



## Scottish Association for Public Transport

# SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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### SAPT 2019 AGM

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at Perth Library**

- 10.30 Coffee/tea**
- 11.00 Introduction Stewart Stevenson MSP**
- 11.10 Guest Speaker Tom Harris**  
Former MP and Minister in the Department for Transport, Tom Harris is the author of “Is Scotland on the Right Track?”, an independent report on Scotland’s railways. Tom has been appointed to the influential UK Rail Review Panel by Westminster Transport Secretary Chris Grayling. Tom will give us an insight into current transport issues
- 12.00 Powering Future Transport**  
David Murray-Smith, Emeritus Professor of Electronics & Electrical Engineering, University of Glasgow. Moving from oil to low carbon energy for transport raises issues of power generation and distribution particularly for road vehicles. David compares electric power, battery, hydrogen, super-capacitor etc and discusses the implications for the national grid, rail electrification, and domestic power supplies.
- 12.45 AGM Business Meeting (SAPT members only)**
- 13.00 Close**



*Season's Greetings to all our readers.*

The Glasgow Connectivity Commission was established in November 2017 by Councillor Susan Aitken, Leader of Glasgow City Council, as an independent body with a remit to rethink the city centre as a destination for business, retail and leisure. The Commission, chaired by Professor David Begg, has been investigating how to provide Glasgow with a transport network which contributes to a stronger economy, a healthier environment and social equity.

SAPT chairman John McCormick gave evidence to the commissioners on 30/10/18 covering the need to optimise Glasgow bus routes to reduce delays and congestion, and the potential to expand the rail system into a *ClydeMetro* network introducing light rail on some routes, with the possibility of on-street operation.

The Commission released the first of two reports on 29<sup>th</sup> November at an event attended by Tom Hart and John McCormick. This covered proposals falling within the jurisdiction of Glasgow City Council, including land use, roads and bus policy. The second report, which is expected before Easter 2019, will consider Glasgow connectivity at the regional and national level including trunk road and rail developments and airport access.

The report points out that bus journeys in Strathclyde and south-west Scotland have fallen from 223M in 2006 to 162M in 2016 (a 27% drop). The commission judges that this crisis is caused by an ageing bus fleet, slower journeys due to road congestion, and high ticket prices. Frequency of services is declining, and the network has shrunk. The £40 million Fastlink route, one of the few recent major investments, is “woefully under-utilised”.

The Commission has considered regulation but this is not regarded as a guaranteed panacea. A fresh partnership approach between the City Council and bus operators should be given a chance. The Commission has set a target of 25% increase in bus journeys in Glasgow over the next five years. If bus operators underperform against this target, the Commission recommends that the powers in the new Scottish Transport Bill should be deployed to regulate the bus network. This is likely to involve some form of franchising.

SAPT has suggested that bus routes should be reviewed to reduce the number of buses crossing the city centre. Some bus routes could terminate at city centre interchanges, as in the days of Glasgow Corporation when, for instance, some buses from the south of the city terminated at St.Enoch which was convenient for the city centre and also provided an interchange with the Glasgow Subway. This approach would avoid delays from crossing the city centre and would also improve the environment by reducing vehicle traffic and emissions in city streets. The Commission’s report agrees with this approach.

The recommendations in the Commission’s first report are realistic and should be achievable. We look forward to the second report due in early 2019.



*First Glasgow has announced investment in 75 new ultra-low emission buses to raise the quality of travel in Glasgow, and also improve air quality. The Glasgow Connectivity Commission recommends a rapid roll-out of bus priority measures and better enforcement of bus lanes to accelerate bus journeys. Multi-operator cheap day saver tickets are also proposed, though this will depend on co-operation between bus companies.*



*The Commission supports Glasgow City Council’s development of “avenues” in the city centre, banning on-street parking, and giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists with less space for cars.*

