

Is Scotland on the right track?

The background of the top half of the page is a solid dark blue. It features several horizontal lines of varying lengths and colors (light blue and white) scattered across the space, creating a modern, abstract design.

Tom Harris
August 2018

Contents

Introduction	3
Foreword	4
 1 Understanding our railways	6
The trains	6
The tracks	7
Freight.....	7
Fares	7
The ScotRail franchise	9
Service reliability.....	9
The Donovan Review	11
 2 The cost of Scotland's railways	12
How are railways run elsewhere?.....	12
 3 What the public think	15
Who uses the railways, and why?	15
What is important to passengers and how does the service perform?	15
What do passengers know about how the railway works?	16
What do passengers think about travelling by train in Scotland?.....	17
Who should make decisions about Scotland's railways?	18
What are passenger's priorities for the future?	18
 4 Recommendations	20
Devolution of decision-making	20
Passenger priorities	21
Public understanding	21
Service improvements	22
A joined-up railway.....	22
 5 Conclusion: Is Scotland on the right track?	25

Introduction

In early 2018, Abellio, the company that owns the ScotRail franchise, approached me with an invite to undertake a piece of original research and analysis into the current state of the Scottish passenger railway, the effectiveness (or otherwise) of Abellio's stewardship of the franchise and, most importantly, how Scotland's rail passengers view the services they use.

It has been my view for some time that the current public debate about the nature and structure of the railway industry has suffered from the absence of two things: hard facts and the participation of the industry itself, which too often adopts a defensive approach in response to external criticism.

We have used a range of evidence sources in the compiling of this report, from publicly available material such as annual reports and the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which records passenger services' punctuality, to newly commissioned public perception research by our partner, Mark Diffley Consultancy and Research Ltd.

The aim of this report is to present an accurate and objective assessment of the facts of the railway industry in Scotland, and to examine the validity of some of the criticism that has been made against it. It looks not only at the record of expansion in the post-devolution era, but also at its prospects for the future. It has proved essential to do so in the context of the

recent history of the national network, and drawing comparisons, where appropriate, with the different political situation in other parts of the UK.

But at its heart, this report seeks to draw attention to the experience, not of train managers, company leaders or politicians, but of the ordinary Scottish railway passenger, and seeks to understand the priorities and aspirations of passengers and the general public for the future of their network.

Although funded by Abellio, this report has been produced entirely independently. We trust it will be used as a resource to help opinion formers lead an informed debate about an indispensable national asset.



Tom Harris
August 2018

Tom Harris is an independent transport consultant, and former MP and Transport Minister

Mark Diffley is one of the UK's leading pollsters, and Director of Mark Diffley Consultancy and Research

Foreword

If you needed a lesson in how important railways are, then you need look no further than the terrible summer of passenger service collapse (disruption just doesn't cover it) on Northern and Thameslink services after the appalling May 20 timetable changes.

Thankfully, Scotland needs no such lesson and rail's crucial social and economic role in connecting communities with jobs, families, new homes, business and the wider world is clearly acknowledged, appreciated and valued by its Government. Railways clearly really matter at Holyrood – and in the right way. This understanding is a fundamental reason why Scotland does railways so well – and this is an important point because this is frequently not appropriately reflected in Scotland's news media. As this report notes, good news is no news and so critical stories are common. It is important to see past this to the transport truths beyond.

It might not always feel like it to Scots, but Scotland's approach to rail is informed, sound and logical. Yes, railways are politically important but rail policy is not overtly politically driven. Holyrood believes in its railways, wants to develop them and in Transport Scotland has created an arms length body of fantastically well-led rail, highly capable specialists. They do

a great job of not just implementing, but actively shaping their political leaders' views, requirements and specifications for the iron road they wish to see, pay for and operate. It works.

Since 1998, passenger journeys have doubled to 93 million a year. More than 80 km of new railway and 13 new stations have opened in the last decade. ScotRail is, by some key measures, the best performing large train operator in the UK. This despite frequently missing some very challenging performance targets – which, to me, actually says the system is calibrated pretty well!

There are some very pleasing measures of satisfaction in these pages – but I'll let you discover those for yourself. There are other statistics which validate commissioning of this excellent report which I want to highlight here.

Only 17 per cent of regular passengers believe passengers are prioritised – despite 79 per cent believing that rail is preferable to all other modes. If Holyrood really is building “the best railway Scotland has ever had”, that gap must be closed. Likewise 53 per cent of rail users think value for money is essential – but only 45 per cent think they are getting it. Nearly a third (28 per cent) of rail users think that Holyrood's investment priority should be fare subsidy.

Pleasingly, 80 per cent (so room for improvement nonetheless!) of passengers rated their recent rail journeys and station experiences as good or excellent. There are plenty more very encouraging stats in this report of which everyone involved with rail north of the border should be very proud and I am happy to salute that.

But if momentum is to be maintained then some challenging discussions need to be prompted by the findings in these pages, not least the question of Network Rail devolution – fully 93 per cent of regular passengers want either exclusive Scottish oversight (73 per cent) or UK and Scottish oversight (21 per cent) of their railways. These are tough questions.

I wish that the Holyrood approach to railways was replicated south of the border and strongly urge the Department for Transport in London to look hard at Transport Scotland, because we desperately need a similarly skilled, measured and arms length body like that for rail in England.

Tom Harris sums it up: “Those who provide passenger services are better placed than civil servants or ministers to judge what the most suitable rolling stock is for a particular service.”

One last thing – the early sections of this report are a masterly and articulate summary of how our railways are structured, operated and paid for – if all politicians and journalists (north and south of the border!) were to read and digest these few pages, then public discourse about railways everywhere would improve considerably!

So, Scotland – keep on doing what you’re doing! If attitudes, procedures and structures south of the border towards rail were only half as impressive, there’s a powerful argument that England’s railways would be twice as good.

I shall watch the public conversation and political debate about this report with considerable interest.

And I shall continue to relish my frequent trips north of the border... always by rail, naturally.

Nigel Harris
Managing Editor, *RAIL* magazine

| 1 | Understanding our railways

The complexity of Britain's railway network often leads to misunderstandings about who does what, who pays for it, and who each of the different parts of the industry are responsible to.

The trains

Passenger rail services are provided, on the whole, via franchises. These are finely specified legal agreements that give a company the exclusive right to provide services in a particular geographical area, or on a specified route or line. Franchises last, in general, for seven years, although it has become common practice to allow successful operators to continue the contract for an additional three years. The Chiltern Railways franchise, operating out of Marylebone station in London, was granted, uniquely, a 20-year franchise, running from 2002.

Since the last major restructuring of the industry in 2005, the responsibility for awarding franchises – the contracts by which private companies provide passenger services – has laid with the **Department for Transport (DfT)**, part of the UK Government. In Scotland this task lies with

Transport Scotland, the quango set up by the Scottish Government, and which is directly responsible to the Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity and, through him, to the Scottish Parliament itself.

The number of passenger franchises has fallen in the last two decades, from 25 to 17, through a series of mergers.

The awarding of railway franchises is carried out on a “blind” basis. Civil servants are unaware of the identity of each bidder, whose answers to various questions posed to them are therefore assessed entirely objectively. When the minister is invited to open an envelope revealing the winner of a particular franchise, he or she genuinely does not know the identity of the winner.

