



## Scottish Association for Public Transport

# SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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*The Scottish Government has allocated £500 million in its Programme for Government for bus priority measures to improve bus speeds and reliability on urban routes. This should reverse the downward trend in city bus use.*

*An initiative is also needed to attract greater use of rural buses. SAPT suggests that a Bus Integration Grant should be provided by the Scottish Government to encourage bus/ rail/ ferry integration. Bus services that connect with trains or ferries such as the Dunoon-Ardentinny bus (right) would be funded as part of a national integrated network. See section 2.*



### Next Members Meeting:

**Glasgow    Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019 18.00 Mercure Hotel, Ingram St (6<sup>th</sup> Floor)**

**Strategic Transport Projects Review: Priorities for the next two decades**

**Glasgow Connectivity Progress**

**The future of Bus Services including co-ordination**

**Anglo-Scottish developments and HS2**

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# 1

## Strategic Transport Projects: The Next 20 Years

The Scottish Government is conducting a **Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2)** to be published by the end of the year. This will set the priorities for a 20-year investment plan for all Scottish transport, including cross-border routes, over the period 2022 to 2042. STPR2 will update the first Strategic Projects Review (STPR) published in 2008.

A separate consultation on an update to the **National Transport Strategy** is being conducted. **NTS2** will give a higher-level vision for Scotland's transport system, based on four priorities:

- Promotes equality
- Takes climate action
- Helps economic prosperity
- Improves health and wellbeing

The NTS2 consultation is open to all members of SAPT and the general public until 23d October 2019 at [www.transport.gov.scot/NTS2](http://www.transport.gov.scot/NTS2) . *Please respond if you have time.*

The first National Transport Strategy (NTS) was published in 2006 and "refreshed" in 2016. The new National Transport Strategy (NTS2) will define the Scottish Government's transport policy and should have preceded the projects review but with the next Scottish Parliament elections due in 2021, STPR2 is being started now to allow for publication well before the next election.

SAPT committee members John McCormick and Paul Tetlaw were invited to a STPR2 briefing in August involving Transport Scotland and Network Rail focusing on rail issues covering the whole of Scotland. Other regional meetings have been held across Scotland, with SAPT's Tom Hart attending the south-west Scotland meeting. The meetings and consultations are being organised on behalf of Transport Scotland by transport consultancies AECOM and Jacobs.

### Changing Transport Environment

The Programme for Government announced by Nicola Sturgeon on 3<sup>rd</sup> September promises to:

- Phase out new diesel and petrol cars by 2032
- Continue with rail electrification, with rail decarbonised by 2035
- Invest £500 million in bus priority measures and more funding for low emission buses
- Trial of zero emission flights starting in 2021

In putting together SAPT's advice to Transport Scotland, we should draw attention to the increase in environmental pressures since the first STPR in 2008, and other developments that are likely to influence future travel. In particular:

1. The First Minister's Programme for Government based on the climate emergency
2. The adverse health effects of NOx and particulates from transport is now better understood
3. The Scottish Government's commitment to stop the sale of petrol and diesel cars from 2032 will have an unpredictable impact on travel preferences as long-distance journeys by electric cars may be affected by the need to recharge batteries
4. Development of autonomous cars is predicted to increase urban road congestion
5. Car ownership amongst the younger generation is falling
6. Commuting patterns will be affected by the move to more flexible hours and home working

The next page comprises a summary of progress made with the public transport projects in the 2008 STPR, together with suggestions to be considered for the new STPR2.

***The SAPT members meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October is an opportunity to discuss these.***

## Progress with STPR1 Public Transport Projects

STPR1 contained 17 public transport interventions. Some major projects have been completed successfully. For instance the Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme electrifying Edinburgh -Glasgow lines via Falkirk, Cumbernauld and Shotts, Haymarket interchange upgrade, Ayrshire/Inverclyde-Glasgow rail service upgrade and bus Rapid Transit via the Forth road bridge.

