



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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Faster journeys between Scottish cities are recommended in SAPT's "Railway Race to the North" report, outlined in Section 1.

One possibility for reducing journey times would be tilting trains to Aberdeen and Inverness, as in this photo on the West Coast Main Line, courtesy of Bombardier.

Bidders for the new ScotRail franchise, due to start in 2015, will have an opportunity to propose initiatives for Scottish InterCity routes as well as for the urban and rural routes covered by the franchise.



A SAPT Members Meeting will be held in **Glasgow on Monday October 28th 2013.**

18.30 – 20.30 in the Glasgow Mercure Hotel (formerly Ingram Hotel, in Ingram Street).

An update on the latest transport developments will be given:

- 1. Latest news on Scottish electrification programme**
- 2. HS2 Route to Scotland, and Terminal Options in Glasgow and Edinburgh**
- 3. Scottish Bus Bill draft proposals and SAPT response**
- 4. Ferry developments**

All SAPT members are welcome to attend.

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New Railway Race to the North

Fast rail links between neighbouring cities are an essential feature of developed economies. In Scotland, rail links need to be upgraded to keep pace with the high level of Scottish road spending. Road schemes including the M8 completion, the £3 billion A9 dualling, and A96 improvements will generate increased car traffic and reduce rail's market share unless train travel also improves. The 3-car Class 170 Turbostars currently used by ScotRail are limited both in capacity and engine power to maintain principal intercity services into the future.

The ScotRail franchise starting in 2015 is an opportunity to transform Scottish intercity journey times and travel experience. The successful franchise bidder will be committed to provide a new electric train fleet for the **Edinburgh-Glasgow-Stirling/Dunblane/Alloa** electrification projects, cutting Edinburgh-Glasgow journey times from 50 minutes to 42 minutes by 2018.

But there are no committed journey time improvements to cities north of the Central Belt. **The booming economies of Aberdeen and Inverness justify better rail links. This paper discusses how this might be achieved. ScotRail franchise bidders should join the new "Railway Race to the North"**

Bidders should be required to devise a service improvement strategy for rail services linking **Aberdeen, Dundee, Inverness, Perth and the Central Belt**. The target should be journey times and quality much better than by road, with 20% faster rail journey times than now.

Comparing current road and rail journey times (table below) shows the Edinburgh-Glasgow journey by rail is faster than by road. But Glasgow/Edinburgh-Inverness and Edinburgh-Perth trains are slower than road travel. On the other routes, trains have no speed advantage.

To:	<i>Intercity Road and Rail Journey Times</i>				
	<i>From Edinburgh</i>		<i>From Glasgow</i>		
	By road	by rail	By road	by rail	
Glasgow	64 mins	50 mins*			*42 mins from 2018
Perth	57 mins	1 hr 17 mins	1 hr 7 mins	1 hr 2 mins	
Dundee	1hr 17 mins	1 hr 13 mins	1 hr 29 mins	1 hr 22 mins	
Aberdeen	2 hr 26 mins	2 hr 27 mins	2 hr 39 mins	2 hr 38 mins	
Inverness	2 hr 55 mins	3 hr 26 mins	3 hr 2 mins	3 hr 14 mins	

Road times from RAC route planner (Transport Scotland quote faster road times on some routes)

Rail times are typical journey times for direct trains.

Intercity rail journey speeds north from Edinburgh compare badly with rail speeds around London. For instance, the Edinburgh-Aberdeen time of 2 hours 27 minutes for 130 miles is an average speed of **53 mph**. The Edinburgh-Inverness rail journey of 3 hours 26 minutes for 175 miles is an average of **51 mph**, compared with an average from London to Birmingham of **84 mph**, or **77 mph** from London to Sheffield.

Population and topography in Scotland differ from England, but, nevertheless, ScotRail franchise bidders should be invited to develop strategies for much faster Intercity journeys.