Contests for franchises are fiercely competitive and expensive: estimates suggest that a train owning group will spend between ten and fifteen million pounds in its bid to win a franchise. The successful franchisee inherits the same rolling stock (trains) as used by the previous incumbent (unless lease agreements come to an end at the same time as the franchise change-over). The timetable the new company operates will be dictated by the Invitation To Tender (ITT) document prepared by the DfT or Transport

Scotland, following an extensive consultation among stakeholders in communities in which the new franchisee will operate.

The cost of the bidding process has been blamed for subsequent weaknesses in the franchising process. It is widely suspected in the industry that, in an attempt to recoup the high costs incurred by the bid process, bidders will over-state the growth in passenger numbers – and, therefore, revenue – they expect to see during their tenure. Such optimistic predictions have led, on more than one occasion, to TOCs being unable to achieve what they originally promised and having to surrender their right to run services.

The final franchise agreement will specify the level of subsidy – government financial support – the TOC is to receive in each year of the franchise, depending on estimates of future usage and level of service to be provided. Alternatively, if the franchise is a profitable enterprise, the franchise agreement will set out how much premium the TOC will pay to the franchising authority (the DfT or Transport Scotland).

The ITT will normally contain details of each station that must be served under the new franchise, usually to the extent of mandating a precise number of times in a particular timeframe that each station and line must carry services. This constrains the degree to which winning bidders can be flexible over the services they provide, and a constant complaint about the franchise process, from the operators' perspective, has been that ITTs are over-specified, and that operators should be given more freedom to determine service levels.

The train carriages used by winning bidders are (mostly) owned by another wing of the industry entirely: the **rolling stock companies** (or **Roscocs**). These are mainly large banks and similar financial institutions, which lease rolling stock to franchise winners on a long-term basis. This model has been changing in recent years, however, with more TOCs entering into contracts directly with rolling stock manufacturers.

The tracks

The 2005 restructuring maintained the pattern of the previous 20 years, whereby passenger services were provided by private **Train Operating Companies** (TOCs) through franchises, while the

infrastructure – the tracks on which the trains run, the signalling and most railway stations – were owned, managed and maintained by **Network Rail**, the company that had replaced the failed Railtrack organisation that was abolished in 2002.

Network Rail was originally set up by the then Labour Government as a private company which, uniquely, had no shareholders and whose debt was guaranteed by the Government. This was a way of satisfying Treasury demands that Network Rail's debts could be kept "off book" and would therefore not be counted as part of the national debt. This particular sleight of hand came to an end in December 2013, when the Office for National Statistics decreed that from September of the following year, Network Rail would be reclassified as a public body. The organisation's debt, already guaranteed by the Government, would be added to the national debt, and Network Rail would, in effect, be nationalised.

Freight

The national network also provides an essential function in transporting freight across the country, a fact that is frequently overlooked when the industry is discussed, and which is a source of frustration to the rail freight industry itself.

Rail freight is an entirely private enterprise. The routes freight transport can take and the times at which journeys can be made, as with passenger companies, are decided by Network Rail, which is responsible for the railway timetable. Freight companies pay Network Rail to access the tracks.

Fares

The fares set by individual TOCs are, as with the services they provide, constrained by the awarding authority. Fares on the railway network are either regulated by the Government (or Scottish ministers) or are unregulated, and set by the TOC. Regulated fares include most season tickets and open return (Anytime) tickets. Virtually everything else – first class fares, advanced purchase tickets, most off-peak tickets – are set by the TOC according to their commercial priorities and the market.

Regulated fares are increased at the start of each calendar year according to the Retail Price Index (RPI) measure of inflation the previous July. At the start of January 2018, regulated fares in England

and Wales (and season tickets in Scotland) rose by 3.4 per cent. In Scotland, ministers have taken the decision to impose a limit of RPI minus one per cent to regulated fares (but not season tickets).

The regulated limit is not applied to individual fares, however; the Government allows TOCs to apply the rise to a “basket” or range of fares, within which the increases (and in some cases, decreases) in individual fares can exceed the RPI limit provided that across the range of fares, the average rise is the equivalent of the RPI.

In 2016, just over half of the total revenue from rail fares (52.9 per cent) came from regulated fares [Source: Office of Rail & Road, January 2017].

The cost of rail fares in Britain has come under steady fire from commuters, trade unions and the media for being too expensive, especially in comparison with fares available on mainland Europe. While this report is perhaps not the appropriate place to conduct an extensive examination of the veracity of the case, it should be noted that research by railway journalist Mark Smith (also known as “The Man in Seat 61”) has concluded that the criticism is largely justified only by comparing – to the UK’s disadvantage – the cost of “walk-up-and-go” fares in Britain with advance purchases in Europe.

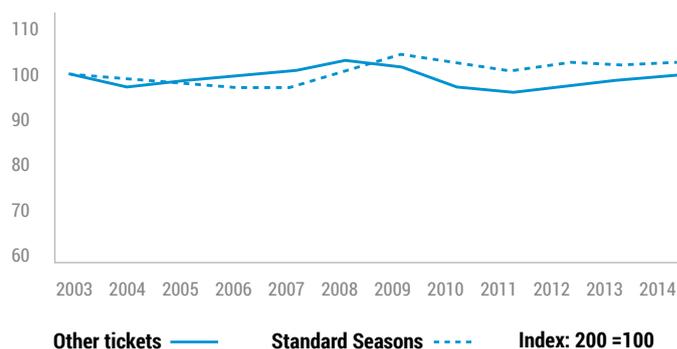
“The *big picture* is that Britain has the most commercially aggressive fares in Europe, with the highest fares designed to get maximum revenue from business travel, and some of the lowest fares designed to get more revenue by filling more seats. This is exactly what airlines have known, and been doing, for decades.”

[Source: seat61.com]

According to research by the Rail Delivery Group (the RDG), the industry body representing Network Rail and the TOCs, the average price paid per passenger mile increased by 6.7 per cent (in real terms) between 1997/98 and 2013/14.

Average price paid per passenger mile, Standard Seasons & other tickets

[Source: Lennon data]



Since 2009, government policy has deliberately sought to “rebalance” the cost of the railways towards the fare-payer and away from the (generally non-rail using) tax-payer. In the last five years, the amount of public subsidy given directly to TOCs has been outweighed each year by the amount of premiums that are returned to the Government by the TOCs running profitable services. In 2015/16, TOCs received government funding of £2.5 billion, but paid £3.2 billion in premiums to the DfT, a difference (to the DfT’s advantage) of £700 million.

According to the Office of Rail and Road, the industry regulator, in 2016/17, passenger fares funded the industry to the tune of £9.7 billion, up 1.1 per cent on the previous year. The Government’s contribution to the industry fell in the same period by 0.7 per cent, to £3.4 billion.

In the five years to 2017, across Great Britain:

- Passenger journeys have increased by 18.4 per cent;
- Income from fares has increased by 18.2 per cent;
- Government funding of the railways has fallen by 21.1 per cent;
- TOCs’ expenditure has fallen by 20.2 per cent;
- Network Rail’s expenditure has increased by 20 per cent.

[Source: ORR, January 2018]

Significantly (and perhaps unsurprisingly), in quantitative research carried out as part of this report, value for money in terms of fares was found to be the most problematic aspect of Scotland's railway services.