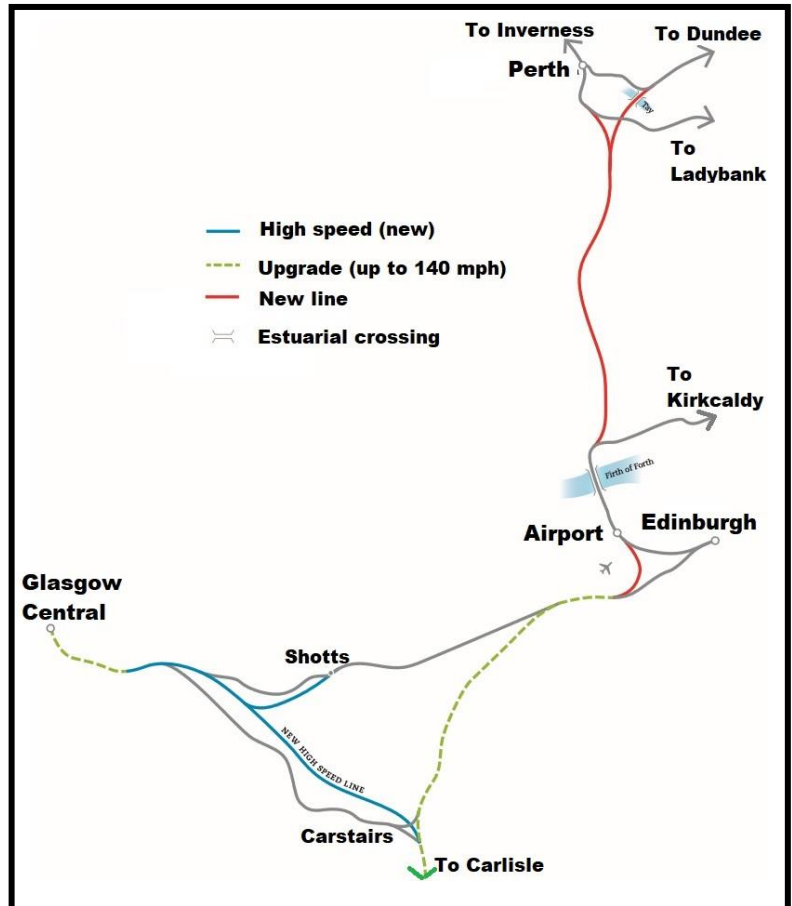
Greengauge21 held a meeting in Glasgow on 15<sup>th</sup> November attended on behalf of SAPT by John McCormick. The topic was Greengauge21’s *Beyond HS2* report which lays out a long term strategy for Britain’s railways. It identifies services that should run on, and beyond, HS2 and opportunities created on existing parallel lines.

Greengauge21 questions the practicality of the HS2 Ltd proposal for 18 trains per hour out of London Euston, suggesting instead a more cautious assumption of 16 trains per hour. The East Coast route out of London Kings Cross could be upgraded to 140 mph offering a more direct route to Newcastle that could achieve London-Newcastle timings that would closely match HS2 timings. This would free up capacity on the eastern Birmingham-Leeds arm of HS2 for High Speed cross-country trains including Edinburgh-Leeds-Bristol.

For Scotland Greengauge21 proposes a new High Speed Line from Rutherglen to south of Carstairs (see map), similar to the scheme being assessed by Transport Scotland’s cross-border rail team.

Greengauge21 also suggest a new line from Inverkeithing to south of Perth (to replace the former direct Glenfarg line to Perth closed when the M90 was built). This would cut Edinburgh- Perth train journey times from the current 75 minutes to 45 minutes, and also cut 30 minutes off Edinburgh - Inverness times. This proposal is similar to Transform Scotland’s *InterCity Express* campaign. Greengauge21 have also proposed a new bridge across the Tay downstream from Perth to give faster journeys from Edinburgh to Dundee and Aberdeen.

A new link from the Carstairs-Edinburgh line east of Kirknewton to Edinburgh Gateway station would link north-west England with Edinburgh Airport and also enable new services from Glasgow Central, Lanarkshire and Livingston to Edinburgh Gateway, Fife and Dundee.



Above: New “Beyond HS2” routes proposed by Greengauge21

### Rail Electrification

The Scottish Government’s 2019/2020 budget commits to invest £1.7 billion in transport infrastructure, including £93 million to take forward its commitment to dual the A9 and **£207 million in rail electrification**, equivalent to 200 track kilometres or 62 double track miles.

### Strategic Transport Projects Review

The next Strategic Transport Project Review is due in 2020. Major upgrades to the Scottish InterCity network must be prioritised in the list of STPR projects.

SAPT is analysing possible upgrades to the InterCity network, including Perth – Edinburgh and more electrification, for submission to Transport Scotland’s review. The next “Scottish Transport Matters” will summarise this analysis.



