



Rail 2014 consultation

Transform Scotland response

Monday 13 February 2012

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance. We campaign for a more sensible transport system, one less dependent on unsustainable modes such as the car, the plane and road freight, and more reliant on sustainable modes like walking, cycling, public transport, and freight by rail or sea. We are a membership organisation bringing together rail, bus and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation organisations; local environment and transport campaign groups; and individual supporters.
- 1.2 In 'Part A' of this response we set out as a narrative the key issues that we believe need to be addressed in the new ScotRail franchise. In 'Part B', we then answer a number of specific questions posed in the consultation.

Part A: Narrative response

1 The Role of the Railway in Scotland

- 1.1 Scotland's railway system should be seen as the core or backbone of the public transport network. This network should provide seamless connections between public transport modes. A railway station is not a destination in its own right, it is merely a point on a journey which may start at the home and end at the place of work, a leisure facility or an essential service.
- 1.2 For those who choose to arrive at a station by private transport — be it a car, bike or on foot — easy and safe access routes should be the norm. There is a particular need to improve active travel routes to stations and ensure there is secure cycle parking at the stations and adequate cycle carriage on the trains: two bikes per carriage should be the minimum.
- 1.3 The new franchise represents a unique opportunity to review public transport provision in Scotland and the role played by government in specifying and supporting rail, bus and ferry services. All three modes benefit from government support but do not provide value for money because of the fragmented nature of the services provided. Much greater integration is required between modes through timetabling and ticketing and the creation of high quality interchanges.
- 1.4 The need for improvements in the public transport offering is highlighted by the underlying trend in advanced countries which shows a stabilisation or decline in road traffic. This started in Japan in 1997 with Germany, the UK and France following from 2001 and the USA and Australia from 2004.¹ We now have a clear trend in the UK where rail use is increasing at or above GDP growth while road traffic has failed to grow at annual rates similar to GDP since the late 1990s.
- 1.5 The new franchise should be designed to encourage further rail passenger growth in Scotland within a co-ordinated public transport network.

¹ Local Transport Today, 3 June 2011, p19.

2 Fares and the Role of Government

2.1 Fares and Demand Management

- 2.1.1 The railway competes directly with the private car and the consultation document raises the issue of fares and their role in demand management on the railway. Rail fares are already used to manage demand with peak time fares being set at a significantly higher level. There is no similar mechanism on the road network where most cars carry just one occupant at peak times. Furthermore, rail fares have increased above inflation while the overall cost of motoring has fallen — between 1997 and 2009 the overall cost of motoring fell by 13% while rail fares rose by 7% above inflation.²
- 2.1.2 The government should ensure that road and rail are treated in a comparable manner and not seek to further penalise rail users.
- 2.1.3 However, we see an early opportunity to spread the peak morning load on the railway by offering cheaper fares on early morning services — say those arriving at their destination by 07:30. For season ticket holders off-peak and early morning travel could be offered at a discounted rate, thus spreading the peak load.

2.2 Concessionary Passes

- 2.2.1 The provision of concessionary passes has encouraged a significant number of car drivers to switch to bus travel, especially those with senior passes. Other groups have benefited from access to employment opportunities and increased social mobility. Clearly there are wider societal benefits to the provision of concessionary passes and these should not be lost.
- 2.2.2 However, we do not believe that the current funding mechanism is sustainable in the longer term or is leading to the most effective provision of public transport in Scotland. There is now clear evidence of a shift from rail to bus services on longer distance routes with the two services competing against one another rather than complementing each other to provide a more comprehensive service.
- 2.2.3 In the West Yorkshire Metro area, holders of senior concessionary passes are now entitled to half-fare train travel at off-peak times. In Wales, pass holders may use certain rural rail routes on the same basis as rural bus services.
- 2.2.4 Government provides support to both bus and rail operators and should use its powers to ensure that both modes are treated in a manner that encourages co-operation and the increased use of public transport - so benefitting both rail and bus operators.