The ScotRail franchise

In October 2014, it was announced that the new franchise to provide ScotRail franchises would be run by Dutch transport company, Abellio. They took over from previous incumbents, FirstGroup, in March 2015, on a contract lasting an initial seven years, with an optional three-year extension.

ScotRail runs the vast majority of services in Scotland. Cross-border services are run by Transpennine Express, Virgin, London North Eastern Railway, Cross Country and the Caledonian Sleeper.

Nearly 13,000 Scottish workers depend on the railway and its supply chain for their employment: 9200 are employed directly by the industry and a further 3600 are indirectly employed. In 2016, Oxera Consulting, in a report prepared for Transport Scotland and the RDG, concluded that the railway in Scotland generates £131 million a year in income tax and National Insurance Contributions, plus an additional £148 million in other and indirect tax receipts. Together with about £13 million in corporation tax payments, this meant that the total tax contribution by Scotland's railway sector was £292 million.

Additionally, Oxera calculated that the Gross Value Added (GVA) of Scotland's railways to the nation could be calculated as £668 million a year.

ScotRail runs more than 2300 services a day, delivering more than 93 million passenger journeys a year. This latter figure, reflecting the UK picture as a whole, is a significant increase over the last 20 years – more than double the number of passenger journeys in 1998.

Since devolution in 1999, Scotland's railways have seen an expansion that has not been reflected elsewhere in the UK outside London: The new Borders Railway, connecting Edinburgh with Galashiels and Tweedbank, opened in 2015. The £300 million Airdrie-Bathgate link was opened in 2010, and the Paisley Canal, Cumbernauld and Whifflet routes have been electrified. Edinburgh Haymarket railway station has been renovated and

redesigned, with similar transformational works taking place at Glasgow Queen Street. Nearly 80 kilometres of new railway and 13 new stations have been opened in the last ten years alone.

Service reliability

ScotRail has endured a number of external impacts on its service delivery, although in the summer of 2016, it was industrial unrest involving its own employees represented by the RMT (Rail, Maritime and Transport) union that had a severe impact on performance. The union has been in dispute with a number of TOCs throughout the country over the introduction of trains on which only the driver is required to operate doors. Citing a security risk to passengers if guards were not aboard each train, the RMT called six 24-hour and three 48-hour strikes. The dispute was resolved in September 2016 with an agreement that the new Class 385 Hitachi-built electric trains (to have been delivered in 2017 but delayed until the end of 2018 at the earliest) will have doors operated by both drivers and guards.

Additionally, a £60 million project to upgrade the tunnel approach to Queen Street station in Glasgow seriously affected ScotRail's services over a 20-week period in 2016.

The punctuality (or otherwise) of GB train services is calculated using the monthly Public Performance Measure (PPM). This measures the number of trains in each franchise that arrive on time at their destinations, although this is sometimes seen as a controversial yardstick, since "on time" can mean up to five minutes later than timetabled for a commuter service and up to ten minutes later than scheduled for a long-distance or InterCity service.

The PPM is calculated on a monthly basis, and for a longer perspective, and perhaps a more accurate assessment of whether an individual company is seeing improvements in its performance, the Moving Annual Average (MAA) measurement, which aggregates the 12 monthly figures over a year, might be preferred.

These figures for all the franchises are published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR), the industry's regulator.

According to the ORR, ScotRail's MAA (annual) figure for services arriving within five minutes of

their timetabled schedule was 90.3 per cent, a reduction in the previous year of 0.3 per cent. Of long distance services, 96.1 per cent of services arrived at their destinations less than ten minutes behind schedule (unchanged from the previous year).

The total number of delays experienced by ScotRail passengers increased by nearly nine percent, to 929,240. The industry and the ORR identify the cause of each delay to each service, and decide whether they can be attributed to the TOC itself, to the weather, to Network Rail (through faults to the tracks and signaling, or to delays in finishing repair and renewal work) or to other external factors.

In 2016/17, more than half (52 per cent) of all delays suffered by ScotRail passengers were the fault of Network Rail, although a significant number of delays were caused by failures in the trains themselves (117,097, or 12.6 per cent).

Abellio/ScotRail has frequently missed both the contracted target for performance agreed with the Scottish Government at the start of the franchise in 2015 – 91.7 per cent MAA – as well as the 90.8 per cent MAA imposed through a shorter term improvement plan in autumn 2016.

ScotRail's PPM since that point is as follows:

2016-17	PPM	MMA
Period 6	90.7	89.6
Period 7	90.2	89.5
Period 8	86.1	89.8
Period 9	83.7	89.8
Period 10	89.7	90.0
Period 11	91.6	90.1
Period 12	93.2	90.3
Period 13	93.3	90.3

2017-18	PPM	MMA
Period 1	93.6	90.4
Period 2	91.6	90.3
Period 3	92.0	90.5
Period 4	93.7	90.7
Period 5	92.5	90.9
Period 6	94.1	91.2
Period 7	88.4	91.1
Period 8	83.1	90.8
Period 9	83.3	90.8
Period 10	83.5	90.4
Period 11	88.8	90.1
Period 12	86.6	89.7
Period 13	90.9	89.5

2018-19	PPM	MMA
Period 6	92.0	89.3

As noted above, more than half of delays suffered by Abellio/ScotRail passenger services are caused by Network Rail rather than the operator itself, and the legislation governing the industry provides

for compensation claims to be paid by whichever body is responsible for delays to the franchisee. In May 2018 it was announced that Abellio/ScotRail faced financial penalties amounting to £1.6 million as a result of its failure to meet its performance targets. As *The Scotsman* [reported](#) on May 8:

The penalties follow a weekend of bank holiday travel chaos that saw Glasgow Central station closed because of problems with overhead wires.

director of Transpennine Express, to carry out an independent review that would address concerns and make recommendations on improvements.

In March 2018, Donovan presented his report containing 20 recommendations, all of which were accepted by the Alliance. The central recommendation was that “stop skipping” – where trains don’t stop at a station as scheduled in order to make up time – should be used only as a last resort in the future, and that where it can’t be avoided, it should be put in place before the train departs its origin station, not during the journey.

The company issued a statement in March 2018 insisting that despite the failure to meet performance targets, Abellio/ScotRail remained the best performing large franchisee in Great Britain. There is some evidence to support this:

Data for Period 1 (April 1-28, 2018)

[Source: *Network Rail*]

TOC	PPM MMA
Arriva Trains Wales	92.2
East Midlands Trains	91.6
ScotRail	89.3
Greater Anglia	88.6
Southeastern	88.3
Northern	87.6
West Midlands Trains	87.2
Great Western Railway	82.7
South Western Railway	84.2
Govia Thameslink	81.3

The Donovan Review

In response to public and media criticism of ScotRail’s performance, Alex Hynes, the managing director of the ScotRail Alliance (which brings the train operating company and Network Rail in Scotland under a single management structure) invited Nick Donovan, the former managing

| 2 | The cost of Scotland's railways

The current model of Britain's railways has come under severe criticism from politicians, trade unions and passengers over the years. It should be noted, however, that under public ownership, in the pre-1996 days of British Rail, the railways were frequently the butt of comedians' jokes and the subject of ridicule throughout the media.

