distant 'alternative stations'.

A more 'think positive' approach to more fully exploiting ScotRail's transport potential requires Transport Scotland to pursue a programme of new / re-opened stations (and lines) throughout Scotland which would both promote and support enhanced economic / employment opportunity, serve distinct social needs and environmental relief of road traffic congestion.

The current Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidelines (STAG) evaluation of desirable new stations / new lines is too narrowly restrictive and needs improving to more fully recognise the wider accessibility / environmental / energy benefits of more rail travel. Experience of new / reopened stations / lines has invariably demonstrated an overall benefit in terms of increased journey opportunity afforded to local / regional communities, and revenue generation gains for ScotRail.

Against this background, there is growing concern over Transport Scotland's apparent 'resistance' to many proposed new stations and their tendency to exaggerate, and over-emphasise the claimed [theoretical] disbenefit, likely to be imposed on overall journey times for existing passengers, by such new network stations. These misgivings are however not confirmed in patronage terms, given that the 'time penalty' (at 1.5 - 2.0 minutes for an electrified suburban station or just over 3 minutes on a higher speed electrified intercity route) is of almost imperceptible proportions to the existing passengers. The additional patronage (and revenue) generated from additional intermediate stations has invariably been without prejudice to the travel patterns of pre-existing passengers on the longer journey markets being competitively served.

An excellent case study of this 'win-win' patronage and revenue gain situation is provided by the 2009 re-opened Laurencekirk Station (between Montrose and Stonehaven on the main line north to Aberdeen). It now generates 68,000 passengers per annum (against a 36,000 pa 'forecast') but with no diminution in the numbers of longer distance passengers travelling between Glasgow / Edinburgh to Aberdeen resulting from this new intermediate Laurencekirk stop en route.

Whilst obviously there cannot be an infinite number of intermediate stations added to the current ScotRail network, Railfuture Scotland believes upward of 40 judiciously placed additional stations (some on short sections of new or re-reopened lines) are required, and eminently feasible operationally, to improve connectivity / regional accessibility and broaden the rail user base across Scotland. But which need not impose any detrimental impact on the quality and competitiveness of journey times offered between major population centres in Scotland.

Although it is beyond the scope of this response to identify all of those additional access points to the ScotRail network, around 15 new stations have recently been identified by stakeholder responses to the recent EGIP Consultation whose catchment area accounts for covers around 80% of Scotland's population.

The EGIP Review has also been advised of growing concern over Transport Scotland's apparent 'reluctance' to approve proposed stations at Robroyston (Glasgow) and Winchburgh (West Lothian) given that both are acknowledged as legitimate on transport / population / land-use grounds by the relevant local authority and its RTP, backed also by very significant developer funding. No discernible or insurmountable operational problems to the existing rail electrification of the two been identified as likely to arise construction of those from those two additional stations - even after EGIP electrification of the two relevant lines.

Railfuture Scotland also believes that the local authority 'guidelines' for the safeguarding of future sites for new stations are unduly harsh and restrictive. There should be a greater flexibility for those bodies, and their relevant Regional Transport Partnerships, with detailed knowledge and understanding of local circumstances to be given greater freedom and power to provide a greater degree of 'future proofing' safeguarding for creating such additional access points to the ScotRail network. Particularly at this time of economic stringency when construction finances for new stations are tight, but a legitimate case for safeguarding future rail opportunity can still be demonstrated.

As is regrettably obvious, in hindsight, Scotland is replete with examples of where lack of past foresight has in hindsight, physically or financially frustrated the opportunity gains which could, and should, have been derived from a new local rail station or re-opened route. We should not short-sightedly or prematurely handicap fuller exploitation of ScotRail's full potential to offer improved accessibility and connectivity to areas of economic/employment opportunity, social need and relief of urban congestion.

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: Evidence suggests that third parties eg local authorities / land-use developers / employers are already interested to invest in new rail stations / lines and other passenger facilities. But are often frustrated and discouraged by contrived operating 'difficulties' raised and unreasonably high capital cost of additions /improvements. Those current 'barriers to progress' should be mutually resolved

to encourage opportunities for third parties inputting their contribution to a bigger / better used Scottish rail system.