2.3 A Smartcard for Scotland

- 2.3.1 Transform Scotland strongly supports the creation of a Scotland-wide public transport smartcard. We believe this will make the use of public transport easier and will attract greater numbers of people onto existing services. Incorporating the ScotRail network into a national smartcard is vital in order to allow people to access the full flexibility of the public transport network.
- 2.3.2 We would hope that by 2014, work will be advanced on enabling the use of smartcards across the ScotRail network. However, we feel that in order to deliver the full benefits of a smartcard system, there has to be an integrated ticket available across Scotland (supported by Transport Scotland's March 2011 *Smart & Integrated Ticketing Report for Scotland*). Therefore, we would wish to see the inclusion of the full ScotRail network in a national smart integrated ticket as a condition of the new franchise.

² Rail Magazine issue 687 page 33.

3 Service Types and Rolling Stock

3.1 General comments

- 3.1.1 We do not believe that the current 'one size fits all' approach is appropriate for a country the size of Scotland. The same rolling stock can be found on commuter routes into Edinburgh, Edinburgh-Glasgow inter-urban services, and long distance inter-city routes.
- 3.1.2 This approach fails to recognise the very different journeys and is not the most appropriate use of rolling stock. We believe that there are five distinctive type of rail services in Scotland, each requiring a distinctive type of rolling stock and marketing strategy. We believe that the Scotrail branding should signify trains that the country can be proud of - whichever type of route they serve. Aligned to this is the ownership of trains, in our view there is a good case to be made for new trains to be owned by the Scottish Government as opposed to being leased from ROSCOs.
- 3.1.3 In our view the provision of appropriate rolling stock is a crucial area upon which further consultation is required. Neither Rail 2014 or the parallel EGIP consultation process allow stakeholders sufficient opportunity to engage in this important area.
- 3.1.4 We would suggest that a specific consultation exercise should be carried out to collect views on both rolling stock provision and new timetables — given the major changes to both areas that will be necessary in the coming years.

3.2 Inter-City Routes

- 3.2.1 The routes connecting Edinburgh and Glasgow to Inverness and Aberdeen and that between the latter two are long-distance inter-city journeys. The train is competing with the car and coach services. They require longer, more powerful trains with adequate space for luggage and bikes. The on-board environment should be such that seats line up with windows, food and drink is available at all times and people are able to work on the train. These routes are also highly scenic and many of the marketing initiatives outlined in 3.3, below, for rural routes will also apply here.

3.3 Rural Routes

- 3.3.1 Rural routes in Scotland are world-renowned and an intrinsic part of the marketing of Scotland to visitors from all parts of the world. Glenfinnan viaduct appears constantly in Visit Scotland promotions and the West Highland Line has twice won an award for the best railway journey in the world. Additionally, rural lines provide lifeline services to many remote communities and so fulfil a vital social need.
- 3.3.2 However, they are currently under-valued, lacking appropriate rolling stock and marketing — and consequently fall well short of their potential. The objective should be to grow passenger numbers and allow these routes to play their full part in attracting tourism to Scotland and serving the needs of the local communities. Rolling stock should be appropriate for the long and scenic journeys with comfortable seats that align with the windows, sufficient space for luggage and bikes and a service of on board refreshments. Switzerland provides a good model of how to serve such scenic routes.
- 3.3.3 A partnership approach is required for the operation and marketing of our rural routes along with appropriate rolling stock for the long and scenic journeys. The franchise operator should be required to work with Network Rail, local authorities, the Regional Transport Partnerships, the tourist industry, support groups and other public transport operators along the route in order to maximise the potential of the routes. Timetables and facilities should ensure easy and effective interchange between rail, bus and ferry with integrated ticketing being the norm. The current situation where bus and rail compete on certain rural routes such as the Oban Line serves no ones best interests. Allowing two ailing animals to fight will not make them healthier!
- 3.3.4 There are many examples in England and Wales of Friends Groups and Community Rail Partnerships working successfully with the operator and other stakeholders to improve the offering and increase patronage.

