



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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2022 SAPT AGM and Members Meetings

The **AGM** is being held in-person at 10.30 on **Friday 10th June 2022** at the AK Bell Library, 2 York Place, **Perth** PH2 8EP. There is lots of space to allow social distancing.

Guest speaker is **Scott Prentice, Head of Business Development, ScotRail**. Scott will update us on current developments and thoughts for the future. This is an opportunity to give informed feedback at this time of great change on Scotland's railway.

SAPT Chair **John McCormick** will outline additional SAPT advice to the Scottish Government on strategic transport infrastructure projects including the **Scottish InterCity Network, ClydeMetro, bus/rail interchange** and **HS2 to Scotland**.

An **Inverness** meeting will be held on **Thursday 8th September** starting at **13.45** in the Mercure Hotel, Church St (near the station). Topics will include Highland developments and bus integration. **Frank Roach** of Hitrans has been invited. All SAPT members welcome.

A **Glasgow** meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 24th November** starting at **17.00** in the Mercure Hotel, Ingram Street (near Queen St station). All SAPT members welcome.

Subscription Reminder

Any outstanding subscriptions should be sent to: **SAPT, c/o GCVS, 44 Ashley Street, Glasgow G3 6DS**

1 New Direction of Travel

Rail and bus services in Scotland have lost more traffic due to the pandemic than in other parts of the UK. Statistics show ScotRail at the bottom of the UK table, carrying only 48.9% of pre-covid passengers in the period between July and September 2021, compared with the British railways average of 55.4%. Bus operators also face lower revenue and rapidly rising fuel prices. The end of special covid financial support could spell disaster for public transport economics.

But if the Scottish Government is to hit its ambitious targets of 20% less car travel by 2030 and net zero by 2045, a dramatic resurgence will be needed in public transport usage. Continuing with the current transport framework will not achieve this. Transport Scotland needs to learn from continental countries like Switzerland and Austria where bus and rail use has been rising year-on-year while pre-covid bus use in Scotland fell by around 10% in the five years to 2019. Transport spending needs to shift from major road schemes like the A9 dualling, which generates more road traffic, towards active travel, rail electrification, light rail and green bus schemes. And public transport needs to be properly integrated to provide a coherent network of interconnecting bus and rail services across the country.

Transport Scotland's draft *Strategic Transport Projects Review* (STPR2), published in January this year, sets out the government's proposed transport infrastructure plans for the next 20 years. The 45 recommended projects focus on decarbonising transport (which is responsible for 37% of greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland) and improving connectivity. Schemes cover city and regional travel as well as the problematical ferry routes.

Cities need high-quality, frequent and affordable zero-emission public transport bypassing congested urban roads to tempt motorists out of their cars. STPR2 envisages a **ClydeMetro** network for the Glasgow City Region (this concept was originally proposed by SAPT in 2005!). ClydeMetro will be partly funded through the City Deal and will transform the rail network around Glasgow into high frequency metro services similar to the successful systems in Manchester and Newcastle. Some Metro routes will be extended on new reserved track along the verges of dual carriageways into housing areas not currently served by the rail network. Metro routes to Glasgow Airport and Paisley via Braehead and Renfrew, and to Maryhill via SEC and Botanic Gardens are proposed. Dedicated bus lanes will be provided on some roads to create Bus Rapid Transit routes.

In Edinburgh, STPR2 envisages the Edinburgh Tram network being further extended, and some Bus Rapid Transit routes being provided. Bus Rapid Transit would also be developed in and around Aberdeen. (Section 2 covers SAPT's response to STPR2).

These STPR2 public transport proposals are a welcome switch in emphasis away from road schemes. Yet public transport infrastructure projects are not the whole answer. What passengers need is a comprehensive transport network with seamless connections between buses, trains, trams and the subway so that journeys can easily be made between any two places on the network, using just one ticket, smartcard or mobile mTicket. Without this, investment in public transport projects will fail to bring the benefits that many continental cities have achieved.

For regional and intercity travel, ScotRail will be expected to greatly increase its modal share to cut car use, emissions, and overall transport energy consumption. There will also be pressure from the Scottish Government to reduce the rail subsidy which spiralled to £1.5 Billion in 2021. This will be a challenge for the new ScotRail management that replaced Abellio in April. Cost cutting has already started. From May, the number of daily train services increases to 2150 but this is well below the pre-pandemic level of 2400. Booking office hours are being cut as more passengers use smartphones to buy tickets. Commuter traffic is not expected to return to pre-pandemic level as many people continue to work from home. If the unions call strikes for more money while opposing rail efficiency improvements, as now seems likely, this will only make the situation worse.