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: Some merging or unified responsibility between ScotRail as the franchisee (and responsibility for stations (and Network Rail as the track infrastructure provider) might be desirable in certain situations regarding station provision and reduced cost of maintenance etc

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

Q27 comments: Some more innovative and collaborative discussion between the train operator (franchisee) and local community interests (local authority /commercial / voluntary) might involve sub-leasing of station premises, including new-build structures on station land to create 'transport and community hubs' Those could jointly share many common costs and help retain a 'human presence' in stations which might otherwise face downgrading to unstaffed status.

Lessons could be learned from airports who have succeed in extending their retail, commercial, leisure, restaurant /cafe / bars activity as a significant supplementary income source to planes. There is further considerable opportunity for developing a similar approach at certain station locations in Scotland

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

Q28 comments: Creating arbitrary categories for 'level of facilities' at each station is a futile exercise, since each station must be assessed on the level of passenger throughflow and particularly those with longer waiting times eg interchange stations.

Rail passengers expect, and are prepared to pay for, the use of toilets at main stations. It is shameful (for example) that the new Partick Station, as a major 'flagship' rail / bus / underground interchange station, is still lacking toilet facilities for its users: a situation which must be remedied within the context of the 2014 ScotRail franchise specification, if not much sooner

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: It is an integral part any 'fit for purpose' ScotRail franchise that a through / direct (no-change of train) service is maintained from London to Dundee

- Aberdeen / Inverness. As in response to Q16, any requirement to change at Edinburgh would probably be followed by a 25-30% loss of existing customers.

A more responsive way to accommodate the lower volume of cross-border rail traffic to the major centres in northern Scotland, would be to design / operate trains which are capable of being split (reduced in length) for onward travel north without imposing a passenger 'change of train' at Edinburgh. The Scottish Government is the major franchise specification partner with negotiated support from the Department of Transport.

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: Edinburgh already serves as a 'hub' interchange for many internal Scottish services, including connectional interchanges for communities in the north of Scotland. Those deliver a supplementary range of services and does not conflict with the basic minimum franchise specification' to retain some direct / no change services from Aberdeen - Dundee / Inverness to London. Ideally two direct daytime services each way should be part of the 2014 ScotRail Franchise specification.

Rolling stock

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

Q31 comments: As electric rolling stock is cheaper to build, operate and maintain further extension of electrification beyond the central belt Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) should be pursued north of Edinburgh / Glasgow to Aberdeen, together with logical infill electrification for diesel operated suburban lines in the greater Glasgow / Edinburgh areas.

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

Q32 comments: It is generally accepted that the standard of existing diesel and electric rolling stock is reasonably adequate for commuter and other short-medium journeys (up to around 1 hour travelling distance). But the fleet of diesel trains deployed on longer distance intercity ScotRail routes eg Glasgow / Edinburgh to Aberdeen / Inverness and longer distance rural routes eg Inverness - Caithness and Glasgow -Stranraer / Dumfries-Carlisle is 'not fit for purpose' when ScotRail's [significantly] higher fares are compared with long distance buses now offering improved levels of passenger comfort / on-board facilities and overall journey times with almost now with almost competitive parity with train travel on key intercity routes.

A basic list of passenger pre-requisite for improvements relating to new-build or 'cascaded' existing rolling stock for those longer distance ScotRail routes would include:

at least one toilet per coach (with greater degree of reliable functionality than on many of the current semi-life expired trains) : adequate and responsive heating : corridor connection throughout the whole train (to ease localised overcrowding/ individual toilet malfunctioning, and achieving more efficient on-train trolley catering service) : more comfortable / posture-supportive seating / more legroom, all seats properly aligned with all windows : lower height of window sill allowing young children to see out without recourse to standing on seats : more adequate (and secure) space for luggage / prams / cycle space : wifi connection / charging facility and 'quiet coaches'.

Two very specific complaints levelled against the generation of Class 170 'Turbostar' diesel multiple units deployed on ScotRail's key intercity routes are:

(a) The excessive and unacceptable noise and vibration generated by their underfloor engines, which compares unfavourably with other superior underfloor engined units, employed elsewhere in Britain. Superior multiple unit diesel trains are already available with 'cascaded' rolling stock, and even more so with modern new-build trains of improved engine design and better noise/vibration dampening.