Electric trains to Dunblane and Alloa started on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2018. Above, a Class 365 leaves Stirling for Edinburgh passing a new Class 385 arrived from Glasgow on 12<sup>th</sup> December. SAPT advocates electrification onwards to Perth, Inverness and Aberdeen. Dunblane-Perth could be wired by 2020 using the government’s budget allocation for electrification (see left).

### 3

## West Highland Timetable Review 2020

By John McCormick

I attended an Oban meeting of the West Highland Review Group (chaired by Transport Scotland) in November in my role as committee member of the Friends of the West Highland Lines. A WHL timetable revision is expected in 2020. The following analysis contains my suggestions for change.

**Usage:** Figures compiled by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) show annual entries and exits for stations, with principal WHL stations shown below:

	2016/17	2013/14	2006/7
Oban	164	129	109
Fort William	139	145	116
Mallaig	86	87	67

*Passenger figures (thousand/year): source ORR*

ORR data suggests Fort William and Mallaig passengers increased by over 20% over 10 years. There was no change to the train service over this period. So train load factors are now higher. (ORR figures do not include Jacobite users which exceed annual ScotRail users at both stations).

Oban traffic increased by 50% over the period 2007/2017. This period saw doubling of Oban train service frequency in May 2014 from 3 trains per day to 6 trains per day (it is understood that the ORR figures do not include schoolchildren with tickets funded by Argyll & Bute Council).

**Conclusion:** This evidence suggests increasing the minimal 3 trains per day train service on the Glasgow-Fort William- Mallaig line will increase usage and revenue significantly.

### Timetable Recommendations

Fort William-Glasgow has the lowest ScotRail frequency in Scotland, with 6 hour gaps in service  
**Recommendation: Fort William-Glasgow train service should be upgraded to 5 train per day**

The first arrival into Glasgow from Mallaig and Fort William is 11.30, too late for many business meetings and some long-distance journeys to England.

**Recommendation: An early arrival from Fort William into Glasgow by 09.00 should be targeted**

Overcrowding occurs on peak summer services, particularly Oban trains with only 2 coaches. Introduction of Class 153 units will provide extra seats and toilets on some services. But short platforms and loops limit the use of Class 153s on combined Oban/Mallaig trains south of Crianlarich. Where train length exceeds platform length only one door can be opened inconveniencing passengers (particularly those with disabilities, luggage or prams) and delaying trains.

**Recommendation: Some trains to Oban and Mallaig should run separately, allowing more coaches, and cutting journey times by cutting station dwell times particularly at Crianlarich.**

Reliability has deteriorated recently due to staff shortage, particularly at Mallaig. Replacement buses cannot serve Rannoch or Corroul causing serious inconvenience to stranded passengers.

**Recommendation: The timetable should be restructured to minimise disruption to passengers**

Tourism is increasing steeply in the West Highlands. For instance visits to Glenfinnan National Trust increased from 251k in 2016 to 396k in 2017, an increase of 58% in one year. The Mallaig timetable needs to be revamped to capitalise on this, and also to improve travel for residents.

**Recommendation: Mallaig trains should be retimed to give a return commuter service to Fort William, better connections with the Mallaig-Lochboisdale ferry and with Fort William- Inverness buses, and improved travel opportunities for trips from Fort William to Glenfinnan**

These draft recommendations will be forwarded to the Review Group for their consideration.

**Vivarail 230 BEMU on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway**

I was delighted to be able to represent SAPT at a special event organised by Vivarail on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway on 11th October 2018 when I was one of a group invited to travel on the Vivarail two-car battery-electric demonstrator multiple-unit. This forms part of a family of Vivarail Class 230 multiple-unit products which include diesel-electric, battery and battery-hybrid versions. The Class 230 is based on the aluminium body shells from ex-London Transport D78 stock, together with Bombardier bogies which are less than 10 years old. The refurbished body shells and bogies are intended to provide 25 years of active service.