Packages which include travel and hotel accommodation, whilst not a new idea, are an effective way to market a route and attract tourists. Special offer rail tickets can also help to fill empty seats at quieter times. At the present time day return tickets are available on the Settle to Carlisle railway at £9 for concessionary pass holders, inclusive of connecting journeys from within West Yorkshire.

- 3.3.5 In our view a formal and fully funded Community Rail Partnership should be created for the Ayr to Stranraer Line to build on the valuable work already undertaken by SAYLSA. We would suggest that this might operate as the Ayr to Stranraer Rail Regeneration Partnership.
- 3.3.6 The West Highland Lines and Far North Lines have active Friends Groups committed to promoting the lines and the former has already had success in leveraging in external funding to improve the views from the train. The Friends of the Settle to Carlisle Line provides an ideal model as to how to transform an ailing route.
- 3.3.7 Already in Scotland the Station Adoption Scheme is successfully showing how empty buildings can be brought back into use to the benefit of the wider community and the rail passenger. We need to build on this and aim to replicate best practice elsewhere.
- 3.3.8 We believe that it is now necessary for Transport Scotland to take the lead and emulate the work carried out by DfT in England and Wales. Core funding should be provided to support the Partnerships and Friends Groups on rural lines and a process should be established to enable appropriate rural routes to be classified for greater community involvement. We suggest that this should commence with the Ayr to Stranraer Line.

3.4 Commuter and Inter-Urban Services

- 3.4.1 These types of route, particularly those in the Central Belt, play a vital role in sustaining Scotland's largest cities and help to reduce congestion and pollution as rail is a much more efficient means of moving large numbers of people. Journeys may be up to 50 miles in length and so the rolling stock provided should ensure that for all but the shortest journeys (15 minutes or less) passengers have a seat and are able to work during the journey. The current Class 170 diesel trains and Class 380 electric trains provide appropriate accommodation.

3.5 Metro Services

- 3.5.1 The short distance, intensive services around Glasgow should be considered for Metro style operation. New electric rolling stock should provide more standing room and the London Overground services may well provide an appropriate model. Standing times could then be relaxed as many passengers now prefer to stand for short journeys. This network could be operated by or in conjunction with SPT, the aim being to create an integrated rail and bus network. As the concept develops additional stations can be added and consideration should be given to tram/train operation for parts of the network with on-street running in the city centre. We recommend the *2020 Vision for Rail in Scotland* publication produced by SAPT in January 2011 for a fuller appraisal of how this network might develop.³

3.6 Sleeper Services

- 3.6.1 Sleeper services provide an alternative to flying and connect remote parts of Scotland to North West England and London, additionally offering the opportunity to connect to European train services from London. They are also used to bolster local rural services. As with many rural routes the sleepers are an iconic part of what Scotland has to offer and should be marketed as such. Many of the initiatives for rural routes apply equally to the sleeper services.
- 3.6.2 It now seems likely that current the rolling stock is to be upgraded or replaced. This provides an opportunity to tailor it to the needs of the modern traveller. We believe that the Lowland Sleepers require

³ Available at <<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browse%20documents/rus%20documents/route%20utilisation%20strategies/rus%20generation%202/scotland/consultation%20responses/s/scottish%20association%20for%20public%20transport%20response.pdf>>.

first and second class accommodation both served by upgraded washing and toilet facilities – that in first class being en-suite.

- 3.6.3 For the Highland Sleepers there is the additional opportunity to market a wider range of accommodation and on-board facilities. Observation coaches would allow passengers to take in the views and dine, creating new passenger markets.
- 3.6.4 Consideration should also be given to the provision on both routes of family or group rooms where up to four people can sleep in one room.