A regular criticism of the current structure of the industry is that private companies make a profit for running services, money that would otherwise be re-invested in the railways rather than go to private shareholders. This is a legitimate criticism that should be addressed.

The key is to identify the net benefit that private sector involvement in the industry produces and to judge whether this is greater or smaller than the net profit taken out of the industry by private companies. Across the industry, a profit of between 2.5 and 3.0 per cent of total turnover is assumed by the franchisee. In other words, if the combination of passenger growth, operational efficiency and innovation that the private sector has achieved is worth less than the equivalent of 2.5-3.0 per cent of turnover, then the current structure does indeed represent a poor deal.

While it is difficult to specify with any detail the exact level of efficiency savings that franchising

has brought about since 1996, and while the same problem exists when examining the increase in passenger numbers/revenue in that time, it is not realistic to suggest that the same efficiencies – eg, in the size of workforce – would have been achieved by a publicly-owned company.

Similarly, while increases in passenger numbers could reasonably have been expected to reflect the growth of the economy since 1996, the record numbers of passengers now travelling by train (now exceeding patronage at any time in the industry's history outside wartime) might reasonably be attributed, at least in part, to private sector initiatives and flexibility. As stated above, it is difficult to quantify such gains from an entirely objective point of view, but given the very low profit margins in the industry, it would be reasonable to assume that the private sector has provided a net gain to the industry since 1996.

How are railways run elsewhere?

Critics of the GB railway set-up frequently pray in aid of their arguments the various degrees of state ownership models in similarly sized European countries. In Germany, France and the Netherlands, the vast majority of passenger services are run by state-owned companies. This

is changing, however. The European Union’s Fourth Rail Package, agreed by the Commission at the end of 2016, steps up the deregulation of the EU railway market in preparation for the completion of the Single Market in this area. Essentially this means that all rail services must be open to competition. According to the Commission:

“Competition in rail passenger service markets will encourage railway operators to become more responsive to customer needs, improve the quality of their services and their cost-effectiveness. The competitive tendering of public service contracts will enable savings of public money.”

In this respect, Britain has led the way in creating new forms of railway structures. This assertion can be supported by looking at the relative growth in passenger numbers in Britain in the last 20 years, compared with other EU countries. Since the introduction of franchises in GB, passenger growth, in terms of the number of journeys undertaken per head of population, was 60 per cent. The figures for France, Germany and the Netherlands over the same period were 25, 23 and 10 per cent respectively.

While critics of the GB franchising system constantly hold continental railway systems up for comparison, those same countries are moving more quickly than ever towards a marketised and commercialised environment in order to offer customers more choice, to save money and to increase passenger growth.

Rail journeys per head of population

[Source: Rail Delivery Group]

	1998	2013	% Change
UK	15.4	24.7	+60%
France	14.1	17.7	+25%
Germany	20.2	24.9	+23%
Netherlands	18.8	20.6	+10%

Further, according to The Office of Rail and Road:

Since 2004 the UK has seen a 48.8% growth in passenger kilometres, which is higher than the average growth across the European Union of 17.5% . The only country with a higher percentage growth in passenger kilometres was Luxembourg with an increase of 61.7%. However, in absolute terms, the growth in Luxembourg is much smaller than that of the UK. Compared to the UK, France and Germany have seen smaller increases in passenger kilometres between 2004 and 2014, with increases of 20.4% and 19.9% respectively. [Source: The ORR]

Franchising does not play the central role in passenger rail services in Germany, France or the Netherlands that it does in the UK, so it is a reasonable assumption that the significant advantage enjoyed by the UK in this respect can be put down to the franchising process and the consequent involvement by the private sector in providing services.

The question then arises as to whether the profit taken by franchisees – typically 2.5 to 3.0 per cent of turnover – would actually exist in order to be “ploughed back” into the service if the structure and ownership of the industry were different. If Britain had enjoyed a passenger growth rate similar to that of France or Germany since 1998 – 25 per cent instead of 60 per cent – then the revenues being generated today would be a fraction of what they actually are.

There are, generally speaking, two distinct forms of contracts which the Government issues to provide passenger train services: these are franchises and concessions. The latter differs from franchises in that it is essentially a management contract where the Government agrees to pay a TOC a monthly fee for providing specified services and the Government takes any profit generated, but is also liable for any losses (revenue risk).

As a franchisee rather than a concession holder, Abellio ScotRail therefore has a high degree of revenue risk, which is illustrated by the accounts

of its first two years of operation: Abellio won the ScotRail franchise in 2014 in a competition with four other private sector bidders, and offered a competitive bid in terms of the level of revenue support grant, or public subsidy, it would require to operate. In the first nine months of the new franchise (April to December 2015), Abellio ScotRail's total turnover was £485.7 million. This was made up of income from passengers (£249.6 million) and revenue support grant from Transport Scotland (£219.8 million), plus other operating income (car parks, etc) of £16.2 million. ScotRail also became liable for an £11.7 million loan from its parent company, which was used to purchase new infrastructure (ticket machines, etc).

In the first full year of operation, January to December 2016, Abellio ScotRail made a loss of £2.1 million and received loans from its Dutch parent company of £14 million. A further £10 million loan has since been made to the franchise by Abellio.

It is not unusual, in the franchising process, for TOCs to plan on the expectation of fallow early years of a franchise, where the costs of early investment is shouldered in the hope that it will begin to pay dividends (literally) in later years. One of the regular criticisms of the process has been that shorter franchises curtail the willingness of companies to make capital investments unless they can be assured of a long enough period afterwards in which to generate a return.

3 | What the public think

To inform this report, Mark Diffley Consultancy & Research Ltd carried out quantitative research among rail passengers in Scotland and the general (largely non-rail using) public. The survey covered a wide range of issues, from usage of the rail network, elements of the service which are most important and perceived performance of the service, through to awareness of who is responsible for different parts of the service and priorities for how the service could be improved. The detailed findings are contained in the appendix to this report.

Who uses the railways, and why?

The research confirms a number of assumptions already widely made about rail usage in Scotland; first, social class plays a significant role: while 14 per cent of Scots use the railways at least once a month for business purposes, this rises to 17 per cent of ABC1 social class and falls to ten per cent of those in the C2DE group.

Age has a similarly significant impact on who uses trains in Scotland: of those aged between 18 and 34, 27 per cent use railways at least once every month for business purposes. This figure falls as we go up the age scale, dipping to six per cent in the 55-64 age bracket, and five per cent of the over-65s.

Significantly, the research found that a higher proportion of Scots use trains for leisure purposes than for business, with 37 per cent of Scots using trains for this purpose at least once a month (although these figures relate to the total number of Scots using trains regularly, not to the overall total of journey types each day). Again, age is a significant factor in who chooses to use the railways for leisure purposes: half of those in the 18-34 age bracket use the railways for leisure travel at least once a month. This number falls in each age group beyond, with the figure falling to 28 per cent among the over-65s.

What is important to passengers and how does the service perform?

The most important factors of the service for regular or frequent rail users are not surprising: *value for money* comes out on top, with 53 per cent rating this as “essential”. Close behind this priority come *punctuality of services* and the *upkeep and condition of carriages* (49 per cent respectively). These three issues are seen as significantly more important than *train frequency* (36 per cent), *over-crowding* (36), *cleanliness of trains* (30) and *helpfulness of staff* (20).