Rail Speed Potential

Central Belt: From 2018, electric trains with faster acceleration will cut journey times between Edinburgh, Glasgow and Stirling. The High Speed Edinburgh-Glasgow Line, planned as part of HS2, will support even faster 140 mph speed cutting journeys to 30 minutes.

North: Electrification to Aberdeen and Inverness is unlikely to be complete within the next ScotRail franchise. A more immediate strategy is needed if journey time is to be cut soon.

Journey times on the curvy East Coast line to Aberdeen, and the steeply graded Highland Main Line to Inverness, could be improved by:

1. *Omitting some intermediate stops.*

This is not acceptable unless additional train services are provided to maintain service frequency to important intermediate stops such as Stonehaven and Montrose

2. *Replacement diesel trains with faster acceleration and higher performance on gradients.*

No new diesel trains are likely to be built in the foreseeable future. But electrification will displace existing diesel trains with superior performance, including some Class 185 Trans-Pennine units, Voyager Class 221 trains (West Coast), and Meridian Class 222 (Midland MainLine). Locomotive-hauled trains, as on the Chiltern line, are also possible.

3. *Tilt operation to increase speed on curves (as used on the West Coast Main Line).*

This could save time in Fife, between Dundee and Aberdeen, and on the Highland Main Line. Speeds up to 20% higher can be maintained on curves by tilting trains, for instance Voyager Class 221 trains. An overall 20% cut in journey time, if achievable through faster acceleration and higher speed, would cut the best **Edinburgh-Aberdeen** journeys from **2 hours 20 mins to less than 2 hours**, and **Edinburgh-Inverness to 2 hours 40 minutes**.

4. *New sections of high speed track to bypass speed bottlenecks.* The Strategic Transport Projects Review confirmed that a new railway from Inverkeithing to Perth would save 25 minutes, but costs were estimated to outweigh benefits. This should be reconsidered.

A shorter section of new line from **Inverkeithing to Halbeath**, together with an upgrade of the line through Cowdenbeath to Thornton, could reduce Edinburgh-Inverness and Edinburgh-Aberdeen journey times. Trains take 18.5 minutes for 17 miles from Thornton to Inverkeithing. A straighter route via Halbeath supporting 90 mph average speed would cut 7 minutes from the journey from Edinburgh to both Aberdeen and Inverness. Transport Scotland and Network Rail should evaluate this scheme for CP6 (2019-2024).

Intercity Strategy Recommendation

The new ScotRail franchise in 2015 is an opportunity to introduce a step change in speed and comfort on trains linking Scotland's cities. Tilt technology, as used on the West Coast Main Line, would allow higher speeds on the curvy routes linking Inverness, Aberdeen, Dundee and Perth with the Central Belt. Together with high performance trains and infrastructure upgrades, journey times could be cut by up to 20%, with Aberdeen less than 2 hours and Inverness only 2 hours 40 minutes from Edinburgh, with similar improvements to Glasgow.

Electrification schemes in England, including the Midland and Great Western Main Lines, will release many modern diesel trains which in turn could allow tilt-enabled "Voyager" trains to be cascaded from the West Coast Main Line to ScotRail Intercity routes.

Full refurbishment of these trains, including more comfortable seats, better catering, and wifi would give Scotland highly competitive Intercity trains which would make lengthy car journeys unnecessary. Rail use would be further boosted through better business class accommodation, and competitive fares to attract leisure travellers.

In the longer term, the Scottish Intercity network should be fully electrified, with tilting electric trains.

Transport Scotland and ScotRail franchise bidders should negotiate with the Department for Transport as soon as possible to agree a UK train cascade programme that fully includes the economic importance of good Scottish intercity rail links.

Infrastructure upgrades, including support for tilt technology and strengthening of bridges for higher speeds, could also be included in the new ScotRail franchise package, partly funded through increased revenue attracted by faster journeys.