4 Infrastructure Improvements and New Services

- 4.1 There are a number of already identified infrastructure upgrades that need to be progressed during the period of the new franchise. It is essential that this is a clear element of the new franchise and the improvements progress in conjunction with the franchise operator. Specifically these works would include infill electrification schemes, upgrades to the Highland Main Line and Aberdeen-Inverness route and doubling the single track at Usan.
- 4.2 Beyond that there are re-opening opportunities on the lines to Levenmouth, Grangemouth and the through route between Alloa and Dunfermline. New service opportunities will arise from the EGIP upgrade and the aspirations of Regional Transport Partnerships such as Tactran's Tay Estuary Rail Strategy. Bidders should be invited to propose ways to develop these opportunities.

5 Cross-Border Services

- 5.1 We believe that these services play a vital role in bringing visitors to Scotland and allowing residents to travel on one train to many parts of England. Any attempt to terminate these services in Edinburgh would lead to a significant reduction in patronage and a loss of modal share to road and air. Passengers very much prefer a single journey and would be resistant to changing in Edinburgh, more especially as most are travelling with luggage. Furthermore these long distance trains provide important internal services in Scotland.
- 5.2 To imply that loadings are low near to the destination stations is misleading: that is the nature of long distance trains that serve many stations along their route.

6 Open Access and Raitour Operators

- 6.1 The attractions of rail journeys in Scotland are well illustrated by the number of companies running raitours to and within Scotland. The Jacobite train from Fort William to Mallaig now runs twice daily bringing significant economic benefit to the area from the tens of thousands of passengers who travel. The sheer number of raitour operators offering scenic journeys and on board dining demonstrates the size of the market.
- 6.2 Ironically the vast bulk of passengers drive to Fort William to join the train. We need to learn lessons here, through ticketing would encourage many more to travel by rail to Fort William. The franchise operator should be encouraged to innovate and offer more tourism focussed services such as the Edinburgh to Oban summer trains and to work in conjunction with other operators to grow the overall market.

7 Operation of the Franchise

- 7.1 We do not believe that fragmentation of the franchise will bring overall benefit. The creation of yet more interfaces is likely to add cost. This may benefit lawyers and consultants but not the travelling public.
- 7.2 We do however believe that devolved management within the franchise is necessary to bring focus to the operation and marketing of the different service types that we have described under section 3.

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Part B: Response to consultation Questions

Procuring passenger rail services

Q1: 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.

In our view there are five types of railway service in Scotland and we have detailed them at length in section 3 of 'Part A' of our response. Of these we believe that the rural routes fit most closely to the social railway as described in the consultation.

We have outlined a variety of ways in which a partnership approach would allow greater community involvement thus ensuring that they deliver real social value and develop their tourism potential.

Q2: What should be the length of the contract for future franchises and what factors lead you to this view?

We believe that the key issue here is to ensure that the contract allows for ongoing investment and upgrades. In section 4 above we have described the type of infrastructure and service improvements which we believe need to be prioritised during the period of the franchise. If it is the case that allowance for residual asset value enables these to proceed then the length of contract is not so important.

What is critical is continual management focus on delivering a first class passenger service and we would not wish to see this lost in a re-franchising process every few years.

Q3: What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?

Bidders will clearly assess the level of perceived risk and an economic downturn will be one of the factors they consider.

However it appears to us that the greater risk is that created by government itself and the policies it chooses to adopt. If for example major expenditure is put into parallel roads such as the A9 then that will improve journey times by road and lead to loss of modal share from rail to car and bus. Similarly the removal of bridge tolls and the failure to apply peak time charging to road traffic while imposing peak fares on rail travellers will encourage people to choose the car over the train.

Concessionary fares are another area where government policy is currently leading to a loss of modal share from rail to bus. Finally, the fragmented nature of public transport provision is a deterrent to the use of public transport and hence does not encourage rail use.

