



## Scottish Association for Public Transport

# SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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### Edinburgh Gateway Opens

The £41m Edinburgh Gateway station opened on 11<sup>th</sup> December. The two train platforms (left) are long enough for 10-car trains. Trains from Edinburgh to Dundee, Perth/Inverness, Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline call at Edinburgh Gateway, giving four services per hour each way. Aberdeen trains don't stop. South Gyle now gets two services per hour instead of four.

The tram takes 7 minutes from Gateway station to the airport. The tram also provides a link for train commuters from Fife to the Edinburgh Park business development. Integrated train/tram tickets are available.



It is hoped that the proposed rail link to Glasgow Airport will now make progress.



*Season's Greetings to all our members.*

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SAPT has produced a draft paper “Changing Buses” with some suggestions to attract greater use of buses. This covered a number of topics including:

- Funding
- Road congestion
- Rural Transport Co-ordination
- Urban Transport Co-ordination
- Transport and Land Use Planning in urban areas

These were discussed at two SAPT members meetings in Aberdeen (30<sup>th</sup> September) and Glasgow (25<sup>th</sup> October), also attended in Aberdeen by William Mainus (Commercial Manager Stagecoach North Scotland) and in Glasgow by Fraser Smith (Commercial Director Stagecoach West Scotland)

One issue that was raised was the effect of roadworks on the **reliability of bus services**. It was suggested that the Road Works Commissioner should give special attention to bus services when approving road works on specific routes. Stagecoach agreed that some routes present special difficulties and that spare buses often need to be provided to compensate for the effects of delays due to roadworks etc. The situation is likely to get worse as the effect of many years of neglect become evident. It was suggested that utility companies (water, gas, electricity etc.) need to be subject to penalties when work over-runs.

Funding for the **concession scheme** was also discussed. As passenger numbers under the scheme are falling overall, the total costs to the Scottish government were not rising at present and it might well be that the scheme can continue without change. It was felt unlikely that any change in eligibility (e.g 65 or 66 instead of 60 years) was likely, for political reasons.

Problems associated with **excessive boarding times** due to the present ticketing systems were discussed. Smart cards/smart phone systems are seen by operators as being an important step while contactless card systems, such as those introduced in Manchester, might be a useful longer-term development.

The provision of more **modern fuel-efficient buses** with reduced emissions was another topic that was discussed. Stagecoach hybrid vehicles may be suitable for use within cities but are not suitable for use outside built-up areas as currently available hybrid buses cannot travel at speeds above about 40 mph.

SAPT committee members had a subsequent meeting with CPT (Confederation of Passenger Transport) in Glasgow on 14<sup>th</sup> December. A further range of issues discussed included bus stop timetable information, inter-availability of travel smartcards, tourism initiatives to encourage the use of rural buses, bus lanes and quality partnerships, and connections between buses, trains and ferries.

The SAPT “Changing Buses” paper is being updated in the light of these constructive discussions, and will be presented at a meeting with the Scottish Transport Minister scheduled for early February 2017. The next “Scottish Transport Matters” will cover the outcome.

*One example of good transport co-ordination is the Arran ferry from Brodick to Ardrossan. At Ardrossan Harbour, trains link Glasgow with the ferry terminal.*

*On Arran, the well-used buses, which are operated by Stagecoach, connect all villages on the island with the ferry at Brodick. SPT have recently bought a fleet of eight Wrightbus Streetlite hybrid buses to be operated by Stagecoach (pictured right), though these had some teething problems on the hilly island roads, and with lack of luggage space.*



## 2

## Ferry Connections

The SAPT October meeting in Glasgow was also attended by Finlay McRae and Neil Paisley of CalMac. One of the topics discussed was **the need for improved links between ferries and connecting trains or buses**. It was pointed out by CalMac that there are always going to be times when connections do not work out. In response, it was suggested there should be contingency plans to deal with abnormal situations. CalMac reported that they are having success with the policies adopted by some local port managers and steps would be taken to spread good practice. Some other recent developments have led to improvements.

One example quoted concerns Ullapool where the Traffic Commissioner has ruled that connecting buses (which also serve other communities between Ullapool and Inverness) can now wait up to 30 minutes for delayed ferries. Generally, bus services in Scotland are required to operate within a period from one minute early to five minutes late. Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems now coming into use should improve the situation for passengers joining delayed bus services at intermediate points en route. Ports where difficulties arise quite frequently are Mallaig and Oban. The Stagecoach representative pointed out that problems do not only affect connecting services on the mainland: island bus services have problems because there may not be drivers available for additional services when a ferry is seriously delayed. Another topic discussed was the need for **improved signage** at ferry ports. Better use should be made of symbols rather than using signs involving words.