This article was released to the Scottish press in September and got extensive coverage in the Herald, and the Scotsman website. It has also been sent to Transport Scotland and RTPs.

Labour MSP Iain Gray issued proposals for a draft Bus Bill in May 2013. SAPT has long campaigned for improvements to the bus legislative framework (see for instance “Scottish Transport Matters” 2013/1) and, in our response to the consultation, generally welcomed the proposals.

The aim of the proposed Bill (as laid out in the consultative draft) is “to give transport authorities greater control over bus services in their area by enabling authorities to regulate how they are delivered. Using these powers, transport authorities would be able to:

- ‘Bundle’ profitable and non-profitable routes and franchise them as a package
- Set a minimum level of service within the franchise, agreed with the operator
- Use local authority fleets to provide socially useful services where there are gaps in provision

The Bill will also include new powers for the Traffic Commissioner to impose financial penalties on operators who do not meet the terms of franchises, and transport authorities will also be able to seek redress for the cost of retendering routes where operators have walked away from franchise agreements.”

However, Stagecoach reacted strongly to these proposals. Stagecoach West Scotland’s Managing Director said that re-regulating the bus industry would set services back 30 years, eroding the freedom to operate commercial bus services. Stagecoach Chief Executive Martin Griffiths was reported in the Scotsman as saying that there is no need for drastic change in the structure and regulation of the bus industry, and that the proposed Bus Bill ignores the economic reality of operating bus services. Mr Griffiths pointed to the model used by the London bus network, the same he says Mr Gray is advocating for Scotland. In 1999-2000, London buses cost taxpayers £44 million, before mushrooming by nearly 1,500 per cent to £690m in 2009-10.

Initiated by an Opposition MSP, Iain Gray’s proposed Bill has little chance of progress. But there is no doubt that, despite Stagecoach’s views, there are problems with the existing framework. Local authority financial cutbacks are leading to rundown of uneconomic but socially needed bus services in several parts of Scotland. There are few reliable connections between local bus services and trains. And provision of information is very patchy.

Poor bus timetable information can have a severe impact on passengers. On a recent visit to Skye, I encountered two elderly tourists from South Africa who had been waiting at a bus stop for ninety minutes for the Armadale-Broadford service provided by Stagecoach. It transpired that the timetable information displayed at the bus stop (which had been printed in 2012) bore no similarity to the actual current summer 2013 timetable. The Stagecoach bus arrived on time, but this was little comfort for the passengers who had been misled by out-of-date timetable information provided by the local authority.

There are a number of issues that are important to public transport users, including:

- Dwindling, or non-existent, bus frequencies on many non-commercial rural and evening routes
- Rising fares for those who do not benefit from concessionary travel
- Poor or inaccurate timetable and service information in some local authority areas
- Lack of co-ordination between trains and local buses, limiting overall public transport travel options

Given the substantial profits made on commercial bus routes by operators such as Citylink, and the pressure on local authority finance, and on the concessionary travel scheme caused by increasing numbers of eligible people, there is clearly a need for a review of the bus framework.

Our Association will seek the views of the main bus operators on these issues.

Transport Scotland issued the Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the Caledonian Sleeper services in August 2013. The franchise is to start in April 2015 and run for 15 years. Bids have to be received by December 2013, with bid evaluation and award expected by mid 2014. Three companies are responding: First Group, Arriva and Serco.

Up to £50 million is being offered by Transport Scotland for a substantial improvement in the quality of sleeper accommodation. Caledonian Sleeper Services currently use loco-hauled stock, employing Class 67 (diesel) and Class 90 (electric) locomotives leased from DB Schenker. For sleeping accommodation, Porterbrook Leasing supplies 53 Mk3 Sleeper coaches, which are 30 years old. The Lowland Sleeper consists of 16 coaches, with one 8-car section for Glasgow and one for Edinburgh. The Highland Sleeper also consists of two identical 8-coach sections, one for Inverness, and one for Aberdeen (which contains a sub-section of 2 sleeping cars for Fort William). Forty two stations in Scotland have a direct link by sleeper with London. The ITT specifies that all existing stations should continue to be served.