Other projects are underway with further phases to be scoped and completed:

1. **Aberdeen-Inverness "A21"** is now (mostly) doubled from Aberdeen to Inverurie. Elgin track has been upgraded. The new station at Forres is open, and Kintore is progressing. Work is planned west of Inverurie to allow an hourly A21 frequency and a new station at Dalcross.
2. **Highland Main Line** platform and loop extensions at Pitlochry and Aviemore are complete, ready for hourly Perth-Inverness trains when HSTs become available. A second phase is needed to provide extra loops or double track sections to improve punctuality. Also journeys are not as quick as promised: cutting Edinburgh-Perth journey times would help (see below).

Other STPR projects that need to be carried over to STPR2 include:

3. **Further electrification of the Strategic Rail Network:** The climate change agenda raises the urgency to complete electrification of the "Inter7City" network, phased with replacement of the ScotRail HSTs which will be fifty years old by 2030. Extending electrification from Dunblane to Perth, linked with Perth track and signalling modernisation, would be the next logical step. The Edinburgh-Perth journey could be reduced to less than an hour, 15 minutes faster than the current time via the Ladybank single line. Further electrification onwards to Inverness would allow all-electric operation from London, Edinburgh and Glasgow.
4. **Rail enhancement between Aberdeen and the Central Belt:** Route modernisation and electrification should follow **electrification of the Fife Circle and Edinburgh-Dundee routes.**
5. **West of Scotland Strategic Rail Enhancements:** The "Connecting Glasgow" report for Glasgow City Council proposed a "Glasgow Metro" and north-south tunnel to resolve capacity shortcomings and link to Glasgow Airport (see Scottish Transport Matters 2019/2). SAPT is engaging with the City Council to discuss the way forward. A priority is electric operation of the East Kilbride line which is facing peak overcrowding.
6. **Rail enhancements in the east of Scotland:** STPR2 needs to find a solution to the rail overcrowding, track and platform bottlenecks and general road congestion in and around Edinburgh. Re-organising rail services to operate more of the suburban trains through Waverley could reduce conflicting movements and pressure on terminating platforms, while at the same time providing improved cross-city travel opportunities. This would need major infrastructure upgrades on the eastern approach to Waverley. One idea would be to restore four tracks through the Calton Tunnels to Portobello, and upgrade and electrify the suburban circle and to Gorebridge and Tweedbank (on the Borders line). This would allow a "Crossrail" service of 8 trains per hour (4 from Morningside via Portobello, and 2 from Gorebridge/2 from Tweedbank) to operate through Waverley and Haymarket, continuing to Glasgow via Shotts and Cumbernauld and to Dunblane. This would give cross-city access to Edinburgh Park and Livingston employment areas and could be co-ordinated with buses to offer fast bus+rail journey times from south and east Edinburgh. Shotts, Cumbernauld, Dunblane and Borders/Morningside via Portobello trains would need only one eastbound and one westbound platform in Waverley and use dedicated tracks to Portobello independent of East Coast trains.
7. **Expansion of Edinburgh Tram:** In addition to the "Edinburgh Crossrail" proposed in 6 above, solutions to the worsening Edinburgh road congestion are likely to include a further extension of the Edinburgh Tram and some form of road pricing and workplace parking charging.
8. **Anglo-Scottish route upgrades:** A new project to expand capacity and cut journey times on both East and West Coast Main lines in Scotland should be included in STPR2. A new line from an expanded Glasgow Central towards Abington, with a link to the Shotts-Edinburgh line at Breich, is being studied. Expanding track capacity on the East Coast Main Line eastwards from Waverley will also be needed to cope with predicted traffic growth (see 6 above).

Projects for inclusion in STPR2, including those above, will be discussed at our meeting on 8/10/19.

## 2

## The Future of Rural Buses

Scottish bus services are in decline. Journeys made by bus **fell by 20%** over the last decade. Bus use in Scotland is falling at double the rate in Britain overall. Urban road congestion and cutbacks in local authority financial support threaten bus frequencies and routes, leaving many communities with poor or non-existent public transport.

First Bus has recently made proposals to cut services in Aberdeen. The operator has proposed alterations to 11 services, including the removal of two routes.

The £500 Million funding announced by the First Minister in September 2019 to improve bus infrastructure should be a major boost for urban bus punctuality and journey times.

