

Plans to overhaul the Caledonian Sleeper train

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Plans have been announced to overhaul the Caledonian Sleeper service, which runs between Scotland and London, and turn it into a luxury train.

The Scottish and UK governments have pledged £100 million of investment to the scheme in a bid to broaden the appeal of the overnight service, reports the Scotsman.



Around 27,000 passengers currently use the sleeper each year with the majority of them being businesspeople and politicians wanting to arrive in London early in the morning for a full day of meetings.

It is hoped that by including luxury-class cabins in the renovated train it might also appeal to tourists and other visitors.

Features to expect in these cabins include showers, TVs, Wi-Fi access and gourmet dining options, making the train more of a hotel experience.

For 140 years sleeper trains have run between London, Edinburgh and Glasgow, with demand being such that another overnight train divides at Edinburgh, serving Aberdeen, Fort William and Inverness.

ScotRail runs the current services, which offer basic facilities and have coaches that are up to 40-years-old, but the overhauled Caledonian Sleeper is to be run separately and will be opened up for companies to put in bids.

A spokeswoman from Transport Scotland told the news provider: "The Caledonian Sleeper stands as a unique and cherished service for rail users to and from Scotland. It is more than just a train service, it is part of a holiday, a business office and a hotel which is close to the hearts of passengers.

"We will let a separate 15-year franchise and this, coupled with over £100 million of investment, is intended to give this historic service the 21st-century future it deserves."

Bidders with a potential interest in running the service, which regular users say desperately needs updating, will be asked to confirm their intentions in April.

Transport Scotland will ask them to submit ideas about how it would be run and the ways in which the Caledonian Sleeper would be used to reflect Scotland as a brand, including new livery.

Posted by Nick Anderson

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