Leisure and InterCity rail travel is expected to recover more strongly than commuting. Scotland's scenic railway lines to the West and Central Highlands, Far North, Borders and South-west rival the world's best. The new ScotRail management should boost the quality of service and marketing on these routes. The privately run Jacobite train on the Mallaig line shows there is high demand for first class rail leisure travel through Scotland's dramatic scenery.



InterCity trains, as in this view of HSTs for Aberdeen and Inverness in Glasgow Queen Street, are expected to recover their market more quickly than commuter services.

Some ScotRail trains could be switched from quieter commuter lines to expand services on scenic routes, providing more seats for tourists, including foreign visitors to Scotland. LNER, which operates London-Edinburgh trains, has launched an international website allowing customers from overseas to purchase LNER train tickets using their local language and currency. This is an initiative that ScotRail should join, as part of a campaign to boost green tourism to Scotland

But not everyone uses the internet. The questionable decision by Abellio to stop printing ScotRail timetables and publicity posters at stations should be reconsidered. A good website should be an addition to, rather than a replacement for, the visual impact of printed publicity and timetable material

Rising petrol prices and range anxiety around electric cars gives rail an opportunity to attract more people to long distance rail travel. ScotRail's "InterCity" trains are comfortable and offer competitive journey times on most routes. Electrification of InterCity lines will further reduce journey times and emissions. Transport Scotland is leading the way on electrification compared with elsewhere in Britain, with plans to complete electrification of most Scottish routes by 2035. On quieter rural lines, battery or hydrogen trains are to be introduced, but these are less energy-efficient than pure electric trains.

Electric railways also have massive potential to decarbonise Anglo-Scottish passenger and freight transport. A 3-hour London-Glasgow/Edinburgh rail journey time target was set for HS2, making the train competitive with gas-guzzling aircraft which currently have 70% of the market from London to Scotland. The Scottish Government has unfortunately stalled progress on Anglo-Scottish rail development. What is needed are sections of new 200 mph railway bypasses on the West Coast Main Line to cut rail passenger journey times and to free the existing track for more electrically powered freight trains, reducing the need for convoys of heavily polluting diesel HGVs on the M74. Anglo-Scottish High-Speed Rail should be an environmental priority in the Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review. Transport Scotland should work with the Department for Transport to ensure HS2 progresses north of Manchester.

This is a time of profound change for transport and the environment. The recently appointed Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth has a crucial role in hitting the Scottish Government's net zero target, as well as overseeing the new state-run ScotRail. Bus companies face rising fuel costs, and lower revenue due to covid. The Scottish Government introduced a new bus Network Support Grant on 1st April 2022, to compensate bus operators for the effects of Covid. The Transport Minister should grasp this opportunity to ensure bus and train services are properly co-ordinated in future. Integrated public transport gives better connectivity for passengers, and gets better value for state funding. Reducing duplication between rail and bus on some busy central belt intercity routes will leave more of the bus Network Support Grant for supporting socially necessary bus services in rural and deprived urban areas where there is no rail alternative.

This article by SAPT Chair John McCormick appeared in the "Herald" last month.

2 ClydeMetro

Following the welcome inclusion of **ClydeMetro** in STPR2 (first proposed by SAPT in 2005, see Transport Matters 2022/1), SAPT has been contemplating the type of metro or light rail vehicles that are likely to be most appropriate for the Glasgow conurbation. The metro proposed in STPR2 would take over some inner suburban railway lines including the Argyle line, as well as providing new links. As the heavy rail routes have high platforms and are electrified at 25kV/AC, the metro trains will most likely be dual voltage AC/DC for compatibility with existing electrification as well as giving the option of low voltage DC electrification on new sections of route.



Newcastle metro train (above) and interior (below)



A high platform design would avoid reconstruction of existing heavy rail stations. The Newcastle Tyne and Wear Metro (left) and Manchester Metrolink tram system (right) both incorporate substantial sections of former railway routes and use high platform metro or tram vehicles.

The design of a metro for Glasgow should assess the Newcastle Metro and Manchester Tram approaches. The trams have the same top speed (50 mph) as the metro but can navigate much sharper curves and run alongside roads if needed. This could make new sections of line easier to route through the city, for example at St.Enoch and Kirklee. Preliminary route surveys could sway the choice of metro technology.