But rural bus routes will continue to be particularly vulnerable. Typical of recent rural cutbacks, in Lochaber bus frequency from Kinlochleven to Fort William has recently been halved from hourly to every two hours. The *Press and Journal* (19/6/2019) also reports threatened cutbacks by the Western Isles Council. *“Islanders have expressed outrage as Lewis and Harris public bus services face severe cuts under council plans. Residents warn drastic proposals to provide only a skeleton service will greatly harm the local economy, affect employment opportunities, threaten fragile rural areas and lead to depopulation”*.

This in turn worsens rural depopulation as young people who depend more on public transport have to move to urban areas.

On current trends there will be no rural buses running in Scotland by 2060.

Evidence from European countries shows more people will use a properly funded integrated public transport network, where bus, train and ferry timetables are co-ordinated to give more frequent, faster and more reliable connections and tickets are valid for through journeys using bus and train. For instance in Switzerland the rural postbus service which connects with the national rail network saw a **17% increase** over 5 years.

The Scottish Association for Public Transport is proposing a radically new approach to revive rural bus services in Scotland based on a successful continental model.

A strategic bus network of rural routes would be supported by restructuring the £300 million annual public funding for the bus industry to introduce a **Bus Integration Grant** of £52 million, currently paid as the Bus Service Operators Grant, to be focused on co-ordinated interlink bus services connecting communities into a national bus, rail and ferry integrated network.

Five consistent qualities would be specified for these InterLink bus routes throughout Scotland:

- Regular departures throughout the day including a regular Sunday timetable
- Reliable connections with national rail and ferry networks, monitored by a control system
- Real-time timetable information displays at main bus stops
- New low or zero emission vehicles assisted through an enlarged Scottish Green Bus Fund
- Fares and ticketing systems compatible with other **InterLink**, Scotrail and ferry routes

An example evaluated by SAPT on the Newton Stewart-Girvan route shows that Interlinking local buses with rail could cut longer distance journey times by one third, making public transport more competitive with car travel. This will boost passenger numbers, improve connectivity, reduce social isolation in rural areas, and safeguard the future of rural buses.

The SAPT proposals have been sent to the Confederation for Passenger Transport (CPT) for comment. CPT's initial response is not against the principle of greater transport integration, but questions the funding mechanism suggested by SAPT. CPT point out that restricting the Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) to “Interlink” bus routes could undermine the viability of other services which currently operate commercially. SAPT have asked for a meeting with CPT to discuss alternative funding mechanisms, including allocation of ticket revenue for combined bus/train tickets, that could improve the prospects for more transport integration.

Since SAPT organised the “FastTrack North” conference in Glasgow in 2005, we have continued to champion the benefits of a High Speed Rail route linking Scotland with Northern England, the Midlands and London. SAPT serves on Transport Scotland’s High Speed Rail Stakeholder Group.

The UK government has now initiated a review of HS2 chaired by Douglas Oakervee. This is understandable given the escalating costs and lengthened timescale revealed in the chairman of HS2 Ltd’s “Stocktake” published in August.

The projected timescale for Phase 1 and 2a (London-Birmingham-Crewe) has now been extended from 2026 to December 2030. The cost of Phase 1 is now projected to increase from £27.6 billion to £38.4 billion.

Phase 2b extending HS2 northwards to Manchester and Leeds is being modified to integrate with “Northern Powerhouse” aspirations and has now been put back from a 2033 opening date to “between 2035 and 2040”. The overall funding for both phases is now put at £72 to £78 billion.

The escalating costs and lengthening timescale for Europe’s largest infrastructure project is a poor reflection on HS2 Ltd. Some of the decisions taken at the beginning of the project were highly questionable. HS2 Ltd opted for higher top speeds of 400 kph (250 mph) against a maximum of 300 kph for French TGVs. This necessitates expensive slab track, larger tunnels, and straighter alignments, all adding to construction costs, and increases wind and rolling resistance and hence operating costs for the trains. The huge interchange station at Old Oak Common and the lengthy tunnels to reach London Euston have added to the cost, particularly compared with the French approach where existing lines into city stations were upgraded and expanded, avoiding the high cost of building a new railway in tunnel.

In this situation, it is not surprising that the Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has ordered an enquiry. His statement to the House of Commons however is not entirely negative, recognising that the long-term benefits of HS2 may have been underestimated as well as the costs.

Development work is being allowed to continue, including progress on the hybrid Bill for Phase 2a to Crewe, pending the results of the review.