In a joint submission with *Friends of the West Highland Lines*, five recommendations have been sent to Transport Scotland and the bidders:

1. Revamp of sleeper coaches to provide a wider range of accommodation and pricing options
One and two berth cabins with en-suite toilets could be available for exclusive booking.
A new category of four-berth “couchette” cabins for shared use would be for budget travel.
Reclining seats could continue to be available. Currently there are 34 seats per 8-car section.
2. Expanding leisure travel including round-trip and short stay breaks
The West Highland and Highland sleepers have marketable international tourism potential.
3. Development of connections to and from the continent via Eurostar and DB from St.Pancras
An overnight travel market could be developed for people who prefer trains to low cost flights.
4. Major improvements to the booking system
Thetrainline and other websites are not good at handling the greater complexity of sleeper booking
Virgin’s website does not show any visibility of the overnight train options.
5. Changes to the operation to suit the travel market and improve connections within Scotland.
The current operation involving identical 16-coach trains for the Highland and Lowland sleepers could be changed to provide a more tourist-orientated formation for the Highland train.

The ITT specifies changes to the operation of the West Highland portion of the sleeper. This will in future have a connection for Oban at Crianlarich, and will be routed via Glasgow (Queen Street or Central Low Level). This train (seen at Rannoch, right) has considerable tourism potential for development of short breaks, or round trips linked with the Highland train.



News Around Scotland

By Tom Hart

Rail

Fears of a one year closure of Glasgow Queen St High Level as part of the EGIP programme have been denied by Transport Scotland and Network Rail. Any closures will be of much shorter duration but with details still not available.

Coal traffic by rail continues to be hit by reduced coal demand, closure of many opencast sites in Scotland and prospects of higher track access charges. Despite recession, container traffic remains more buoyant. For the first time in 30 years, Speyside distilleries are working together to reintroduce 'whisky trains' from Speyside to the Scottish Central Belt. It is estimated that each rail trip will save 29 lorry trips on the A9.

By extending some London-Birmingham Pendolinos through to Edinburgh (replacing Birmingham-Edinburgh Voyagers) Virgin is to increase through Euston to Edinburgh trains from 1 to 6 in December.

The new Borders railway is expected to cut car trips by at least 500,000 a year. It will also boost tourism with First Minister Alex Salmond confirming that the line design includes full capability for longer tourist charter trains and steam working. It is already stimulating increased interest in new housing, especially on that part of the route closer to Edinburgh.

Letters to the press have called for more 'exciting' and better quality trains on Scotland's great tourist routes together with plans for selective tree-cutting to improve views being blocked by tree growth.

The former Mull narrow-gauge tourist railway has been bought and may relocate to Oban.

The Scottish Government has been attacked for re-selling land purchased for the Glasgow Airport Rail Link at far below the original purchase price. This is seen as premature pending decisions on improving public transport access to Glasgow Airport later this year. These will come after publication of a delayed report on options including a rail link. Critics have asked for early publication of the draft report on options. Supporters of an airport rail link also argue that this could be associated with low-cost plans to restore passenger services on the existing cross-Glasgow rail link from Shields Road to Bellgrove. However, others have pointed out that passengers from the airport and the south-west will have excellent links into improved Glasgow Central to Edinburgh services. They see an airport service running to Glasgow Central as the better option. Over time, some services might use the cross-Glasgow link.

ScotRail has reduced anomalies where some travel is cheaper if tickets are bought between intermediate points rather than as through tickets. This has not stopped demands for further reforms with clearer links between improved services and rises in some fares. Multi-modal zonal fares with discounts for pre-purchase have increasing attraction in and around cities.