Some **RET issues** were discussed, especially the fact that the current tariffs put foot passengers at some disadvantage compared with those with vehicles. CalMac suggested that the vehicle situation would eventually be self-limiting because the infrastructure on some islands would be unable to cope with the increasing amount of traffic from ferries. This involved commercial vehicles as well as cars, due in part to the growth of purchases over the internet and subsequent deliveries by van. These changes in the supply chain for west coast communities are likely to become more marked in future and traffic by ferry is likely to level off eventually, whatever is done in future in terms of ship provision.

## 3 New Anglo-Scottish TransPennine Expresses

*TransPennine Express* is now six months into a plan to transform its business into the inter-city of the north, explained its MD, Leo Goodwin, in a stakeholder conference in Edinburgh on 9<sup>th</sup> December attended by SAPT Committee Member David Giles. Over the next seven years it will oversee an investment of more than £500 million focussed on transforming rail services across the North of England and Scotland. Capacity on its connections between the largest cities in the North and Scotland will increase by 59% by 2019. Currently around 1 in 3 journeys between Scotland and Northern England is by rail. TPE believes that more services, increased capacity and improved rolling stock will enable it to abstract traffic from road and air.

Some improvements to the Manchester - Glasgow/Edinburgh service will take place during 2017 (a new Manchester – Glasgow service in May and a return to running mainly through Bolton in December) but the biggest changes come with the December 2018 timetable. This will bring a substantial increase in the number of services from Manchester Airport to Edinburgh and Glasgow together with the introduction of three new services from Liverpool to Glasgow



From early 2019 these services will be provided by twelve newly built 125mph five-carriage EMUs from CAF in Spain. These provide 40% more capacity than the current Class 350 EMUs with a total of 264 seats in standard class and 22 in first class.

In December 2019 the existing Liverpool – Newcastle service will be extended to Edinburgh. These services will be provided by newly built 125mph five-carriage bi-mode units from Hitachi. These will provide 318 seats in standard class and 24 in first class.

The higher speed of these units makes an important contribution to fitting them onto the already overcrowded east and west coast main lines. According to Leo Goodwin two 125mph trains use less capacity than one 100mph train. Both units will have real time passenger information systems in every carriage capable of displaying live connectional information.

ScotRail developments were outlined at a HITRANS conference in Inverness on December 12<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The **radio electronic token block signalling system** (RETB) on the West Highland, Far North and Kyle lines has been replaced at a cost of £18m with modern, more reliable equipment. OFCOM reallocated the radio frequency band used by RETB for use by digital TV, so the RETB radio bearer network had to be replaced using an alternative frequency. The opportunity was taken to replace the outdated base stations and signaller terminals at Banavie and Inverness, and the equipment on all RETB-fitted ScotRail, West Coast and freight trains. New masts have been installed at Connel, and at Corroul where hydro-generated power is now available. There are no plans to implement the full ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System) on these lines in the foreseeable future, so the new RETB equipment is expected to last until at least 2030.

**Train performance:** Phil Verster, ScotRail Abellio/Network Rail Alliance managing director, has introduced a sequence of performance meetings at fixed regular times every day, with the first one at 06.00, to discuss operational problems of the day. These are held at three main operational centres. The objective is to improve performance, which is already 2.4% better than the UK average. He has also set up a team to look at the time taken by trains to enter and leave passing loops on single track lines, with a view to improving journey times. On the Far North line, a loop between Inverness and Dingwall would relieve congestion on section, but this is unlikely in CP6 (2019-2024).

**Reliability of Class 158s** is being improved through a programme of upgrades described by Derek Glasgow of ScotRail. Doors and seals have been replaced, radiators redesigned to reduce engine overheating, and new toilets with more reliable piping are being installed.

**Fergus Ewing**, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Connectivity, confirmed that the target best rail journey time for Inverness-Glasgow/Edinburgh journeys is 2 hours 45 minutes, with a 3-hour average. The Scottish Government has agreed to fund 60% of the cost of a station at Dalcross. There is also to be a team set up to review performance and long term investment in the Far North line (a similar team for the West Highland lines would be useful). It is expected that Scrabster harbour will become more important as oil fields are developed west of Shetland.