On arrival at Bo'ness station the group, which numbered about 50 or 60 people (including press, transport and environmental professionals), was given an opportunity to listen to a brief presentation about the company and its products and to meet Vivarail staff, including Adrian Shooter the Chief Executive. The presentation emphasised the low capital cost, flexibility, reliability and maintenance benefits of the Vivarail design, along with discussion of the innovative features based around the modular approach that has been adopted. The design provides a very simple procedure for power-pack replacement (which it was said can be carried out in ten minutes on a concrete bed by the trackside) and, also, allows vehicle configurations to be changed easily (e.g. from diesel-electric power to battery-electric power or fuel cells in future). Remote monitoring for early detection of faults is another important innovation in the Class 230.

In terms of interior layout, the units can be configured to suit different markets. The two-car unit being demonstrated was configured in the "City" version with four doors per side for each car and longitudinal seats allowing for 86 seated passengers (including 4 on tip-up seats) and 106 standees. The "Commuter" version can have two or three cars and the "Country" version is a three-car unit, each car having two doors per side. Lithium-ion batteries are used in the battery-electric version and all types of Class 230 use modern ac traction motors. For the battery version it is intended that charging should take place at automatic charging points at each end of a route, involving a pick-up shoe which engages with a two-pole electrical supply.

Although the battery version seen at Bo'ness is a demonstrator vehicle, the DEMU Class 230 has already gained approval for use on the mainline and three two-car sets are currently being delivered for the London Northwestern Railway services between Bletchley and Bedford (the Marston Vale line). Vivarail is also supplying five diesel-battery hybrid three-car units for use by Keolis-Amey on the Wales and Borders franchise (now branded as Transport for Wales Rail Services). These will be used for services between Wrexham and Bidston from summer 2019. On these hybrid sets use will be made of GPS systems to cut out the diesel engines in stations and environmentally-sensitive areas.

Although the speed limits imposed on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway did not provide a good opportunity for the unit to show its full capabilities, the demonstration was a success. I am sure that all those present enjoyed the experience and the opportunity that it provided to learn about the Vivarail range of products and, also, mix with others having interests in transport and environmental issues. In addition to the special event on 11<sup>th</sup> October, the demonstrator unit was based at Bo'ness for three days and provided free demonstration runs for members of the public.

I am sure that, like myself, one or two others on these demonstration trips could recall the pleasures of routinely travelling by battery-electric unit on the Aberdeen to Ballater line about sixty years ago!

More information about Vivarail and the company's plans for future developments can be found at <http://vivarail.co.uk>

***Future power technology development for road and rail transport as oil is phased out will be discussed in a presentation at the AGM on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 (see front page).***

*Right: Vivarail battery train on Bo'ness line*



## 5

# South-West Scotland Transport Study

A study of transport in south-west Scotland south of Ayr is being conducted by consultants Aecom. Better access to the port of Cairnryan is part of the remit of the study.

The largely rural character of South-west Scotland with a low population density means that most public transport services are low frequency, though SAPT successfully advocated the two-hourly Stranraer train timetable that was introduced by Abellio, with hourly frequency on the Ayr-Girvan section.

Given the trend to decreasing numbers of young people holding driving licences or having access to a car, improved public transport would be of benefit in reducing migration of young people away from the area.

The limited journey range of electric road vehicles means that better public transport will also be important in rural areas if fossil fuel powered vehicles are to be phased out, as planned by the government.

SAPT suggestions to the current transport study include:

### Rail

- Electrification of the Ayr-Girvan line giving a Glasgow-Girvan journey time of 80 minutes or less
- New or re-opened stations at Thornhill, Dunragit, South Ayr and Mauchline
- Relocation of Stranraer station nearer the town centre

### Bus

- Better Sunday services
- New bus link from Girvan station to Cairnryan port (replacing the current Ayr-Cairnryan service)
- Newton Stewart-Girvan bus service to be more closely co-ordinated with trains at Girvan
- Better bus services integrated with rail from Stranraer to Portpatrick and Logan Botanic Gardens, encouraging tourism by public transport, and from Dumfries to Lockerbie railway station

We did not consider re-opening of the Dumfries-Stranraer or Cairnryan-Stranraer lines to be realistic possibilities. The rail journey to Cairnryan via Stranraer would be much longer than a bus link from Girvan.

## 6

# Class 153s for Rural Lines Notes by Scott Simpson

The initial meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2019 was covered in "Scottish Transport Matters" 2018/3.

I attended a follow-up stakeholder workshop at Transport Scotland on 8 October, on the topic of dedicated coaches that are to be provided for cycles and sports equipment. This meeting was to discuss detailed design proposals.