Due to pressure on bandwidth, wifi will not be available for users watching videos or other heavy bandwidth material on rail trips. This decision came after more than 130,000 users logged on the ScotRail wifi in August. Telnet has won the NR contract to replace radio infrastructure on the West Highland and Far North lines.

Metal thieves caused major disruption on Aberdeen-Inverness line after three cable thefts within a week

ScotRail has provided the largest expansion yet in services during the Edinburgh Festival. Record numbers travelled by train for the Golf Open at Muirfield. 25,000 used the train to reach the event, a 33% rise on the last major Muirfield event in 2002. Final access was by bus from Drem station.

Gleneagles station is to be refurbished for the Ryder Cup in 2014. £11m renovation of Dalmarnock station for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games will be completed later this year.

NR is planning the addition of £12m viewing platforms to the Forth Rail Bridge for the 125th anniversary in 2015. Costs should be recoverable from charges. The original Perth-Inverness line has celebrated 150 years since opening in 1863. March was the 50th anniversary of the Beeching Report on Rail Reshaping

Bus, Tram, Subway and Taxi

Emergency tunnel repairs disrupted services for three days on the Glasgow Subway in June. A new ticketing system compatible with ScotRail ticketing is being introduced while, in Edinburgh, a new company *Transport for Edinburgh* will oversee ticketing on Edinburgh trams and buses. Edinburgh passengers over 60 or disabled will be able to use the trams free but with Edinburgh City Council responsible for compensating the operating company. Previous efforts to get the Scottish Government to accept this responsibility have failed. Longer Sunday opening hours have been requested on the Glasgow Subway.

Edinburgh trams are likely to be in operation over the full route from the Airport to York Place no later than May 2014 with trial running on the whole route by December 2013. Trams will have £1.50 single trip flat fares apart from a £4.50 fare for Airport travel and £2.50 from Ingliston park and ride. Day tickets at £3.50 will be introduced for bus and tram use along with longer-period tickets.

Tram fares from the Airport will be higher than the £3.50 fare on continuing airport bus services also operated by Lothian Buses and with a shorter trip time into the city. But the tram is seen as having comfort and reliability advantages compared to bus use. Times from the Airport to York Place will be 33 minutes but less to other stops between Haymarket and St Andrew's Square – making times comparable to bus times and better than bus at peak periods when there is greater road traffic congestion.

As part of plans to improve city centre amenity, there is a possibility of tram frequencies every 5 minutes on the inner section of route, associated with bus feeder and car parking provision. SNP MSP Marco Biagi has called for faster action to remove high emission buses from central Edinburgh. In the longer term, there are suggestions that south-east sector trams could extend as far as Dalkeith.

Access to Edinburgh Royal Bioquarter has been improved by a new 200 metre link road to the north-east reserved for buses, taxis and emergency vehicles.

A new Citylink air-coach service has been introduced from Edinburgh Airport to Glasgow Buchanan Bus Station. Journey time is 1 hour with a half-hourly frequency at peaks. Stagecoach has introduced a new Citylink Gold service four times a day from Edinburgh to Aberdeen. The service includes free wifi and calls at Ferrytoll, Kinross and Broxden park+ride centres as well as Dundee. Stagecoach has also launched overnight sleeper coaches from central Scotland, Fife and Edinburgh to London with prices ranging from £15 to £60. This follows a successful pilot service between Glasgow and London.

First Scotland East has improved coach services between Stirling and Edinburgh, re-introducing the popular Bluebird designation.

£2m has been added to the Green Bus Fund which helps bus companies buy more environmentally friendly vehicles. Take-up in Edinburgh has been good but there are concerns at a lack of take-up in Glasgow which could have been valuable as part of Commonwealth Games Transport Plans for 100% access by public transport or active modes. Many details of the Plan have still to be agreed though it is now less than ten months to the Games.