**Aberdeen to Inverness (A2I):** Graeme Stewart and Colin McDonald of Network Rail, followed by Scott Prentice of ScotRail, described A2I and HML developments. By 2019 there will be a half-hourly aggregate frequency between Inverurie and Aberdeen, with double track restored. This has been made difficult as, since the line was singled, the track has been realigned. Relaying double track will involve lifting the existing single line, which will disrupt train services and require some blockades.

HSTs will operate a two-hourly Aberdeen-Inverness service. Inverness-Elgin will have an aggregate hourly frequency with extra peak trains. Forres station is being rebuilt on a new alignment. Elgin track and signalling will be upgraded to improve efficiency. Phase 2, upgrading the central section from Insch to Elgin, will allow an hourly Aberdeen-Inverness service, but design and funding have not yet been agreed.

**Highland Main Line (HML):** The faster performance of HSTs will make it easier to achieve the target hourly frequency between Inverness and Perth, with a 10 minute journey time reduction. Trains will cross at Aviemore and Pitlochry passing loops, and on the double track Dalwhinnie-Blair Atholl and Stanley-Perth sections. Work on upgrading Aviemore and Pitlochry loops will start in October 2017 and be complete by March 2019. There will be 14 trains per day, compared with 10 now. Intermediate stations will get a basic service. South of Perth, Inverness-Glasgow trains will call only at Stirling, while Edinburgh trains will call only at Kirkcaldy.

HSTs are expected to enter service by 2019. There will be 17x 5-car and 9x 4-car HSTs. Refurbishment will replace doors and seats (better aligned with windows) and introduce a new distinctive livery.

**Caledonian Sleeper** progress was outlined by managing director Peter Strachan. Sleeper traffic increased by 3% in 2015/16 and is 4% up this year so far, reversing the decline of previous years. New trains are under construction in Spain. These will provide the same overall capacity as now. Some cabins will have a shower/toilet. Luxury cabins will have a double bed. Adjusting the timetable to provide a connection to Oban is being considered. In the longer term, an Oban portion could be investigated. There has been a suggestion of a new Thurso-Inverness-Edinburgh sleeper train, but this would require funding.

The Scottish Government's **Rail Infrastructure Strategy Consultation** was outlined by Frazer Henderson, of Transport Scotland. This consultation, which will affect future rail investment, is discussed below.

**Frank Roach** of Hitrans is investigating an alternative approach to providing train services on the Kyle line which would allow road traffic to share part of the rail alignment between Attadale and Strome Ferry. This could turn the railway into a tramway for a short part of the route, shared with road vehicles where the present road alignment is subject to landslides and rock falls. Vivarail Class 230 ex-London Transport "D-trains" might be considered.

An **Inverness** station upgrade is being planned. There would be a new façade, and Station Square could be vehicle-free, subject to planning permission (though the Royal Highland Hotel has access rights). Land ownership problems preclude a direct link between railway and bus stations. There is a £9 million development fund for Inverness, Aberdeen, Stirling, Perth and Motherwell stations.

**Community Rail Partnerships** have been established for Highland Main Line (Dunkeld-Carrbridge) and West Highland Line (Criannlarich-Mallaig). Activities were described by Sally Spaven and Hege Hernaes.

## 5 Rail Infrastructure Strategy Consultation

Now that Network Rail debt is under Treasury control, future Scottish rail schemes will compete for government funding with the NHS, education, roads etc, rather than being funded through Network Rail borrowing. Priorities will be for investment that generates economic growth or promotes social inclusion. Rail schemes to succeed must tackle inequality, improve competitiveness, and integrate services, creating seamless links to other modes.

Up until the end of Control Period 5 (2019), infrastructure investment will continue to be funded through the 5 yearly control period mechanism where the government issues a High Level Output Statement (HLOS) and statement of funds available (SOFA), with the ORR confirming if funds should be sufficient for Network Rail to deliver the outputs requested by government. This mechanism has the advantage that upgrade projects can progress over a 5-year period. The extensive Central Belt electrification schemes (Edinburgh-Glasgow via Falkirk, Shotts and Cumbernauld, and Alloa/ Dunblane) as well as A2I and HML upgrades (above), are being delivered through this mechanism.