The review will be chaired by Douglas Oakervee, former chair of Crossrail and HS2. Lord Berkeley, a constant critic of the project, is deputy chair. The nine members of the review panel are mostly based in the south of England, with the exception of the Mayor of the West Midlands, the Chair of Transport for the North, and a Dudley councillor. There are no members from Scotland.

SAPT is writing to Douglas Oakervee reminding him of the environmental benefits of HS2:

- Reduced domestic flights. Aviation is the fastest growing source of CO<sub>2</sub>
- HS2 will relieve pressure on existing routes leaving capacity for more rail freight, cutting the number of HGVs.

In the light of both the Prime Minister and First Minister stressing the threat posed by climate change, this is not the time to scrap Europe’s biggest electrically powered transport project that will cut greenhouse gas emissions from aviation and lorries. Hopefully the Oakervee review will instead make recommendations that can cut the cost of the project without losing the benefits.

**AVIATION**

Massive plans for a 50% major expansion of Heathrow (including a third runway) have hit hard opposition in the Guardian and Times (LTT775 21June p22) A £75m expansion of Edinburgh Airport has been completed facilitating growth to 20m passengers. Edinburgh airport owners (New York based GIP) are considering a sale of Edinburgh Airport following 7 years of ownership. A profit of £1bn on the purchase price of £807m may arise. The Scottish Government is seeking a quick sale of loss-making Prestwick Airport (H18Jun)

Due to low use, Hainan Airlines is likely to suspend their direct Beijing-Edinburgh route this autumn.

Loganair has introduced a London Southend- Stornoway route (including a 30 minute stop in Glasgow). Southend Airport has a direct 53 minute rail link to London Liverpool St (H2Apr). BA has announced a rise from 171 to 182 weekly winter flights from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen to London Heathrow (H27Jun)

Ryanair has cut Edinburgh-Stansted flights to 4 a week due to aircraft availability problems after the grounding of Boeing 737 Max new planes following two international flight crashes.

Air traffic controller strikes at H&I airports disrupted flights in late July.

**FERRIES**

Public complaints continue at the decreasing reliability of CalMac ferries, delays, pier deficiencies, cost overruns on new orders and the failure to examine a strategy adopting smaller but more frequent ferries requiring less costly construction and pier redesign (H12, 17 & 24June). A £31n investment in Brodick pier has attracted strong complaints since docking is now more difficult in the easterly winds now more common than in past years (H13 June). Argyll and Bute Council is seeking government help to maintain the Council ferries serving Jura, Luing, Easdale and Lismore. Shetland & Orkney had already received £10m of extra support for island ferries

Expansion of whisky, gin and tourist traffic is placing Islay services under severe strain H14June. £10,000 of funding is being sought for repairs to the MV Glenachulish on the short crossing from Glenelg to Skye

Stornoway has received its largest ever cruise ship, the 935ft long Zuiderdam with 2000 passengers (H23 May). Work has ended on a £2.4m investment in TS Queen Mary which has returned to a Clydeside location at Glasgow Science Centre.

Lifeline dual fuel new ferries for the CalMac Ardrossan-Arran and Uig-Western Isles routes have been delayed at least a further year after disputes over rising costs and Fergusons shipyard being placed in receivership. New ferries for shorter routes will operate on combinations of diesel and battery power(H30May).

HIE has granted £3m to a second phase of Scrabster Harbour upgrade, giving deeper water for cruise ships and offshore energy supply vessels(H2Aug)

In a landmark legal case Court of Session has rejected appeal by Pentland Ferries regarding potential discrimination if lower fares and charges were introduced on Northlink franchised routes to Orkney and Shetland. This decision should allow the delayed lower charges on Orkney/Shetland services under the new £370m eight year contract. Court decided that this contract would not introduce 'undue market distortion' (H24July).

**TRAM**

Due to Edinburgh trams now being charged for infrastructure costs, a former annual surplus of £1.6m has changed to a £9.4m loss (EN19Jun). Edinburgh Tram chief awarded a 33% pay rise.

Longer-term plans for Edinburgh include further proposals for tram extensions linked with business developments and plans for extra housing. A court ruling has found that poor design of cycle/tram crossings in Princes St had contributed to a serious cycling accident (H29Jun) in Leith St.