When asked about their overall experience of using the rail network in Scotland, 80 per cent of regular and frequent passengers rate their most recent usage of train travel as “excellent” or “good”, while only 6% rated it as “poor”. There are no discernible and significant differences between different demographic groups.

However, when looking at the ratings of specific aspects of the service, the picture is more mixed. For example, when it comes to fares, the number of those rating value for money as “excellent” or “good” – 45 per cent – were outnumbered by those describing value for money as “not very good” or “poor” (54). Similarly, 82% of regular and frequent users rate the helpfulness of staff as “excellent” or “good”, far outweighing the 10% who see it as “not very good” or “poor”.

These figures are particularly important because they illustrate the disconnect between what passengers believe is important and how they perceive their actual experience: the issue seen as most important to them (value for money fares) is also the area where there is the least satisfaction, while the issue of least importance (helpfulness of staff) is the issue with the highest satisfaction rating. Those who manage and deliver rail services in Scotland should be mindful of these results when planning improvements to the network and

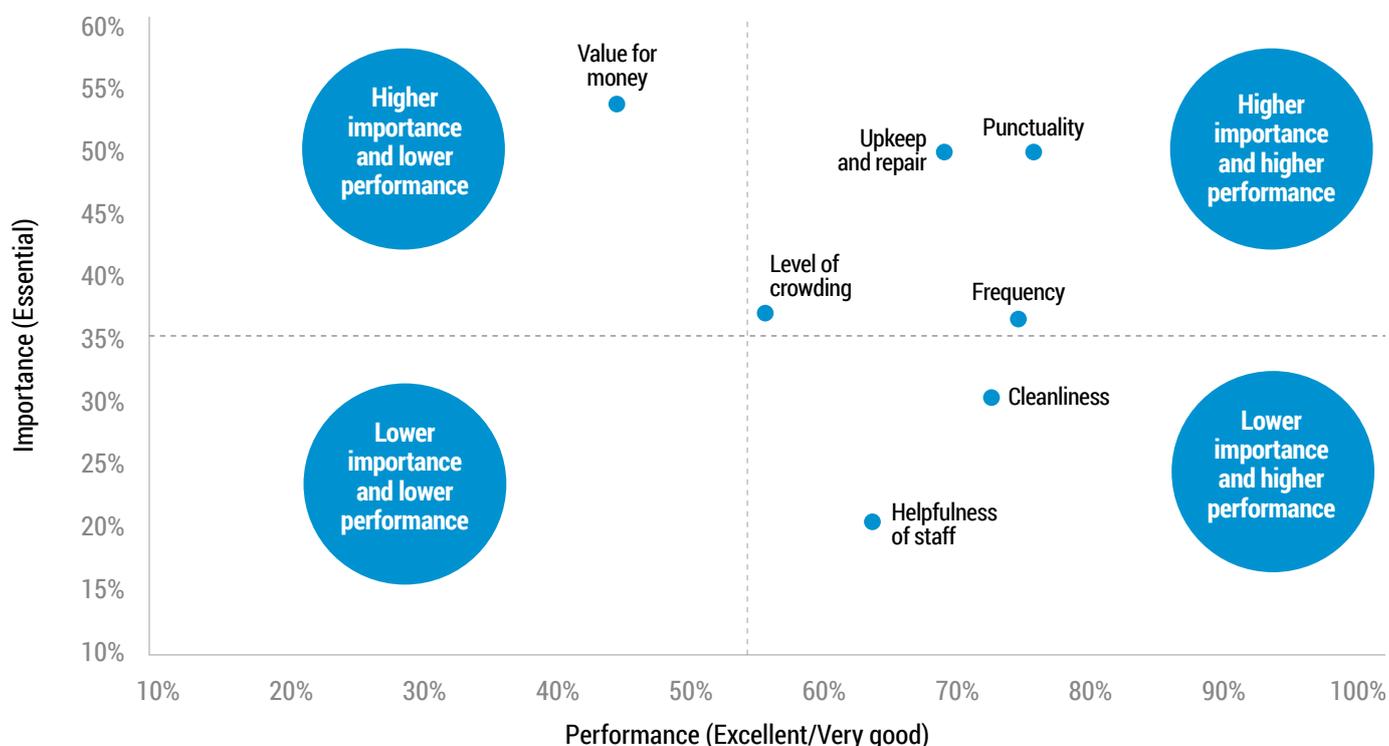
how these should be prioritised.

The graph below illustrates the relationship between the issues rail users see as important and how they rate those same issues:

What do passengers know about how the railway works?

Respondents were also asked a series of questions to assess their knowledge of the structure of the industry. The responses were again unsurprising, and the importance of the conclusions are open for debate and discussion. But Scotland’s politicians, as they seek to engage the public in a debate about the future of the industry, may have to address some of the knowledge gaps among the people for whom services are provided in the first place.

Essentially, knowledge of the different organisations involved in running Scotland’s railways is patchy at best and depends on how frequent a rail user you happen to be. Fewer than one in five Scots claim to know “a lot” about any of these organisations. Only 18 per cent claimed to know “a lot” about Network Rail, for example, though the infrastructure might take some comfort from the fact that an additional 56 per



Base: Those who use the train for business and/or leisure at least monthly (419)

cent claim to know at least “a little” about it.

When it comes to the franchisee itself, the numbers are similar but not comforting: 19 per cent of Scots claim to know “a lot” about Abellio/ ScotRail, while a further 37 per cent claim to know “a little” about the company. The lower awareness of the Abellio/ScotRail brand compared with Network Rail can almost certainly be put down to the fact that Network Rail has been in existence (and has experienced extensive media coverage) since 2002, while the Abellio/ScotRail label is still relatively new to passengers.

When it comes to the other major players in the industry in Scotland, 15 per cent of Scots claim to know “a lot” about Transport Scotland (51 per cent know “a little”), 19 per cent know “a lot” about Virgin Trains (54 per cent know “a little”), seven per cent know “a lot” about CrossCountry trains (25 per cent), eight per cent know “a lot” about the Caledonian Sleeper (36 per cent) and four per cent know “a lot” about Transpennine Express services (19 per cent).

The table below illustrates the level of knowledge that Scots have of the different providers.

Name recognition aside, respondents were asked details about their understanding of who actually does what when it comes to the ownership of the tracks and trains, and who has responsibility for setting and subsidizing fares.

After 16 years of operation, Network Rail has established in most people’s minds its central role in the ownership of the infrastructure: an impressive two thirds (66 per cent) could name Network Rail as the owner of the track and signaling, and this went up to three quarters among the most regular rail users.

Beyond this, however, the knowledge of members of the public is low. When asked who owns the rolling stock, 37 per cent named Abellio/ScotRail, 17 per cent said rolling stock companies (this figure rose to 27 per cent among regular rail users) and 16 per cent said Network Rail.

Thirty-nine per cent of respondents correctly identified Network Rail as the owner of the country’s railway stations, while 16 per cent cited Transport Scotland and 13 per cent Abellio/ ScotRail (this latter figure can probably be put down to the fact that Abellio/ScotRail manages some stations on Network Rail’s behalf, so confusion among the public is unavoidable and to be expected).

What do passengers think about travelling by train in Scotland?