We have described much of this in more detail in sections 1, 2.1 and 2.2 above.

If the general thrust of government policy is such that people are encouraged to switch from private to public transport then rail will benefit and bidders will perceive a lower risk and more potential gain. Under such circumstances the franchise is likely to flourish and grow with a much lower risk that additional government support will be required.

Q4: What, if any, profit share mechanism should apply within the franchise?

We believe that a profit share mechanism should apply but should be linked to specific outcomes which government requires from the franchise. We have detailed these under Q6 below.

Q5: Under what terms should third parties be involved in the operation of passenger rail services?

We believe that there is potential for extended third party operation of passenger rail services, particularly on the scenic rural routes. The seasonal Jacobite train operated by West Coast Railways on the Fort William to Mallaig line has been a great success. It has brought extra services to the line and while mainly focussed on tourists the regular timetabled services are available to all users. However, we would wish to see fully integrated ticketing with

ScotRail allowing through journeys by rail. In section 3, above, we have commented on the need for much greater marketing on rural lines with inclusive packages; one such example could be a journey on the Jacobite plus hotel accommodation for visitors using the sleeper service to Fort William. The Kyle line could similarly lend itself to a third party operation.

Beyond the national network the heritage lines from Aviemore and Keith offer the option of through ticketing as is the case on a number of heritage railways in England.

Q6: What is the best way to structure and incentivise the achievement of outcome measures whilst ensuring value for money?

We believe that outcome measures should target modal shift to rail from the car and hence a growth in rail passenger numbers. A further measure that would assist in the development of rail use is greater integration with other public transport modes through timetabling and ticketing. By using outcomes such as those outlined the franchise operator would gain revenue and the government would be assisted in its aim of reducing congestion and carbon emissions and creating greater social inclusion.

Q7: No response.

Q8: No response

Achieving reliability, performance and service quality

Q9: Under the franchise, should we incentivise good performance or only penalise poor performance?

Good performance should be the norm and should not be additionally rewarded. Poor performance should be penalised.

Q10: Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

The regime should be aligned with the service groups we have described under 3. This will give focus to the management of each service group and help to prevent particular routes being given preferential treatment.

Q11: How can we make the performance regime more aligned with actual passenger issues?

We do not see a justification for certain routes being given priority. A delayed train can be more critical on a rural route with limited services where passengers may then miss an ongoing bus or ferry connection. Indeed we would wish to see more common sense adopted across the public transport network to ensure that trains properly integrate with buses and ferries and connections are held in the event of delay. Connectivity is just as important as the performance of an individual route or service.

Q12: What should the balance be between journey times and performance?

There is widespread evidence across the UK rail network of journey times being padded out to improve punctuality data at the final destination. This is not in passengers' best interests or indeed of the railway as a whole. Journey times should be as competitive as possible to maintain and increase the market share of rail. We would not support any measures to further increase journey times.

Q13: 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?

We do not favour a self-monitoring regime. SQUIRE has been effective but could perhaps be simplified to focus on key priorities of the service but this should include stations.

Q14: What other mechanisms could be used for assessing train and station quality?

The trains in the ScotRail fleet should perform in line with the best of class across the UK. The operator should be required to work with other franchise operators to ensure that this is achieved.

Stations across the network should be categorised by the facilities expected based on size and role in the community. So for example key interchange stations should offer the full range of facilities at all times. At the other end of the scale, rural stations should offer waiting facilities and service information but the very successful *Adopt a Station* scheme should be further enhanced to offer a welcoming ambience at unstaffed stations.

Scottish Train Services

Q15: 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?

In section 3, above, we detailed the different service types operating across Scotland. Of these the Metro type services could benefit from a more appropriate type of rolling stock with increased standing room. On inter-urban and longer distance commuter routes many passengers will wish to work while travelling and so standing should only be permitted at peak times and then for no more than 15 minutes.

Q16: 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 to this?