Unfortunately, most of these schemes are now predicted to cost more than budgeted:

<i>(source: Major Projects Review, EY, October 2016)</i>	Budget (£m)	Predicted cost (£m)
Glasgow-Falkirk-Edinburgh electrification	659	795
Holytown-Shotts-Midcalder electrification	80	160
Larbert-Stirling-Dunblane/Alloa electrification	105	160
A2I including Aberdeen-Inverurie doubling	170	330
HML upgrades: passing loop and platform extensions	117	65

Some of the overspend may be because projects are included in the 5-year programme before costs have been fully identified. In future, Transport Scotland (TS) are proposing a "pipeline" approach to projects. TS will only commit to an enhancement project "when the business case is clear and both price and affordability are certain." Four categories of investment are envisaged:

1. Projects carried over from CP5 to be completed in CP6
2. Enhancement projects that are essential to maintain a safe, high performing railway
3. Enhancements to support social and economic objectives, including new routes and stations
4. Projects to increase capacity on cross-border routes, future-proofed for HS2

TS will consider retaining ring-fenced funds, eg the Scottish stations fund and level crossing closure fund

The consultation asks for views on taking a more flexible approach to projects, whether ring-fenced funds should continue, and how alternative funding sources, eg developer taxation, could be attracted. The consultation closes on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

The initial reaction to the TS consultation is that, while it is essential to avoid major overspends and projects widely missing completion dates, there is a danger that scrapping the current 5-year funding periods could return to the pre-privatisation situation of short term "stop go" funding linked to annual government budgeting. If progress with upgrading the rail network is to keep pace with traffic growth, a 5-year government rail budget is essential. Individual projects from the "pipeline" could be given the go-ahead for a share of this budget once costs have been accurately assessed. Without such a ring-fenced rail budget, Scottish rail investment and competitiveness could revert to the stagnation of the 1980s.

**AVIATION**

Ryanair is planning an extra 3,500 jobs in 2017 but will 'pivot' jobs away from UK airports after Brexit vote (H5Oct). It is now expected that UK government will permit an additional Heathrow runway with Scottish Government and business interests agreeing that would be the most favourable decision for the Scottish economy – improving world connectivity. The Scottish Government also wishes to see more direct flights from Scotland. Edinburgh Airport (linked with Gatwick) continues to support expansion at Gatwick. Herald editorial has called for stronger use of evidence-based policy. 'Political parties of all stripes have a disappointing record on evidence-based policy' (H19 Aug)

Edinburgh Airport is facing opposition to revised plans for amended flight paths aiding a rise in airport capacity and is also working on plans for improved passenger facilities within the airport following strong growth in usage. Edinburgh Airport expects to have direct flights from China within five years if APD is halved. RAC has complained at high parking charges at Edinburgh and Aberdeen Airports. At Edinburgh anger has been sparked by a new £5 charge to allow passengers to jump passport queues when arriving from outside Britain.

Emirates is planning to introduce 517 seat Airbus 380 planes on its route from Dubai to Glasgow, launched 12 years ago (S12Aug). Glasgow has received its first flight from South Korea. Ryanair has announced five extra routes from Edinburgh in 2017, including Porto and Vigo.

Prestwick Airport received a further £21m from the Scottish Government in the year to March 2016 but Audit Scotland has confirmed that this is likely to show a return higher than the current rate of interest charged to the government-owned airport. Plans including further investment in UK spaceport development but with Argyll and Bute Council also making a case for Machrihanish. North Ronaldsay, with 70 inhabitants, has a new air terminal costing £275,000 serving both islanders and a growing number of tourists. The beach airport on Barra has celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Edinburgh Airport reports a seventh consecutive month in October when passengers were over 1m. October usage was 1.3m passengers - international traffic up 23.6% to 676k but domestic down 0.9% to 453k. November's figure of 860k was an 8.3% rise on the previous year. The Airport has launched a consultation on a Masterplan for development to 2040. 13.1m annual passengers are expected by 2020. October passengers at Glasgow totalled 884k with international travellers up 8.3% to 502k and domestic up 2.4% to 83k. Glasgow's November figure of 666k was 7.7% above last November. Aberdeen Airport use in October fell 9.7% to 272k, and 4.1% in November.