In a development since the previous meeting, at that time I reported that Class 153s would be presented in ScotRail livery so as to appear visually as part of the same train. The proposal now is to have a special design, depicting cycling, skiing and outdoor sports. I opposed this (as a traditionalist), but my view did not gain much support.

Some gauge clearance work will be required. Although Class 153s and Class 156s are very similar, the 153 has a slightly wider underframe. The 153s also have slightly higher windows than 156s. The aim is to introduce the first two units during 2019. It may be possible to make changes to the second three units based on experience with the first two.

Unfortunately, I do not have any diagram of the interior due to the stage of development. It is clear this will not be a 'bike shed' and will be designed for mixed use, possibly incorporating a small buffet. It is expected that demand will vary seasonally with skis replacing bikes in the winter months. There will be connectivity with the rest of the train.

There are a few practical issues to be resolved. If the number of cars exceeds six, single door operation will be needed at some stations and the aim is to avoid this on a busy train. The present booking system does not cope well with bikes and will need to be reviewed. A real-time system would be better to allow prospective passengers to see what spaces are available on the day.

To my mind, all of this is a positive development consistent with the franchise aim of promoting tourist and leisure use of Scotland's railways.

## Access to Bus Services

Living Streets, an environmental charity, have been commissioned by the Scottish Government to deliver a Bus Connectivity project, developing a 'Bus Stop Walkability audit'. Together with consultation with local residents this will lead to recommendations supporting increased bus patronage on between 12 and 20 selected bus routes, by May 2019. SAPT have suggested including bus links to railway stations (see below).

SAPT committee members David Giles and John McCormick met David Graham, who is conducting the audit, on December 4<sup>th</sup> and discussed how SAPT could assist. All SAPT members could help in participating in the consultation by forwarding answers to the following questions direct to David Graham:

- ***Do you know of any bus services or stops that are underused because of accessibility or actual/perceived safety issues, that could be looked at?***
- ***Are there any locations where signage or the walking route allowing interchange between different buses/trains is not clear and could be better?***

If you know of any locations please let David know at [david.graham@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:david.graham@livingstreets.org.uk) and David can then discuss with the relevant bus operators and local authorities.

## Rail Bus Integration

### Summary of Bus/Rail Interchanges by SAPT Vice-Chair David Giles

**Aberdeen** Plusbus; Most local buses from Union St (400m from railway station); Country buses from Union Square Bus Station (100m); Railbus tickets to Aboyne, Ballater, Banchory, Braemar, Fraserburgh and Peterhead.

**Ayr** Plusbus; Local buses and most country buses from Burns Statue Square (150m); Sandgate Bus Station (1km)

**Bathgate/Livingston** Plusbus; Many local and country buses from Edinburgh Rd (100m); no bus station.

**Cumbernauld** Some local buses serve Cumbernauld and Croy stations; unstaffed bus interchange (1km from Cumbernauld, 3km from Croy).

**Dumfries** Plusbus; local buses from Burns Statue (700m) or Great King Street (600m); country buses from unstaffed bus interchange at Whitesands (1.2km)

**Dundee** Plusbus; local and country buses from Commercial St (700m); country buses from Seagate Bus Station (900m); Railbus tickets to Forfar and Kirriemuir.

**Dunfermline** Plusbus; Most local and country buses call at station; country buses from Queen Anne St Bus Stn (1km).

**Inverness** Plusbus; Most local buses from Millburn Road (150m); country buses from Farraline Park Bus Station (300m); Railbus tickets to Ullapool.

**East Kilbride** Most local and country buses from Olympia Court Bus Station (900m)

**Edinburgh** Plusbus; local buses from Princes St (200m); country buses from St Andrews Square Bus Station (700m); Railbus tickets to Edinburgh Airport, Galashiels, Hawick, Peebles and Selkirk.

**Elgin** Some local and country buses from railway station; Alexandria Rd Bus Stn (1km); Railbus tickets to Lossiemouth.