The section of the survey of which Abellio/ ScotRail and its partners should take most careful note concerns passengers’ attitudes to travelling

Knowledge of train operators “Know a little/ a lot”	Frequency of travel by train			
	Overall %	Use trains weekly %	Use trains monthly %	Use less often %
Network Rail	73	92	82	71
Abellio ScotRail	55	86	75	51
Transport Scotland	65	84	72	63
Virgin Trains	73	86	81	71
Crosscountry Trains	32	53	43	28
Caledonian Sleeper	43	69	45	42
Transpennine Express	23	45	28	20

Base: All (1008)

by train in Scotland. When the frequent rail users takes a train journey, only a third of them don't often expect something to go wrong, while half expect something to disrupt their journey. In line with the survey's findings regarding knowledge of the various players in the industry, when something does go wrong during a journey, only 27 per cent of frequent rail users have a clear idea who is at fault, far below the 45% who do not.

Most damning of all the findings, there is a perception, widely shared, that the network as a whole does not prioritise the needs of passengers. Only 17 per cent of all Scots and only a third of the most frequent rail users believe passengers are prioritised. And when frequent users are asked if they agree with the statement that "trains offer better value for money than other forms of transport", only 35 per cent agree, with 42 per cent disagreeing.

However, among the most regular travellers, there is some better news for the industry: 79 per cent of them believe rail travel is preferable to other forms of transport (although this could be seen as self-evident, given that those who use the service most frequently will naturally believe they are making the best choice).

The table below illustrates the breakdown of attitudes to the rail network in Scotland.

Attitudes to the rail network in Scotland "Strongly Agree/Agree"	Frequency of travel by train			
	Overall %	Use trains weekly %	Use trains monthly %	Use less often %
When I travel by train I often expect things to go wrong	29	49	32	26
When things do go wrong on the railways it is clear to me who is at fault	17	27	20	16
The railway network in Scotland prioritises the needs of passengers	17	35	20	16
Travelling by train is generally preferable to other modes of transport	45	79	65	41
Travelling by train is better value than other forms of transport	16	35	23	15

Base: All (1008)

Who should make decisions about Scotland's railways?

In addition to assessing respondents understanding of who is responsible for the delivery of different aspects of the railway presently, they were also asked who should be responsible.

More than six in ten Scots believe that *all* decisions about the railways in Scotland should be taken by organisations overseen by the Scottish Government, while a further 30 per cent want a combination of UK and Scottish Government oversight. Among the most frequent passengers, 93 per cent want either exclusively Scottish Government oversight (73 per cent) or UK and Scottish Government oversight (21 per cent).

Arguably, the results are unsurprising given the natural preference towards devolution in wider public life in Scotland.

What are passengers priorities for the future?

Respondents were asked to identify what is important to them in the future, having been

previously asked their views on their experiences of using the railway to date.

Twenty nine per cent of Scots say that subsidy for fares should be the number one priority for future investment (the same proportion as those who want more spending on trains as their number one priority and just ahead of spending money to bring the rail network into public ownership). The one notable data variation to highlight is that the most frequent rail users are, unsurprisingly, more likely to prioritise spending on more trains and carriages, with 35% saying that this is their top priority for future investment.

The table below shows the proportion of Scots who rate each of the issues as their top priority and in their top three priorities for future investment.

Priorities for investment in the railways in Scotland	Overall %	% Top three
Spending more on buying more trains or extra carriages	29	72
Spending more on subsidising fares	28	69
Spending more on bringing railways into public ownership	27	50
Spending more on extra staff at stations	6	37
Spending more on upkeep of stations	5	31
Spending more on on-train facilities	3	18

Base: All

| 4 | Recommendations

The survey confirms that the railways in Scotland have both strengths and weaknesses in the minds of those who travel by train regularly and by the wider general public. It also provides a strong steer as to where the focus of service improvements and changes in structure and ownership would most effectively align with public sentiment.

The findings from the research, outlined in the sections above, suggest that the following recommendations should be considered by the railway industry and the politicians charged with making key decisions.

Devolution of decision-making

Broadly speaking, it should not matter too much to industry leaders and politicians if the admittedly complex nature of the railway industry is not particularly familiar to passengers and the wider public. Rail users are naturally more concerned about getting from A to B on time, in comfort and safety and without paying too much. Once those objectives are achieved, the ownership of the infrastructure or carriages becomes a moot point.

The corollary of this is that if politicians wish to engage the public in a debate about the future

of the industry, they need to do so by informing voters about the facts; evidence-based policy-making does not lend itself to simplistic solutions, but ill-informed debate does.

Nevertheless, particularly among the more experienced passenger, there are high levels of understanding, not just about the complexity of the industry, but about who is responsible for delays when they occur, and an awareness that the franchisee is not always to blame. Given the high level of support in Scotland for all decisions about our railways to be taken here by organisations that are accountable to the Scottish Government, it is inevitable that the argument – one supported by Scottish ministers and Transport Scotland – in favour of devolution of Network Rail will continue.

Recommendation: That politicians and rail industry leaders acknowledge passenger and wider public views on this issue and ensure that those views are reflected in future decisions about the structure and ownership of the railways in Scotland

Passenger priorities

Given that one of the most vocal and keenly-expressed criticism of the industry is in the area of fares, it is unsurprising that our research reveals that passengers believe that more should be spent on subsidising travel.

Far more important are passengers' priorities, what they see as essential to their having a satisfying experience aboard a train in Scotland, and this is where industry leaders need to focus their attention. As noted earlier, train companies themselves have only limited discretion when it comes to setting fares, particularly those that are regulated. They can choose whichever price they think is appropriate for non-regulated fares, depending on the price level the market will support such products.

But it will come as little surprise that customers, particularly after nearly a decade of austerity-driven stagnation in wages, set the greatest store by "value for money" when it comes to fares. Scotland's political parties will gain more credit by addressing this area than they will by leading a debate about who should own the trains for which passengers believe they're paying too much.

Punctuality is seen – again, naturally – as almost as important as fares by regular users. Given the level of delays that can be identified as caused by Network Rail and not Abellio/ScotRail, the need to revisit the infrastructure's role and governing structure is exposed by this research.

In the 21st century, it is hardly acceptable that so many passengers have a fatalistic approach to journey delays – if half of passengers expect interruptions to their journey, it encourages cynicism about the service, which in turn makes it harder to engage the public in a positive discussion about the way forward.

As noted previously, the Government (or Scottish Government) sets the policy on fares, both in specifying which fares are considered "regulated" and the amount by which these fares can increase in any year. At a time when there has been a rebalancing in the cost of the railways, away from the general tax-payer to the fare-payer, any aspiration for more public subsidy is one that can only be met through government action, either by legislative direction or by allocating more tax revenue to the railways. At a time when there is

a greater competition than ever among public services for special treatment, the railways would have to take their place in the queue.

The situation could become even more austere were the structure and ownership of the industry to change drastically: current budgets are effectively subsidised already by the premiums that private franchisees pay to the Government.

Recommendation: That future investment decisions to improve the railways in Scotland reflect the strong and consistent priorities of both frequent train users and the public as a whole, particularly in terms of spending on trains/carriages and on subsidising fares.

Public understanding

The research highlights the widespread lack of understanding about the management and operation of the railways in Scotland among the general public and, to a lesser extent, train users.