The Scottish Conservative Party has decided to support scrapping the standard rate of Air Passenger Duty for long haul flights ("Band B" over 2000 miles), but maintaining APD for short haul flights ("Band A", less than 2000 miles). **This was the SAPT recommendation to the government's APD consultation** (see "Scottish Transport Matters" 2016/3). Given that the SNP government has no overall majority and needs support from other parties, this makes it more likely that this policy will be adopted. Scrapping APD on short-haul flights would, it was estimated, have badly affected Anglo-Scottish rail traffic, with a 30% fall in rail passengers predicted. It would also undermine the case for Anglo-Scottish HS2 services

**Trams**

The Edinburgh Tram Inquiry has already cost £3.7m and is under pressure to show how, and when, it will produce results of value for future-decision-taking. Peak frequency on the Edinburgh tram route was increased to every 5 minutes on 25 July. In Glasgow, SPT closure of the Subway as part of the modernisation programme took two weeks longer than the four weeks anticipated but Alastair Dalton of the Scotsman finds the scheme for automated operation with new trains exciting though still five years from completion (S19Aug).

Despite completion of the tram route to the Airport, Lothian Transport operates separate airport tram and express bus services with significant sections of common route. Some 8 per cent of journeys to and from the terminal were by tram at the beginning of the year, compared to around 25 per cent by bus. This is happening since lack of regulation means that if Lothian Transport reduces the airport bus service, another bus operator could step in and prevent a substantial rise in usage and income on a tram route in which £millions of public money has been invested. This adds to bus congestion and pollution in Princes Street.

## FERRIES & SHIPPING

Shortage of capacity over a busier summer season encouraged by RET and aggravated by technical issues on ships has led to widespread complaints about CalMac ferry links to Mull, Skye, Islay, Jura and Arran. Car passengers to Mull are up 40% since RET was introduced.

A technical failure preventing MV Hebrides slowing down on the approach to Lochmaddy, causing £100,000 of damage to harbour pontoons plus damage to the ferry.

D MacBrayne annual losses doubled to £4.6m and government support rose from £109m a year to £132m. CalMac ferry passengers are up 2% to 5m and vehicles up 9% to 1.2m - aided by the extension of RET

Consultants Peter Brett find that Foula, with just 38 inhabitants, is facing sustainability issues due to the cost of maintaining present restricted ferry and air services. Improved connectivity may be vital for the island's future (H4Oct).

The Scottish Government has announced that fares on ferries to the Northern Isles will again be frozen in 2017 but Liberal Democrats claim a failure to deliver on promises of lower fares. Adoption of RET would actually increase prices on the longer routes to the Northern Isles.

P&O has attracted over 50% of former passengers on its Troon-Larne service to its Cairnryan-Larne services, giving a large improvement in its combined routes to Larne which had been loss-making. Many people still liked the convenience of taking their car with them rather than opting for air travel. Facilities offered on Cairnryan-Larne crossings had also been improved.

Argyll & Bute Council has started a two-phase plan to make Oban more attractive for cruises and yacht visitors. Scottish Canals, hosting a World Canals Conference in Inverness, has underlined the rising importance of canal tourism and associated walking and cycling. The Kelpies had already provided a further boost for visits to the Forth and Clyde and Union Canals. But heavy summer rain had forced some short closures of the Crinan Canal due to the need to remove excess water.

The inward shipping of wind turbine components for south-west Scotland has given Ayr Harbour its busiest week in 25 years. Pinstripe, writing in H22Aug, has called for an action programme to make the upper Clyde more attractive and introduce fast passenger ferries from the Clyde at Central Station as far as Bute and Arran or even further to Tarbert and Campbeltown

Preliminary funding has been gained to start restoration of the Queen Mary II which is now moored at the Glasgow Science Centre close to its old rival the paddle steamer Waverley. £2m is needed to restore the ship as an interactive exhibition and arts and culture centre on the Clyde.

There has been considerable controversy over the mainland terminal for the Arran ferry. ABP (associated British Ports) has offered to invest over £8m in its port at Troon if the Ayrshire terminal for the Brodick ferry moved from Ardrossan to Troon in South Ayrshire. Berthing at Troon can be more reliable than the more exposed Ardrossan in south-westerly winds. This proposal has been met with opposition from ferry users and North Ayrshire Council. The crossing from Brodick to Troon would take 12 minutes longer, meaning schedules and costs would be increased, and fares set by the RET distance-based formula would be higher. Instead of train connections direct to and from Ardrossan Harbour station, ferry passengers would need to make their way from Troon Harbour the considerable distance to Troon station to catch a train, or take a shuttle bus. SAPT Chairman John McCormick has written to the Herald arguing for retention of Ardrossan. Peel Ports, owner of Ardrossan Harbour, are now working on a competing multi-million pound investment in the dredge pocket, linkspans, harbour walls, bollards, gantries, fenders and signage at Ardrossan.