(b) A feeling of 'cramped interiors' and skimped seating wholly inadequate legroom and useless micro-sized tables in the face-to-face seating sections. According to informed railway engineering sources, those space constraints have been imposed by the un-necessarily severe 'roof tapering' of the coach bodyshells, which (in hindsight) are not now felt necessary for high-speed running, as was once thought necessary. New build diesel (and electric) units do not have such severe constraints imposed on the passenger interiors

It is to be hoped that both deficiencies can be remedied at the commencement of the new 2014 ScotRail franchise utilising either 'cascaded' trains of an inherently superior design, or specification for an improved generation of new-build stock.

A final point relates to the need for some innovative approach in train design, or modification of existing stock, which would allow passenger viewing forward and rear (directly or indirectly via some form of TV installation) of scenery observable from ScotRail trains operating on world famous tourist routes. Many feel that this is a facility which is technically possible without undue expense (and was actually trialled during the 1990s) which should be pursued in terms of further exploiting tourist rail travel potential.

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: Probably best to prioritise Wi-Fi installation / charging facilities on longer distance routes and busy Glasgow-Edinburgh commuter 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: Design of new stock should facilitate some greater technical adaptability to alter the balance between first and standard class accommodation in response to varying level of demand. Greater flexibility to allow staff to responsively 'declassify' first class accommodation to mitigate periods of gross overcrowding in standard class (without spatial or ambient prejudice to those having already paid first class fares !) would also be greatly appreciated by Standard class passengers holding tickets for more distant destinations.

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

Q35 comments: Any 'blanket ban' on alcohol consumption on trains is undesirable, would be resented and hugely difficult for staff to meaningfully enforce. Maintaining the 'status quo' with selective ban on particular trains with back-up from British Transport Police would be more appropriate and acceptable.

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

Q36 comments: Possibly the simplest and most effective way of improving the dense amount of complex timetable detail on 'Train Times' notice boards displayed at station and adjoining public places, would be highlighting the 'home station' to which each board refers. Simply horizontally underlining the train departure time with a strong / non-fade colour at each home station would be the easiest help to the passenger.

This helpful practice has sporadically been done at some stations over many years but should a mandatory application for all 'Train Times' notice boards in all the relevant Scottish locations. And should be included an integral part of the SQUIRE requirement. Although previously done manually (by the goodwill of individual station staff) modern printing processes now allow this to be done 'at source' in appropriate batches for ready distribution to the current locations.

Train and station staff should be better supplied with information on any timetable changes (departures / arrivals) and the need to better relay this information to passengers on the train and at stations.

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: Since publication of this 'Rail 2014' Consultation the continuing future of this service now seems more assured, given a financial agreement between the Scottish and UK Government to jointly fund major upgrading / refurbishment of the existing fleet of sleeper trains.

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: Provision of the Highland and Lowland Sleeper trains must be integrally included within a [single] 2014 ScotRail Franchise.

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: Better advance information and understanding / responsiveness to the needs and changing expectations of existing passengers would maximise the wider awareness and appeal of the sleeper train to potential sleeper passengers - perhaps through a more specialised marketing division.

A specific case in point is the Fort William - London Sleeper train, also conveying seated coaches for non-sleeper patrons which stops at Westerton (Bearsden).

There is believed, to be a considerable level of travel business / leisure travel from the Bearsden / Milngavie communities to London. Yet the availability of this conveniently local accessed service direct from the Bearsden / Milngavie areas to London (obviating the need for 5 - 8 mile journey into central Glasgow Central Station) is not fully appreciated locally or actively promoted by ScotRail, yet is capable of being more fully exploited throughout the whole year.

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: A key criteria would be monitor the amount of modal shift on to rail, achieved on a year by year basis from other more environmentally damaging forms of transport car or plane. And the extent to which this was achieved by improved and more competitive fares and marketing policy, allied to investment in modern electric and more efficient diesel stock replacements.