Only around a quarter (27 per cent) of the most frequent rail travellers are clear on who is to blame when things go wrong on the railways. Further, there is a considerable confusion over most aspects of ownership and responsibility on the rail network, especially in relation to trains/rolling stock, stations and platforms.

While this is unsurprising given the diffuse nature of ownership and responsibility, it presents government and industry with significant challenges, particularly in engaging passengers and the wider public during a period of potentially significant change.

Recommendation: Government and industry should do more to provide clarity on the differing layers of responsibility. This is particularly important for passengers who should be provided with regular information about who they should be contacting in the event of problems arising.

Service improvements

The research provides a clear indication of passenger views about the day to day service they receive on Scotland's rail network.

Half of the most regular train users agree with the statement that they 'often expect things to go wrong' when they travel by train, while only a third disagree. In addition, only a third of the same group agree that the 'railway network prioritises the needs of passengers' while nearly half (45%) disagree.

These findings are reinforced by the detailed feedback on specific elements of the services experienced by passengers. As detailed above, this highlights a disjoint between what services passengers see as the most important to get right, and passenger feedback on performance around the same services.

The concern for the industry is that it performs poorly in aspects of service which are most important to passengers. This adds to the broad sense that the service is, in some respects, out of touch with what passengers want and is not always putting their needs first.

Recommendation: That industry should acknowledge the views of passengers in relation to service priorities and ensure that plans for improving service performance are centred around those views.

A joined-up railway

The challenges Scotland's railways face are largely ones that have materialised as a result of their success in the last 20 years. Demand for services has led to a more congested network, while passengers rightly expect larger (longer) trains that will accommodate the historically high patronage we now take for granted each day. This is a far cry from the dying days of British Rail, when debate about the railways seemed to focus on decline and a fear that the Beeching cuts of the 1960s might have to be repeated.

Today, despite numerous challenges and the almost inevitable cynicism deployed in media

coverage of the railways, 80 per cent of regular users in Scotland rate their most recent journey as "excellent" or "good". That is an achievement we should not take for granted, but it is also one we should celebrate.

Those who provide passenger services are better placed than civil servants or ministers to judge what the most suitable rolling stock is for a particular service. In fact they are better placed to judge what services need to be run and at what frequency. Nevertheless, given the importance of the railways as a public service and the significant contribution they make to Scotland's economy, an entirely privately-run, for-profit system would not meet the demands of passengers in a modern, democratic country. Train Operating Companies often complain about the over-specification by government of franchises and their own consequent lack of flexibility and discretion when it comes to the choice of what services to provide. Yet it would be politically unacceptable to allow the railways to be run on the same model as the unregulated bus industry, where private companies choose which routes to serve and are unaccountable to anyone but their shareholders.

For the sake of economic inclusion and equality, especially in remote communities, there will always be a need to run unprofitable services – this is all the more true in the context of an unregulated bus industry. At the same time it should be accepted and welcomed that where a TOC provides a popular service, and where it has demonstrated that it is committed to the communities and passengers it serves, it should be able to make a profit in return. None of this should be anathema in a modern Scotland.

Whatever the successes of the GB railway model in the last two decades, critics who point to the degree of fragmentation that previous reforms have brought about, specifically the separation of the ownership of infrastructure (track, signalling and stations) and the trains themselves, have identified a genuine weakness that various governments have sought to address (although it might be pointed out that if fragmentation was, by definition, a barrier to the success of any enterprise, then the international air travel industry would have collapsed long ago rather than have gone from strength to strength).

The largest inhibitor of ScotRail's efficiency is publicly-owned Network Rail. With a new chief executive about to take the reins of the UK-wide

company, there remains the possibility that the cautious moves towards decentralisation embarked upon by his predecessors will continue.

However, something more radical than decentralisation is required; while the TOC/ Network Rail alliance model was a welcome innovation, and raised the prospect of much closer co-operation between those who provide passenger services and those who maintain the tracks, it has become clear that the alliance model leaves a great deal to be desired. Network Rail continues to be perceived as a mighty and inertia-riven behemoth, unable (or unwilling) to grasp the need for efficiencies, too beholden to the Department for Transport and its own central management and not nearly responsive enough to the most important people on the network: its customers.

Politically it has to be accepted that UK ministers are reluctant to progress legislative devolution of Network Rail and see such moves not only as undesirable but also unnecessary.

However, legislative devolution is not the only solution to Network Rail and its conservative culture. Managerial devolution could be instituted without the need for legislation: a decision by the executive board that local Network Rail management would take all its directions from, and seek to meet the aims of, the locally dominant TOC (where geographically possible) could see a genuine shift in the effectiveness of Network Rail at a local level, as well as of the passenger (and freight) traffic it is intended to support.

Recommendation: That Network Rail institutes a radical reorganisation of its own structures, allowing local management teams to refocus their efforts by becoming solely accountable to the management of the dominant TOC in their area. This new structure should be piloted in Scotland.

Franchises themselves have been an essential part of the renaissance of the railway industry in GB, applying private sector disciplines, strategies and flexibility to the challenge of attracting and retaining new passengers. But the franchise

system is beginning to lose some of the dynamism that made it a success, evidenced by the sharp and profound reduction in the number of owning companies now competing for available franchises.

The Scottish franchise is a fine example of the pros and cons of the system: while patronage has increased dramatically since 2004, passenger numbers in Scotland have more than doubled. Yet in 2016, it was the franchisee, Abellio, who were forced, by the terms of the franchise, to shoulder the burden of revenue losses that resulted from an extended strike by drivers during the summer. Similar external threats to services – such as modernisation projects like the enhancement of Queen Street station in Glasgow – significantly reduce patronage and serve to undermine ScotRail's ability to generate profit.

The attractiveness of the franchising model to a private transport provider is fundamentally shaped by revenue and loss predictions. Whereas previous performance can be used to make informed guesses about future profit and loss, external events over which the franchisee has little or no control can impact a TOC's balance sheet drastically.

There is another model used in the UK's railway industry. The concession is a management contract, where the government (or awarding body) shoulders all the revenue risk but also reaps the profits. The private company that provides the service on this basis is paid a standard agreed monthly sum. All decisions about service patterns are made by the awarding body, and these decisions impact on the amount of money paid to the contractor to provide those services.

In a concession-based system, there could still be a competition among owning companies for the winning of the contract, although direct award by the Government would be a potentially cheaper and quicker process.

Given the perception (a perception not always in line with reality) that franchises are too frequently failing to fulfil their contracts, there is more support and acceptance in the industry of the benefits of moving to a concession model and away from franchising. This would

retain the experience and discipline of the private sector while acknowledging explicitly that the Government is ultimately responsible for the services a TOC provides.

Recommendation: Ministers should be reluctant to dispense with the proven benefits that private sector involvement in the railway industry has brought passengers. But if change is seen as necessary due to the reduced pool of potential franchise bidders and consequent dearth of choice, and if political considerations mandate more political control over services, they should consider, as a first alternative to the status quo, moving to a concession model in Scotland.

| 5 | Conclusion: Is Scotland on the right track?

Judging by the almost uniform negativity of media coverage of Britain's (and Scotland's) railways, you could be forgiven for believing that our system is broken beyond repair, dysfunctional and over-priced, a cash cow for ruthless privateers and a drain on the resources of the hard-pressed traveller.