**Falkirk** Plusbus; most local and country buses from Weir St (150m); no bus station.

**Glasgow** Plusbus; most local buses have stops within 150m of Central Station but are further from Queen St (typically 500m); country buses from Buchanan Bus Stn (600m to Queen St, 1km to Central); Railbus tickets to Glasgow Airport

**Glenrothes** Most local and country buses from Church St Bus Station (3km from Markinch).

**Greenock** Many local and country buses have stops within 200m of Greenock Central and/or Greenock West. Nicolson St Bus Station (600m from Greenock West)

**Hamilton** Local and country buses from Brandon St Bus Station (50m).

**Kilmarnock** Plusbus; local and country buses from James St Bus Station (300m).

**Kirkcaldy** Plusbus; Many local and country buses have stops with 150m of station; Hill Street Bus Station (600m)

**Linlithgow** Plusbus; most local and country buses call within 100m of station; no bus station.

**Livingston** Plusbus; limited local buses from Deans N Rd (100m from Livingston North); centre of Livingston is about 3kn from Livingston North; no bus station.

**Paisley** Most local and country buses have stops about 300m from station; no bus station.

**Perth** Plusbus; Local buses from South St (500m); Country buses from Leonard St Bus Station (200m); Railbus tickets to Blairgowrie and Crieff.

**St Andrews** Railbus tickets from Leuchars; Local and country buses from St Andrews Bus Station (8km from Leuchars)

**Stirling** Plusbus; Local and country buses from Goosecroft Bus Station (200m); Railbus tickets to Doune and Callander.

## Key

Plusbus tickets can be bought as add-ons to rail tickets and give unlimited travel on buses within a local zone. Cost ranges from £2.30 to £3.80 with discounts for railcards. They can be bought online, from machines or ticket offices. Railbus tickets offer combined rail and bus tickets to specific locations but are only available from ticket offices (except for Leuchars to St Andrews). Railbus tickets are also available to Portree and Uig (from Kyle of Lochalsh); to Dornoch (from Tain); to Edinburgh Airport (from Inverkeithing); and to Braehead and Glasgow Airport (from Partick).

## FERRIES & SHIPPING

Pinstripe (H8Oct) has attacked the financial fiasco of government-owned CMAL ferry and terminal infrastructure owner in relation to the two new ferries under construction and as much as £50 million over-budget (H7Dec), and a similar problem at government-owned loss-making Prestwick Airport. Breakdowns continue to affect the German-built Loch Seaforth on the Stornoway route. Data shows a significant rise in ferry delays and cancellations since start of 2018 (H31Oct).

A fifth opening canal bridge has broken down on the Forth and Clyde Canal with little funding available for repairs – though it is hoped to have all repaired by spring 2019.

Stronger and more frequent storms are affecting ferry terminals, traditionally designed to be protected from western winds but less able to cope with increasing wind from the north and south (H2Dec)

Port of Cromarty Firth is gaining both from cruise traffic, oil field decommissioning and sea -wind turbine development. £30m of further investment is planned. Port of Montrose has announced a £5.4m investment plan while Scottish Enterprise has approved £10m towards a £30m Peel Ports redevelopment at Hunterston aimed at oil rig decommissioning and sea-turbine opportunities.

In South Queensferry, there are complaints about problems arising from large numbers from cruise ships using small vessels to reach the town to join coach tours and using the historic High St. Suggestions have again been made for waterbuses on the Clyde within the Glasgow area.

## AVIATION

Emirates is cutting back the new daily Edinburgh-Dubai service to 5 days a week due to low usage. Next summer, Delta Airlines is to start Edinburgh-Boston flights while Ryanair is adding 2 more routes to its existing 56 routes from Edinburgh. Loganair is adding four more routes from Edinburgh –to Islay, Guernsey Bergen and Stavanger. Major Scottish airports continue to seek a halving of ADP to aid their growth and put them on a par with Inverness already exempt from ADP.

Ryanair has introduced charges for small suitcases. Jet 2is set to create 130 jobs at Edinburgh Airport but Flybe, with the second-largest number of flights from Edinburgh, claims level of service provided by the airport is ‘appalling’ with a tendency to favour large planes. Seeking to cut congestion, Edinburgh Airport has raised drop off-charges to £2 for five minutes and £4 for 10 minutes

Just months after cutting flights from Glasgow from 23 to 3, Ryanair is to re-introduce 4 routes for summer 2019 – to Alicante, Malaga, Charleroi and Warsaw. Government-owned Prestwick Airport has been accused of failing to pay the living wage to some employees

## ROADS & PARKING

New forecasts by Transport Scotland are of a 25% rise in person trips by car between 2014 and 2037 (though passenger miles by car will depend on further assessment of length and occupancy levels on car trips) Further refinement may indicate somewhat lower growth due to shifts away from longer trips and, in cities, to cycling and public transport modes. Road vehicle miles are projected to rise 40% due to a 44% rise in lorry and light van trips

Most of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road is expected to open before Christmas following agreement with contractors after the collapse of Carillion.