Lothian Buses has introduced a new 28 summer bus route, running every 20 minutes, to the Visitor Centre at the West Gate of the Botanic Gardens

Taxi drivers are opposing Edinburgh City Council plans to raise late night fares, fearing friction between drivers and customers. Glasgow City Council has already introduced such fares. Edinburgh taxi fares are low compared to many other cities but comparisons are difficult due to considerable variation in the fares which can be charged at different times of the day and night.

Partly due to a rise in cycling deaths and serious injuries plus some high profile fatalities and lenient court decisions, the media has given much greater coverage to cycling issues in both the UK and Scotland. Cycle deaths and serious injuries in Scotland rose 7% to 898 in 2012. The London example as a pro-cycling city has been held up as an example to follow. There is also evidence of wider public awareness of the health and financial benefits of cycling and walking not only for leisure but as part of daily travel. Cycling successes at the 2012 Olympics added to this impetus.

AVIATION

After years of decline since 2008, there are signs of reviving growth in overseas air travel and also in domestic travel. Attracted by the lower prices of spacious houses in Scotland, 'super-commuters' have been relocating residences from London to the Central Scotland Belt. Airlines continue to press for the devolution of air passenger duty as a means of increasing incentives to fly to and from Scotland from overseas centres, aiding both business and tourism.

Inverness has welcomed the EasyJet decision to provide extra Inverness-Gatwick flights to replace those lost by the withdrawal of Flybe links. The Scottish Government has announced a grant to assist repairs to the storm-damaged Shetland Sumburgh runway

CityJet has withdrawn its Edinburgh-London City service but Edinburgh has rising traffic overall. £25m is to be spent on an extension to the terminal building, allowing speedier bag and security checks. Dreamliner flights to China and other long-distance centres are seen as an important component in developing airport traffic. Air Canada has introduced direct flights from Edinburgh to Toronto, while Lufthansa flights from Frankfurt will become a year-round service.

Icelandair is to raise transatlantic flights from Glasgow via Reykjavik from 4 to 5 per week from April 2014. Jet2 has already expanded European tourist flights from Glasgow. Aer Arann is to expand flights on its Aer Lingus franchise for services from Dublin to Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow, aided by funding from Stobart Logistics .

SHIPPING and FERRIES

A need for major ship repairs disrupted Scrabster-Stromness services for almost two weeks in May. Two hybrid diesel/electric ferries for CalMac short crossings have been launched. One will be used on the Portavadie-Tarbert route. Two new and more economical ferries have been launched for the Western Ferries Gourock (McInroys Point) to Dunoon (Hunters Quay) route. They will also increase capacity and frequencies will be able to rise to 12 sailings per hour at peak times.

The value of the cruise industry for the Scottish economy is projected to rise to £50 million in 2013, a 65% rise on 2010 with 400,000 passengers expected at ports right round Scotland. Aberdeen has been added to cruise ship calls with 12 visits due over 2013. The former Cockenzie Power Station site is being considered as a cruise ship hub provided that plans for a new gas powered electricity plant are dropped

A £3m appeal has been launched to allow the paddle steamer Maid of the Loch to return to service on Loch Lomond.

An enlarged yacht marina is planned at Inverness. The existing 150 berth facility opened in 2008 is at 90% capacity.

Transport Scotland has announced a limited re-introduction of the Lochboisdale-Mallaig ferry crossing. This will operate two days per week during the winter, for an experimental three year period, and will be maintained by the "Lord of the Isles", which is the only Calmac large ferry capable of docking reliably in the constricted Mallaig Harbour. The crossing will take less than four hours, compared with seven hours for the current longer route from Lochboisdale to Oban via Castlebay.

In an attempt to improve the reliability of the Gourock-Dunoon passenger ferry service, the CalMac car ferry Coruisk is to be used during the winter, replacing the small passenger boat Ali Cat which is widely regarded as unsuitable for the route. Cars will not, however, be conveyed on the Coruisk, preserving the monopoly enjoyed by Western Ferries on the Cowal link. Preserving this monopoly is to avoid claims by Western Ferries of unfair competition.