You do not have to drill down very far to realise that none of this is true. Naturally, journalists will report on bad news that impacts on those who read their newspapers or who watch their bulletins – that is their job, after all. And when timetable changes cause the kind of commuter misery we saw in England at the end of May 2018, we cannot deny that mistakes and misjudgments by the industry are fair game.

If, from the media's perspective, bad news is good news, then good news is no news. The railways' successes in the last two decades are not only significant – they are also remarkable, given the perception of British Rail in its dying days that here was an industry whose best days were behind it. The opposite has turned out to be the case. Britain's (and Scotland's) railways have never been more popular. There has never been a time when more services were provided or more journeys made. Newer trains are transforming passengers' experience. Our railways are outstripping its continental rivals both in terms of growth and – crucially – safety, forcing them to move towards our model of service provision.

Yet none of this seems to have affected the nature of the political debate around the future of the railways. It's worth noting, in fact, the similarity of the arguments being used today with those used during the debates that took place around the time of privatisation in the mid-1990s, as if time had not moved on and the positive transformation of the industry were merely an inconvenient and unimportant distraction.

None of this is to suggest that the railways are perfect or without problems. The challenges of the future, particularly the perfectly valid demands that delays are reduced, reliability improved, comfort increased and costs contained, need to be addressed in a serious way. The conclusion of this report is that the industry is doing exactly that, striving every day to find new, innovative ways of meeting the demands of the public, passengers, regulators and politicians.

It is too late to make yet another appeal for the railways to be taken out of the political arena. Trains are a political issue: politicians like talking about them, their constituents use and pay for them and when they go wrong, it's our elected representatives who take the heat.

But it is not too late to request that when the railways become the subject of political debate, that dogmatism and ideology be relegated and placed underneath a respect for actual facts.

Appendix: Experience and attitudes towards railways

Topline results

Technical details:

- Results are based on a survey of 1,063 respondents conducted using the ScotPulse online panel.
- Survey invitations were sent on the 15th of May with results analysed on the 18th May 2018.
- Results were weighted to the Scottish population by gender and age.
- Where results do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of “don’t know” categories.
- Results are based on all respondents (1,063) unless otherwise stated.
- * denotes less than 1% answer.

Q1 / Approximately how often, if at all, do you use the following forms of transport?

	Daily %	2-3 times a week %	Weekly %	Monthly %	Less often/ never %
Train for business	3	2	2	7	86
Train for leisure	1	2	6	28	63
Car for business (passenger or driver)	27	10	5	5	53
Car for leisure (passenger or driver)	39	30	15	6	10
Bus for business	7	5	3	6	79
Bus for pleasure	5	11	12	18	55
Cycling	2	3	4	4	86
Motorcycle (passenger or driver)	1	1	0	1	98

Q2 / Thinking about when you travel by train, how important are each of the following to you?

	Essential %	Very important %	Somewhat important %	Not important %
Frequency of trains on the routes you use	36	54	9	2
Punctuality of trains on the routes you use	49	43	7	1
Value for money for the tickets you buy	53	38	9	1
Upkeep and repair of the trains you travel on	49	40	11	1
Helpfulness on the staff on the train	20	44	31	5
Cleanliness of the train	30	50	19	1
Level of crowding on the train	36	44	16	3

Q3 / And thinking about the most recent times you have travelled by train, how would you rate the following aspects of your experience?

	Excellent %	Good %	Not very good %	Poor %	Don't know %
Your experience overall	18	62	13	6	0
Frequency of trains on the routes you use	16	59	17	8	0
Punctuality of trains on the routes you use	17	60	16	7	1
Value for money for the tickets you buy	10	35	36	18	0
Upkeep and repair of the trains you travel on	10	58	20	5	6
Helpfulness on the staff on the train	22	61	8	2	8
Cleanliness of the train	11	63	18	8	0
Level of crowding on the train	13	42	26	18	1

Q4 / There are a number of organisations which are responsible for different aspects of rail travel in Scotland. Looking at the list below, how much, if anything, do you know about each of the following organisations?

	Know a lot %	Know a little %	Heard of but know very little %	Never heard of %
Network Rail	18	56	25	1
Abellio ScotRail	19	37	17	27
Transport Scotland	15	51	30	5
Virgin Trains	19	54	26	1
Crosscountry trains	7	25	33	34
Caledonian Sleeper	8	36	45	12
Transpennine Express	4	19	42	35

Q5 / As far as you know, which organisation owns the following aspects of the railways in Scotland?

	Network rail %	Abellio ScotRail %	Transport Scotland %	Scottish Government %	Rolling stock companies %	Don't know %
The track and other major infrastructure	66	4	7	3	0	19
The trains/rolling stock	16	37	5	2	17	24
The stations	39	13	16	7	0	25
The railway platforms	44	10	15	4	0	27

Q6 / As far as you know, which organisation has responsibility for running the following aspects of the railways in Scotland?

	Network rail %	Abellio ScotRail %	Transport Scotland %	Scottish Government %	Rolling stock companies %	Don't know %
Buying new trains	9	32	9	10	12	29
Regulation of the industry as a whole	7	4	11	52	1	24
Operation of the signalling	59	6	9	1	0	25
Setting of rail fares	7	1	21	48	0	23
Setting of subsidies of rail fares	12	26	16	17	4	25
Provision of catering at stations and on trains	14	30	7	1	6	43
Physical condition of stations and platforms	39	15	14	3	0	29

Q7 / Thinking about the railway network in Scotland, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly disagree %
When I travel by train I often expect things will go wrong	8	21	35	26	10
When things do go wrong on the railways it is clear to me who is at fault	3	14	38	30	16
The railway network in Scotland prioritises the needs of passengers	3	15	42	28	13
Travelling by train is generally preferable to other forms of transport	10	35	30	15	10
Travelling by train is better value than other forms of transport	3	13	29	32	23

Q8 / If there was significant investment in the railways in Scotland over the next few years, what would be your priorities for how that money should be spent. Please select your highest, second highest and third highest priorities from the list below.

	Overall ranking %	Top three %
Spend more on buying more trains or extra carriages	29	72
Spend more on subsidising fares	28	69
Spend more on bringing railways back into public ownership	27	50
Spend more on extra staff at stations and on trains	6	37
Spend more on upkeep of stations	5	31
Spend more on on-train facilities	3	18

Q9 / Currently, some key decisions about the railway network in Scotland are taken by organisations overseen by the Scottish government, while others are taken by organisations overseen by the UK government. Thinking about who should make key decisions on the railway network in Scotland in the future, which of the following statements comes closest to your view.

	%
All decisions about the railway network in Scotland should be taken by organisations overseen by the Scottish government	60
Decisions about the railway network in Scotland should be made by organisations overseen by the Scottish and UK governments, as happens now	30
All decisions about the railway network in Scotland should be taken by organisations overseen by the UK government	10

Unweighted sample profile:

Age	%
Under 35s	17
35-44	16
45-54	27
55-64	27
65+	13
Sex	%
Male	41
Female	59
Location	%
North	23
East Central	32
West Central	45

Presence of children	%
No children	79
With children	21
Social class	%
ABC1	63
C2DE	37
Total	100