## BUS

Scottish Citylink has improved frequency between the principal cities with easy interchange between services at Perth or Dundee. Stirling will have an enhanced hourly service to Glasgow via Cumbernauld (H21May). Lothian country bus has opened a travel hub in Livingston and a new X17 service (H21 May) from Edinburgh to Fauldhouse via Livingston. First is planning direct competition with Lothian Buses in the Edinburgh tour market (EN23May). With a Lothian Buses subsidiary developing subsidy-free bus services in West Lothian, First Bus is considering wider competition with Lothian Buses within Edinburgh.

Apart from Lothian Buses, bus companies have been criticised for a low take up of grants to cut emissions despite substantial profit margins (S17Apr).

Bus drivers are to be balloted for strike action after claims of bullying culture in Lothian Buses management with a potential strike during the Edinburgh Festival in August (EN17 May) Relationships between bus workers, Lothian Buses manager and city councillors have deteriorated

The new Edinburgh 100 seat Lothian Buses have come under criticism for lack of buggy-space and poor alignment of the new centre doors (with kerbs unraised and clashes with street furniture) but buggy problems could be eased if buggies were folded down (EN 23/24 & 29Apr, 4 & 8May)

Lothian Buses usage, operating costs and income is being hit harder by rising delays from congestion and the extra costs of meeting bus emission standards. Bus trips had fallen from 121.1m to 119.2m after a long period of rising usage. Less affected by congestion and with improved frequency, annual Edinburgh tram trips are up from 6.6m to 7.3m. Action to ensure bus usage rises on main corridors may include road congestion charging as well as potential increase in parking charges, including workplace charging (EN4 Jun) Edinburgh based tour coach firms are claiming 'unfair competition' from Lothian Buses tour operations due to their easier access to capital. Rising numbers of large tourist buses are being seen as spoiling Edinburgh's environment – especially the Royal Mile where more space for walking and cycling is needed (EN3 Jun) First Bus launched a new fleet of open-top Edinburgh tourism double deck buses as the end of June operating under the 'Bright Bus Tours' brand. 24 hour day fares will cost £10 compared to the Lothian bus tour charge of £26 (EN29June)

In the 'bus wars' between First and Lothian Buses, First has extended its new 600 Livingston to Edinburgh Airport route to start from Whitburn with frequency raised from hourly to half-hourly. – an extra stop also added to serve the Ingliston park and ride and tram interchange. First will start a new 400 service from Fort Kinnaird via south Edinburgh to the Airport in July (EN12Jun)

R Walter has published a book on 'Lothian Buses – 100 years and beyond'. This looks at city buses since the first city-owned route opened in 1919 – Amberley Books £14.99(EN28jun).

Despite provision of a more new buses, First Bus services in Glasgow still fall below ridership targets.

The No 15 route operated by Glasgow CityBus (a subsidiary of West Coast Motors) running through parts of Milngavie and Bearsden further from the main bus routes but also running on to Glasgow city centre was withdrawn and was replaced by an SPT funded service by McGills truncated to a low frequency between Milngavie, Bearsden and Anniesland serving areas but running only in the daytime off-peak period. After protests, Citybus have re-instated the service but have stressed that increased usage is required for the route to be successful.

## RAIL

SAPT welcomes the announcement by Transport Minister Michael Matheson that the **Levenmouth** branch is to be re-opened. The £70 million project will see passenger trains on the Fife Circle extended via Thornton to Cameron Bridge and Levenmouth on 5 miles of the former Methil branch. Passenger trains to Leven ceased in 1969. The last passenger train on the Methil branch was the "Methil Special" organised by ScotRail for the SAPT AGM on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1992, attended by former ScotRail bosses Chris Green and Cyril Bleasdale. SAPT will be supporting moves to co-ordinate buses from the East Neuk of Fife to the new station. This will spread the benefits of the rail re-opening via good bus links to Crail, Anstruther, Pittenween and Elie.

Work is continuing with both the Far North and West Highland Line Review Groups. SAPT chair John McCormick is a member of the WHL Review Group through the Friends of the West Highland Lines. The groups, organised by Transport Scotland, are tasked with formulating development strategies for the lines. Timetable and infrastructure improvements, marketing, and rolling stock plans are high on the agenda.