As outlined in section 1, above, we believe that rail should form the backbone of the public transport network. We believe that rail should provide direct access to all city centres and existing rail interchange stations perform a valuable role in helping to achieve this objective.

However, we do see a greater role for seamless interchange between bus and rail to reduce traffic congestion and pollution in cities and to allow rail/bus to serve rural communities more effectively.

Q17: 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?

On some routes such as Edinburgh to Glasgow there is a danger of over-provision of services with the planned 13 trains per hour. We do not believe that the planned 6 trains per hour via the Falkirk High route is the best use of the new infrastructure which will be created by EGIP. In our view it would be preferable to retain the present quarter-hourly service with trip times cut to around 40 minutes. Extra half hourly services could then run from Edinburgh to Falkirk Grahamston and on to Queen Street High Level via Cumbernauld (using the slots of the existing Glasgow- Cumbernauld service). We would support giving the operator more freedom to innovate but it is essential that regular service patterns are maintained on all routes, even at off-peak times, to give the public confidence in the public transport offering.

On some rural routes (e.g. the Oban line) we do not believe that the current provision is an adequate level of service and government may need to require this to be enhanced.

At weekends there is evidence of overcrowding through the running of short trains and the franchise specification should ensure that this is rectified.

Sunday train services on many routes and late night services on certain routes are no longer in tune with modern society and need to be enhanced to a level seen in Continental Europe.

Q18: See Q17 response.

Q19: How should the contract incentivise the franchisee to innovate in the provision of services?

We suggest that Transport Scotland should hold an innovation fund to encourage the start-up of new services and /or opening of new stations at minimum risk to the franchisee. This would also require the co-operation of Network Rail and Transport Scotland is best placed to ensure the parties work together. In some instances they may be at the instigation of Regional Transport Partnerships or other key stakeholders and Transport Scotland should act in a co-ordinating role to smooth the passage of such initiatives.

Scottish Rail Fares

Q20: What should be the rationale for, and purpose of, our fares policy?

The primary rationale should be to encourage modal shift from the car to public transport in general and rail in particular. This will allow the government to meet a whole range of policy objectives and introduce more efficiency into the overall transport network. The ability to buy walk-on fares on the day of travel at a competitive price is essential if rail is to compete with the car.

We do not believe that the current policy of only offering day returns on certain routes (some as much as one hour travelling time) is fair to the passenger. Many people, particularly tourists will wish to stay for longer than a day in places such as North Berwick and Stirling. Passengers are therefore penalised by having to buy two singles, each at virtually the same price as a day return.

Q21: 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 example) or by type of journey (for example suburban or inter-city)?

We have concerns about allowing the operator freedom to set maximum fares given the level that some inter-city peak time fares have now reached. However, we would be in favour of giving freedom to the operator to offer special fares to fill up unused capacity. On rural routes we believe there is the potential to offer a whole range of ticketing deals and have covered this area in section 3, above, and our response to Q5.

Q22: How should we achieve a balance between 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 fare increases to sections of the network which have recently been enhanced?

We believe that it is misleading to compare petrol price increases with the cost of rail tickets. A rail ticket is the total cost of the journey whereas petrol merely represents one element of the cost of running a car. As we have indicated in section 2.1, above, the overall cost of motoring fell by 13% between 1997 and 2009 while the cost of rail travel rose by 7% above inflation. This trend continues.

Rail fares in the UK are already at least three and a half times more expensive than in Europe⁴ and we see no justification for any increases above inflation. Peak fares on certain routes are already much more than 20% above off-peak; on the Edinburgh to Glasgow route the differential is 74%.

There exists no mechanism to charge motorists for peak time use of the roads. This leads to low car occupancy levels (little over 1 per car) and an inefficient use of the road network. Similarly, no premium is paid by motorists using new roads so we are not convinced why this argument should be applied to rail users.