Manchester tram (above) and interior (below)



3 InterCity Electric Speed-up

Shorter journey times are no longer being used as justification for road schemes, but for rail investment the issue is different. Train travel needs to be markedly quicker than by car to be an attractive option for car owners, as well as an advantage for people without cars. Otherwise road congestion will continue to worsen and electric vehicle (EV) power consumption may outstrip renewable energy generation. If the government's net zero transport emissions target is to be met, the InterCity network needs to be developed as the high-speed backbone of a green transport system connecting with local trains and buses and linking towns and villages throughout Scotland.

Most ScotRail InterCity journey times have scarcely changed during recent years. Electrification has improved performance on the main Edinburgh-Glasgow line. But longer-distance ScotRail InterCity journey times have remained the same over the last decade (see below), despite Inter7City High Speed Trains being introduced. Gains from faster acceleration of the HSTs seem to have been lost through longer station dwell times. And high HST fuel consumption has raised operating costs. Electrification, as planned in Transport Scotland's rail decarbonisation strategy, is the key to faster, cheaper zero-emission journeys. Journey time targets, as below, have already been set by Transport Scotland (eg intervention 23 in STPR originally forecast in 2009 for implementation by 2014) and should now be met through electrification and other infrastructure upgrades.

Route	Fastest May 2013	Fastest May 2022	Electric Target
Edinburgh-Aberdeen	2 hours 19 minutes	2 hours 18 minutes	2 hours
Edinburgh-Inverness	3 hours 22 minutes	3 hours 24 minutes	3 hours
Aberdeen-Inverness	2 hours 9 minutes	2 hours 12 minutes	2 hours

Projects in STPR2 should be designed to hit these targets by 2029, phased as in the next sections.

4 Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen Route Enhancements

The route from Glasgow and Edinburgh onwards from **Dunblane to Perth** is a core trunk route shared by Glasgow-Aberdeen/Inverness and Edinburgh-Inverness InterCity trains. Upgrading track and signalling is a priority that would benefit all three service groups. Electrification would be a stepping stone to Inverness, Dundee and Aberdeen and could potentially cut the Edinburgh-Stirling-Perth journey towards 1 hour from the current uncompetitive 1 hour 35 minutes via Fife.

A second phase of route upgrades, electrification and timetable re-organisation onwards from **Perth and Edinburgh to Dundee and Aberdeen** should be able to meet the targets of 2 hours Edinburgh-Aberdeen and 2 hours 15 minutes Glasgow-Aberdeen. Electrification and re-signalling should enable a new hourly Inverurie-Aberdeen-Montrose-Dundee-Perth-Glasgow Regional Express replacing separate uneconomic local services and allowing InterCity trains to run fast between Aberdeen and Dundee.

5 Highland Main Line Electrification

The first phase of the HML upgrade costing £57 million was completed by Network Rail in 2019. Loops and signalling at Pitlochry and Aviemore were upgraded to support “an hourly service, with average journey times reduced by around 10 minutes”. But the 2022 timetable gives irregularly spaced train departures and lengthened journey times. This may be partly due to the Covid drop in passengers, and high operating costs and increased station dwell times of InterCity HSTs.

The STPR15 Highland Mainline Enhancement project now needs to deliver predefined targets on both journey time reductions and frequency improvements. Transport Scotland’s rail decarbonisation programme includes **electrification from Dunblane to Perth, and onwards to Inverness**. This is key to enabling journey times, emissions and operating costs to be reduced. Infrastructure work, train fleet specification and timetabling need to be fully co-ordinated in project planning to ensure a **3-hour Edinburgh-Inverness journey time** is delivered as promised. Nationalisation of ScotRail should make project coordination with Network Rail easier to achieve

6 Aberdeen-Inverness Line Upgrade

This InterCity route gets no mention in STPR2. Previous work between Aberdeen and Inverurie, at Forres and Elgin, and now at the new station and loop underway at Dalcross leaves just one outstanding development needed to support a fast hourly rail service between Aberdeen and Inverness: an **additional intermediate passing loop between Elgin and Huntly**.

This would open the way for **hourly Aberdeen-Inverness trains with journey time of 2 hours**. This is an essential link if a national InterCity network with connecting hourly trains is to be completed, and if a fast, environmentally friendly alternative to the A96 is to be offered.