A new “West Coast Partnership” of First Group and Trenitalia will run West Coast Anglo-Scottish train services from December until 2031. This will see the end of Virgin Trains. The Virgin Voyager diesel trains will be replaced by new bi-mode trains, ending the lengthy diesel-powered WCML journeys on electrified routes, though CrossCountry will continue to run Voyagers.

Britain faces the first major rail strike in 20 years in an RMT bid to ensure no undermining of pensions arrangements (H 29 Jun).

Trips using season tickets continue to fall due to changing work patterns. Abellio accused of ‘hellish’ performance since 2015 (S22Apr)

Rail passenger trips in Britain were 3% up to a record 1.76bn in 2018/19, aided by some easing of rolling stock supply and reliability issues. May timetable saw the Glasgow-Edinburgh via Shotts line electrified and 20,000 more seats added to ScotRail services bringing total of extra seats provided since 2015 to 115,000. Reliability is now closer to 2015 levels and will be aided by further electric train deliveries allowing redeployment of diesel trains to Fife and Border services, extra drivers and track/ signalling adjustments. Driver pay is rising from £47,180 to £51,500 (EN25Apr). ScotRail also urged to give automatic compensation to passengers experiencing train delays.

Train usage has fallen in north-east Scotland, partly due to depression in the oil industry and the impact of completed Aberdeen Peripheral road. More trains on Perth-Inverness line may in future require to be increased from 4 to 5 coaches due to rising usage of Inter-city services. A new campaign is promoting usage of the Perth-Inverness line as part of sustainable tourism (H15May)

Extra rolling stock and availability of more drivers has returned Fife rail services to 93.3% punctuality (H24Jun)

Delays and overcrowding on Borders Rail services continue to be a major issue but significant improvement is expected by 2020. Scottish Government is examining possible electrification of the Edinburgh-Tweedbank route (H18 Jun)

Dunbar residents complain of a less than hourly rail service, poorer in the evenings, compared to other stations in Lothians and Fife which have half-hourly or better services all through the day.

A £4m upgrade of Kilwinning station will be completed this autumn, including a covered bridge connecting the four platforms with both stairs and lifts for access

Overhead line power problems led to closure of Queen St Low Level services on 27/28 June and reduced services on Argyle Line tunnel (H28 June).

The new (current) Prime Minister Boris Johnson has ordered a review of HS2 plans, now expected to top £100bn but has announced priority for a new line from Manchester to Leeds (LTT778 2Aug p4)

Article and photos highly commend emerging redesign of Queen St station due to be completed late this year (H1Aug). Further complaint from Gordon Caseley on Scotland’s second-class rail service (H1Aug)

Network Rail’s Scottish Budget has been boosted by £500m, of which £160m will be spent on easing delays arising from soaring temperatures, heavy rainfall and fallen leaves. Trees and vegetation close to overhead wires and track are to be cut back more frequently with other work on drainage to help stabilise embankments (H22July)

Network Rail is seeking recovery of costs incurred when Ayr station was disrupted by the adjacent but deteriorating former Ayr Station hotel (H31July)

Caledonian Sleeper staff say working conditions are appalling and threaten strike action. Network Rail executives in Scotland may have salaries slashed after delays on rail maintenance and other line faults reached a five-year high. ORR says it now takes an average of 1 hour 41 minutes to deal with infrastructure issues such as signal faults – nearly half an hour longer than in 2014(H25July)

A feature by Marianne Taylor is highly critical of ScotRail services on the West Highland Line. A much more ambitious improvement plan for improving the line was needed backed by the Scottish Government and drawing on continental experience (H29July ). Heavy rain, washing away track formation between Arrochar and Tyndrum lead to closure of this section of the West Highland for several weeks at the height of the tourist season. Replacement buses filled the gap (H7Aug)

The Jacobite steam train Fort William-Mallaig trip has been named ‘the best in Britain’ (H19July)

After a long history, the final section of the St Rollox locomotive building and repair centre has closed due to completion of train maintenance programmes. Scotland has a rising number of new trains in service needing less maintenance but why had none of these trains been built in Scotland? (H29July)