A way to spread the peak load would be to offer cheaper fares on very early morning services – say those arriving at their destination by 07:30. For season ticket holders off-peak and early morning travel could be offered at a discounted rate, thus spreading the peak load.

Q23: What should be the difference between peak and off-peak fares? Will this help to encourage people to switch to travelling in the off-peak?

⁴ Campaign for Better Transport press release 30 December 2011.

We have covered this issue in detail in response to Q22. However, given the current structure of fares on the railway we would accept that a 20% peak differential would be reasonable.

Scottish Stations

Q24: How should we determine what stations are required and where, including whether a station should be closed?

Recent station re-openings at communities such as Laurencekirk and Alloa have demonstrated that actual patronage is well in excess of projections. We believe that there are many other worthy candidates for new stations where new communities have grown up near to railway lines. In a very few instances these may replace older less well sited stations.

In rural areas patronage may not be a good guide as to the value of the station to the local community as it may represent the only means of public transport.

We do not consider that separation distance is valid tool when considering the need for a station. In section 3.4 we have discussed the operation of a Metro type service on parts of the Glasgow rail network, in such instances there may be very good reasons why stations may be only 0.5 mile apart to capture most of the potential market.

We do have concerns about the cost of equipping low use stations with level access arrangements and believe that much more common sense and comparative risk assessment needs to be undertaken in such cases. For example anyone can cross major trunk roads running through the heart of communities and yet we are building ramped access bridges at stations some costing upwards of £0.5m.

Q25: What are the merits or issues that arise from a third party (such as a local authority or a business) being able to propose, promote and fund a station or service?

We very much welcome such initiatives as it seems to us that local agencies are often better placed to understand the need for and promote new stations. Indeed, planning policy should be such that any major new development is well served by public transport and a new railway station can be the hub of a public transport network. Private third party funding is to be encouraged.

We believe that Regional Transport Partnerships are best placed to plan and co-ordinate public transport services in their areas and some funding should be allocated to them to allow a more local, less centralised approach to the provision of rail services.

Q26: 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.

We believe that the franchisee is best placed to take on this role as it impacts most directly on their passengers and they should therefore be incentivised to create a welcoming station environment. However, the franchise should be structured in such a way as to ensure that stations are not neglected towards the end of the franchise period.

For the largest stations with multiple operators then Network Rail should assume overall responsibility.

Q27: How can local communities be encouraged to support their local station?

ScotRail's *Adopt a Station* programme has brought welcome life back to many neglected stations and should be seen as a building block for more and wider community involvement in local stations. In section 3, above, we have discussed ways for much greater community involvement in local railways. The station should be seen as the hub of the local community and a permanent presence sought at all stations through the provision of facilities such as cafes and community centres.

Q28: What categories of station should be designated and what facilities should be available at each category of station?

We believe that categorisation of stations is a good way to decide what facilities should be offered. We have no further comment to offer at the present time but would be pleased to have further discussion on this subject.

However we do wish to point out the importance of high quality active travel routes to stations to encourage more people to walk and cycle. We would not wish to see a repeat of the mistakes made on the Airdrie to Bathgate line where the prime focus has been on the provision of access to stations by car.

Cross-Border Services

Q29: Should cross-border services continue to go north of Edinburgh? In operating alongside Scotrail services, how do cross-border services benefit passengers and taxpayers? Who should specify these services, the Department of Transport or the Scottish Ministers?

We do not support the withdrawal of cross-border services and have set this out in more detail in Section 5.

Further we believe that there is a strong case for some cross-border trains from the West Coast Main Line extending to Stirling or Perth where easy interchange could be made with Scotrail services from the north.

At least one service could be extended to Inverness, thereby providing higher quality trains on the Highland Main Line as well as direct services to the south.

Scottish Ministers are better placed to understand the benefits to Scotland than the UK Department of Transport.

Q30: See response to Q29.