Though still calling for more road investment, Graeme McCormick has rejected claims that the Scottish road network is worse than in England. Relative to a population 10 times higher, the English road network is in a worse state than the Scottish equivalent (H28 Nov). A82 north from Tarbert towards Fort William is still in need of significant improvement while arguments continue on how best to improve the landslide stricken A83 west from Tarbert to Inveraray. Others also see a strong case for extra capacity on the M8 (including west from Glasgow) and on the Edinburgh Bypass.



## Rail

LNER (London-Edinburgh) has introduced sensors to show where spare seats are available. New Caledonian Sleeper trains have still to be introduced but queries have been made about usage since London-Inverness sleepers can now cost almost four times more than flying.

New Transport Scotland forecasts for Scotland to 2037 suggest continuation of the more rapid growth in rail passenger miles already seen since 2000. 42% growth is projected between 2014 and 2037 though refinements as part of the New National Transport Strategy may lead to even higher growth

Spanish train maker Talgo has opted for a new factory on the former electric power station site at Longannet but development is conditional on gaining firm orders for new trains (H15Nov)

Trade unions continue to press for nationalisation of ScotRail services but others point out that most rail infrastructure in Scotland is already publicly owned as part of Network Rail with funding and governance issues making it unlikely that full nationalisation would lead to improvements. Another option is to allow ScotRail (or a mix of local government and Transport Scotland) to own rather than hire train-sets (H11Oct)

The Abellio ScotRail franchise is under severe criticism for deteriorating train performance, made worse by late delivery of trains and the need for staff training, but with at least 50% of deficiencies attributable to Network Rail problems in ensuring a higher quality of track & signalling maintenance along with timely completion of infrastructure improvements. Information on delays and alternative services needs much improvement. Overcrowding has been eased by obtaining alternative electric trains but full delivery of new stock is expected during 2019. All Edinburgh-Glasgow via Falkirk services are now electric, including a new half-hourly service from Glasgow via Gartcosh and Cumbernauld to Falkirk and Edinburgh – faster services are also available between Glasgow and Stirling (H14,28,30Nov, 16Oct)

Work is well advanced on the extension of electrification to the Shotts line and to Alloa and Dunblane in 2019. The Scottish Government has advanced a £23m payment (normally due to April 2019) to ScotRail to ease current financial problems. Pre-tax ScotRail loss rose from £2.6m in 2016 to £17.9m in 2017 (H15Nov)

In response to complaints that rail passengers are paying more for poorer services, Scottish Government has capped rise in regulated peak fares to RPI at 3.1% with but regulated off-peak fares rising by RPI -1%

Refurbished high-speed Inter-City diesel-hauled trains are now being introduced between the Central Belt and Aberdeen/Inverness and also on the Aberdeen-Inverness route. Trade unions have criticised the use of 40 year old trains but passengers find them more comfortable than the present diesel multiple unit services. Expected to last another 10 years, refurbished are expected to be replaced by 2030 by a combination of overhead wires and battery power (H10Oct).

Experiments are being made with both battery and hydrogen power with more routes expected to shift to a mix of overhead electric and battery electric power. Battery powered trains may soon be able to travel at least 40 miles without having to re-charge.

Surveys indicate that rail passenger overcrowding is most severe on some Edinburgh-Perth, Glasgow-Neilston and Edinburgh-North Berwick services overcrowding

There has been adverse public reaction to the ScotRail decision to retain free travel for children under 5 to travel free with an adult but impose a £1 charge for those between 5 and 15 (H4Dec)

Writing to the Herald, two people have suggested that, rather than reopen the Leuchars-St Andrews line, it would be better to improve the present bus link to St Andrews with full integration of bus/rail fares. However, the Levenmouth Rail Campaign has criticised the decision the t Scottish Transport Minister to spend almost £2n on a refurbished but little used Breich station on the Shotts line while delaying action on a reopened line to Levenmouth with substantial extra housing proposed close to the terminus.