7 Bus/Rail Co-ordination

Transport Scotland’s new bus Network Support Grant (NSG) replaces the previous bus service operators’ grant (BSOG) which was provided for all bus services. The NSG pays 14.4 pence per kilometre to contribute towards the costs of running bus services but is conditional on the bus operator consulting local transport authorities on timetabling. A higher NSG Plus rate of 79.4 per bus km is available to help offset lost revenue while patronage recovers from the effects of Covid-19. Bus operators have to supply Transport Scotland with data on farebox revenue and patronage to receive this higher rate, and agree to a profit sharing arrangement.

The Network Support Grant hopefully is a sign that Transport Scotland recognises the benefits of a co-ordinated public transport network. SAPT has long called for a strategic network of bus routes co-ordinated with InterCity and local rail, tram and subway services. This will be discussed at the SAPT members’ meeting in Inverness on September 8th (see front page).

8 News around Scotland

Collated by John McCormick with contributions from John Wilson and John Yellowlees

S Scotsman *EN Evening News* *T Times* *H Herald*

Rail

The new £20M station at Reston is opening on May 23rd.

In March and April the Herald ran a series on Scotland's Future. "Scotland's Railways Destination Unknown" featured articles by Dr. John McCormick of SAPT (see Section 1), Professor Iain Docherty (Stirling University), and Jane Ann Liston of Railfuture.

Iain Docherty argued that there is no credible path to net zero in Scotland without much more use of the railway, perhaps double pre-pandemic levels. With less office commuting, the focus should be on leisure travel and ensuring rail is the first choice for long distance travel.

Transforming many of Glasgow's commuter lines into a high capacity metro system would provide genuine mass transit and eliminate the anachronisms of guards and ticket offices.

Jane Anne Liston mentioned Railfuture's list of 50 essential new stations plus extensions of the network such as Tweedbank-Hawick-Carlisle, Perth-Forfar-Laurencekirk, Aberdeen-Ellon-Peterhead/Fraserburgh, Alloa-Dunfermline, the Edinburgh Suburban Circle, Glasgow Crossrail and a link to St.Andrews. While this would take a lot of time and cost a huge amount of money, the costs of not bringing about a massive shift from the private car will be considerably more.

A West Lothian Council report indicates a station at Winchburgh has become doubtful because Transport Scotland had not made a station a condition of the housing development and the developers "question the commuter demand post-Covid" and state increased estimated cost. Winchburgh Developments Limited expect "to progress discussions on an alternative public transport strategy without reliance on rail transport, unless the balance of funding for the station can be secured from another source" (EN).

Ground investigation work has started on the Highland Main Line between Inverness and Perth as part of Network Rail's rolling programme of electrification to decarbonise Scotland's rail passenger services by 2035. Work will take place until the end of July 2022. Boreholes will be drilled to assess the ground condition within and surrounding the railway corridor with core samples extracted to assess the condition of the ground under the railway. The investigation work will help inform the design of infrastructure between the two cities. (Courier).

Engineering consultancy Furrer+Frey has unveiled an innovative composite mast for rail electrification, which could revolutionise the way that rail electrification is undertaken. The first composite masts have been created and tested at Newport in Wales. Whereas a traditional steel mast of the same size weighs around 750kg, the composite masts are around 80kg, yet have the same strength. The reduction in weight is a significant boost towards productivity and reducing cost. The dead weight is just one small part of the load on a pile. It's the weight, the wind on it, the weight of ice, the way the wires are hanging off – it's a whole system. The mast is not only lighter but has a lower wind resistance. This is significant because it means that the piles holding them in place can also be much shallower. (New Civil Engineer).

ScotRail drivers are set to strike for the first time in more than 20 years after their union ASLEF and transport chiefs failed to reach an agreement in pay talks. ASLEF leaders condemned as "derisory" the 2.2% increase from the newly nationalised ScotRail.

Scottish Transport Statistics for 2020/1 showed public transport journeys down 70% (349 million) in the first year of the pandemic but cycling up. ScotRail said on 28 March that 251 staff were absent for Covid-related reasons compared to over 450 at the peak in January. 17 out of 2000 trains had been cancelled or amended due to staff absence. TPE and Avanti West Coast continued to run an amended service with no direct Glasgow-Birmingham trains, but LNER had been running a full timetable since 14 February.

Network Rail awarded a contract to Hitachi subsidiary Perpetuum to develop the first real-time digital solution to monitor and eventually predict sections of track that affected ride quality and required maintenance. It is to install a collision protection beam on a railway bridge on Balgreen Road in Edinburgh to reduce the risk of damage if the bridge is hit by vehicles.