Rolling Stock

The uniform branding of the Scotrail fleet in such way as to transcend change of franchise operator is to be commended. It places Scotland well ahead of England and Wales and provides a unique brand for Scotland to market.

Q31: What alternative strategies or mechanisms could be used to reduce the cost of the provision of rolling stock.

Further electrification will reduce the cost of rolling stock provision. A Metro type operation in the Glasgow area with appropriate new high capacity rolling stock will also help to reduce costs.

On some rural routes there may be scope to introduce additional services with traditional coaching stock of the type used recently on the Fife Circle. These would allow passengers more comfort and could be marketed as tourist trains.

Q32: What facilities should be present on a train and to what extent should these facilities vary according to the route served?

In section 3, above, we have outlined in detail the types of train service operated by ScotRail and appropriate rolling stock.

On all service types rolling stock should be capable of serving the needs of all passengers, including those with disabilities.

Passengers - comfort, security, information

Q33: How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and/or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

We believe that Wi-Fi should be a standard offering on all inter-city routes.

Q34: How should we balance the need for additional seating capacity and retain flexibility of a franchise to offer first-class services if commercially viable.

We believe that first class is essential on all inter-city routes, these are quite long journeys connecting Scotland's cities and if business people are to be attracted to the train then an appropriate working environment is required. In the leisure sector there is also a market for first class travel.

On rural routes, in particular in the tourist sector there is an untapped potential for first class travel. This is borne out by the many charter companies offering first class dining services on scenic routes such as those in Scotland.

Indeed, the Caledonian Railway introduced an observation coach on the Oban line in the early 1900s and this practice was continued on rural lines right up to the British Railways era.

Q35: What issues and evidence should be considered prior to determining whether or not to ban the consumption of alcohol on trains?

Many people enjoy a drink while travelling, and on long journeys this along with some food can create a pleasant ambience and make the journey all the more enjoyable. In the tourist market this may be all part of the holiday for some travellers.

Clearly there is a minority who take this to extremes and spoil the journey for their fellow travellers.

We do not believe that the majority should be punished rather appropriate measures should be taken against the irresponsible minority. We would however accept that it may be necessary to ban alcohol on specific trains that coincide with known times of trouble. What message would it send to the outside world if when visiting Scotland visitors cannot enjoy a drink on the train because of 'the behaviour of the locals'?

Q36: How can the provision of travel information for passengers be further improved?

Modern technology is very useful in being able to speedily convey information. More and more people rely on this to source information and the onus is on the operator to ensure that information is accurate and readily available. Internal lines of communication are critical in ensuring that passengers and staff are given speedy and accurate updates.

However, there will always be a sector of society who look to personal contact for information and it is important that staff are on hand to advise and are themselves fully briefed.

Caledonian Sleeper

Q37: Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter?

The sleeper services are important in a number of ways and we have outlined this in more detail in section 3, above. We believe that they need to be specified.

Q38: Should the Caledonian Sleeper services be contracted for separately from the main Scotrail franchise? Or should it be an option for within the main franchise?

We believe that this should remain as part of the main franchise but with a specific management team focussed on growing and enhancing the product.

Q39: The level and type of Sleeper service?

See response to Q37.

Environmental issues

Q40: What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

For the Scottish Government to achieve its environmental objectives in the transport sector then significant modal shift from the car to public transport and the active travel modes will be required. Rail is a key element of the public transport offering and whilst it is sensible to seek to improve the environmental performance of rail this should not add costs that will reduce its appeal to passengers.

However, certain measures should make rail more efficient and hence help to reduce costs; these include further use of electric traction, energy efficiency initiatives at depots, stations and on trains.

Waste is one very visible area that should also be tackled and initiatives should be put in place to increase recycling at Scotrail properties and on trains.

Finally, the practice of train toilets emptying onto the track should be stopped. It is simply not appropriate in the 21st century.

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Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns. Transform Scotland Limited is a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).

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