Despite spending £6m on improve seawall defences at Saltcoats on the rail line to Ardrossan and Largs, there is still considerable disruption of rail services at high tide and high wind times. Other options may have to be considered in coming years (ASH 5Dec)

Financial problems and the need for major repairs to supporting pillars has forced the Cairngorm Mountain Railway into administration. Services, carrying 300,000 a year, ended in October. HIE remains owner of the railway (which operated under lease) and is considering what may now be done (H30Nov).

## Buses and Trams

Transport Scotland modelled **Transport Forecasts** to 2037, published in November, indicate a continuing fall in both urban and inter-urban bus passenger miles to 207 despite an estimated 6.5% rise in population since 2014. This contrasts with both actual continued growth in and around Edinburgh and the case made in the first Glasgow Connectivity Commission Report, also in November and chaired by David Begg, for a return to regular annual growth in Glasgow bus use, encouraged by major shifts in policy and funding aiding the emergence of a sustainable, inclusive and attractive city with reduced car use and parking, notably in the city centre and accompanied by substantial population and employment growth in the city. Revised forecasts and strategies are expected to emerge from ongoing government consultation on future strategy for transport, land uses and pricing. Glasgow Chamber Commerce is a strong supporter of the CC report provided that substantial short-stay car parking remains available on the immediate fringe of a city-centre car and bus traffic reduced zone. The report stresses the need for improved air quality and improved conditions for walking and cycling with public transport becoming more frequent and attractively priced as well as moving away from diesel buses. The CC suggests workplace parking levies and possible congestion charging as part of wider shifts away from diesel and petrol fuel duties to new forms of road user charging.

McGill's Bus Service has ordered 6 Enviro200 single deck buses from Alexander Dennis of Falkirk for delivery by March 2019 but is also seeking radical change in transport policy as profits fell from over £2m to £384,00 in past year. The fall is attributed to worsening road congestion, roadworks disruption, cheap car parking and falling high street footfall. McGills is confident of a return to bus growth if these issues are tackled with urgency (H5Oct & 22Nov)

Scottish Government has released £1.1m of funding to assist smaller bus operators to adapt to contactless fares but it is also argued that greater gains could come from higher charges for parking linked with a substantial expansion of simple zonal fares (available on bus and rail) available in, and between,, cities and larger towns – including integrated governance in and around larger cities (H1&2Oct) Car users seek much clearer signage of bus gates rather than seeking to use these as a source of funding.

Calls have been made for fuller use of existing and abandoned Glasgow rail tunnels to improve public transport travel opportunities. Glasgow Subway already served part of the city westward but the East End had been neglected. There were improving prospects for a proper Metro system linking well with buses (H11Oct).

The bill for the Edinburgh Tram Inquiry is now over £10m. Plans for an extension to Leith are still attracting criticism but there is increasing pressure to cut the number of buses on Princes St while increasing space for cyclists and pedestrians cutting delays at major pedestrian crossing points. Some local buses (and coaches) may be diverted to alternative routes or to easy interchange points east and west of Princes St coupled with a higher tram frequency.

Asked what his biggest bugbear was, Hugh Macleod, owner of Dunvegan Castle, says it is the lack of integrated public transport in the Highlands – also an airport on Skye H19Oct)

City chiefs have agreed a 10% rise in taxi fares after usage of city taxi ranks has halved since 2006. In Ayrshire, taxi drivers are seeking access to the bus lane on east side of Stevenston. This has been refused due to adverse impacts on buses and on car users annoyed by any favourable treatment of taxis. Uber as a company is flourishing but workers for it remain concerned about a 3-year delay in giving those working as Uber drivers more rights.

As a UK pilot scheme, Stagecoach is to receive £4.35m from a £25m UK government scheme to encourage driverless technology in Britain (two other schemes are in London). 5 driverless single deck buses with 42 seat capacity will operate a 20 minute frequency on the 14 mile route from Ferry Toll in Fife to Edinburgh Park rail and tram interchange. Operation should start in 2021 (H & EN 23Nov)

Plans to revitalise Aberdeen City Centre include proposals for a gondola cable car route from Nigg Bay through the city centre to the beach. This could become an icon like the V&A museum in Dundee (H13Nov)