There is concern that vehicle fares on the Corran Ferry could be increased by 10% by Highland Council, meaning fares will have risen by 40% in the last three years. The vehicle fare for the very short crossing to Ardgour is £8.20.

## RAIL

Chris Grayling, the new Transport Minister, has confirmed that construction of Phase 1 of HS2 will start in 2017 with details of further extensions beyond the West Midlands to be announced in March 2017. There has been increased criticism in England and also by Malcolm Reed, former Transport Scotland Chief Executive, of the balance between spending on high-speed rail and on other upgrades of the national rail network plus increased spend within city regions with devolved powers.

This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of the **Inter-city 125 High Speed Train**. Some of these trains are due to cascade to ScotRail inter-city services from 2018 while the first **Hitachi 800 IEP** sets have arrived to replace trains on the East Coast and Great Western lines (GWR trains will all now be bi mode).

**Abellio ScotRail** has come under increased criticism for a failing performance including reduced reliability and severe overcrowding on some services. Scottish Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf, has set requirements for an improved performance with the option of a full review of the franchise in 2020. Part of the weakened performance is due to the Scottish Government's delay in allowing new and additional train sets to be ordered but there have also been problems with the performance of the engines on some diesel trains. Nevertheless, passenger satisfaction remains at the high end of British levels.

Staff shortages plus rolling stock and line problems have also affected the **West Highland and Far North lines** with train cancellations a cause of particular annoyance due to infrequent services and difficulties in arranging alternatives. Deteriorating service quality has affected patronage on the Far North line. This line could again be under threat but H editorial (26Sept) calls for Highlands to have a first-class rail service including the Far North Line and also, in southern Scotland, an extended Borders line. Chris Harvie, former SNP MSP and SAPT President, has called for innovative approaches to Scottish rail revival led by tourism and tapping into the growing number of cruise ships visiting Scottish ports (H9Sept)

Conditions in the Central Belt were worsened by the lengthy dispute with RMT on extending driver control of train doors to all the planned extensions of Central Belt electrification. The dispute was ended by what was seen as a 'fudge' giving drivers the power to open doors but conductor guards retaining the powers to close doors and oversee passenger safety (H20Sept). No major safety issues have arisen from the driver door control already used for 30 years in West Central Scotland.

The **Borders Rail link** has celebrated over 1m passengers in its first year of operation but this has been clouded by attacks on planning the scheme in ways leading to poor reliability and overcrowding, problems caused by the lengthy single-track sections, and delays in improving the single lead junction with the East Coast main line at Portobello. A café and toilets are to be added at Tweedbank. The Borders Rail Newsletter suggests that a restored rail link from Edinburgh to Peebles and extended along the Tweed to Galashiels and Berwick might offer better value than extension from Hawick to Carlisle.

## BUS

Bus (and lorry) costs are set to rise due to plans for Low Emission Zones in Edinburgh by 2020 and other pressures to reduce the use of diesel engines on busy city streets. Use of hybrid or zero emission vehicles is rising but costs remain greater than for diesel vehicles. The bus industry has countered these trends by calling for action to reduce congestion affecting bus schedules and usage in Scotland's larger cities (H15Sept). Other helpful measures could include smartcards shortening bus loading times, and car parking policies.

Gavin Booth, Director of Bus Users Scotland, has called for radical action to help bus users by ensuring major cuts in the delays experienced due to congestion affecting many urban services. 8 out of 10 bus trips in Scotland are still run commercially but, without action, bus users face further cuts in both commercial and supported services as further cuts are applied to funding (S16Sept).

Ralph Roberts of McGills Buses has argued that improvement to local buses would be better value than the £millions involved in alternative ideas for tramtrain, monorail and riverbus services to Glasgow Airport.

First West Lothian has introduced 19 new double-deckers on the Bathgate-Livingston-Edinburgh corridor. Other investment is planned in hybrid and electric buses. Lothian Buses has introduced EastCoastbuses branding for services from Edinburgh West End and Sempole St through to North Berwick and to Haddington plus additional timetabled school services. Lothian Buses has also launched a new student discount card while, in the west, McGills has a new system allowing parents to purchase cards for school children accessed via mobile phones rather than paper tickets. Prentice Coaches has introduced a service from Haddington to Fort Kinnaird Retail Park in Edinburgh. This replaces a service formerly operated by First and providing a direct link from Haddington to Musselburgh.