The Argyle Line from Rutherglen to Exhibition Centre through Anderston Tunnel closed from 13th March to 8th May for a £32M project to renew slab track, with ScotRail acknowledging that it was going to be a "bumpy eight weeks". SPT supplemented the Clyde Gateway bus service along the route. Anderston Station will not re-open until June 5 as Network Rail's engineers undertake critical work on the entrance, booking office, concourse and platforms.

The West Highland Line closed north of Crianlarich from 19 to 28 March. Network Rail announced 530 upgrades over the Easter weekend. Residents on the west side of Dundee complained about noise from Network Rail overnight tree-cutting. Network Rail completed work on regrading a slope above the railway near Lockerbie, the first of eleven WCML sites identified as vulnerable.

The Campaign for Borders Rail was considering commissioning its own research following disappointment with the Union Connectivity Review and STPR2. The Tweed Valley Rail Campaign is underway to help improve rail travel in north Northumberland by restoring old links between the East Coast Main Line and the Borders Railway. Fears over the impact on a nearby town centre left a business development near the terminus of the Borders Railway facing refusal. Planning officers said the Tweedbank scheme - including a Lidl store - posed an "unacceptable risk" for Melrose. The supermarket firm said that was "disappointing" but it believed there was "huge local support" for the bid. The Borders Gateway project was first unveiled more than four years ago. Developers said it could create up to 100 jobs by "piggy-backing" on the success of the Borders Railway with an investment of more than £10M. Previous plans - which included a hotel - were approved in 2019. However, Premier Inn pulled out of that scheme last year blaming the change in the economic climate due to the Covid pandemic - which was when Lidl stepped in.

At a meeting of Holyrood's Net Zero, Energy and Transport committee to discuss the aims of a renationalised ScotRail, Transport Focus's Robert Samson told Liam Kerr MSP that reopening of railways to Formartine and Buchan should not be excluded as part of the wider net zero debate. "They should be included to see if they're deliverable and if they're feasible and actually make a difference to people's travelling behaviours." Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth said that rail links to Fraserburgh and Peterhead had been assessed but the decision had been taken not to include them in STPR2.

Roads and Cars

A record 39,315 fully electric cars were delivered to British motorists in March, 76% more than in March 2021. Over 16% of new cars are now zero-emission. Tesla accounts for about one in three of battery electric vehicles sold in Britain, ahead of VW, Kia, Jaguar Land Rover, Mini, Citroen and Renault. A further 22% of the market is for hybrid cars. But overall car sales dropped by 14% and average prices for new cars have risen by 25% over two years (T).

East Renfrewshire has the best maintained roads on the Scottish mainland with just 17% of A roads needing maintenance. Argyll & Bute had the poorest roads with 40% needing maintenance

Fuel duty was cut by 5p in the Chancellor's spring statement.

Edinburgh's controversial environmental policies, including a workplace parking levy, congestion charging and low-emission zones, have been put in doubt following the local government elections. Labour and Liberal Democrats may rule out coalitions with the SNP, and an SNP/Green coalition would lack the votes to resist opposition (T).

Buses and Trams

Cycle lanes have the unintended consequence of encouraging car use by slowing down buses and making public transport less attractive for commuters, according to the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT), which represents more than 100 bus and coach companies. There is a direct correlation between the 50% rise in urban bus journey times since the early 1970s and a 50% fall in bus travel. CPT research found a 10% reduction in bus speeds led to a drop in passenger numbers of up to 14% (T).

Free bus travel for people under 22 has been linked to a surge in antisocial behaviour and disorder in Glasgow city centre. Youths bring disruption in from the suburbs to the centre (T).

Edinburgh may become the first city in the UK to introduce a tourist tax. Some of the revenue could be used to subsidise transport links (T).

Travel operators have urged passengers to keep wearing masks, after the legal requirement for face coverings was lifted in Scotland (T).

The SNP Edinburgh Council election manifesto committed to Edinburgh Tram extensions “northward from the city centre to Granton “where 3,500 homes are being built as part of a £1 billion Granton waterfront regeneration” and “south-east towards the Royal Infirmary and the BioQuarter research district, and potentially beyond”. Council Leader Adam McVey comments on “the Newhaven extension on time and on budget” and that “even the pandemic hasn’t knocked the project off course”. He says: “Now it’s time to turn Edinburgh’s tram line into a network worthy of a modern European capital. We will take the time to plan this properly, just as we did for the Newhaven extension, to minimise disruption and ensure the new routes are delivered” (S)

Civic leaders condemned as totally unacceptable the delay to the Hardie inquiry into Edinburgh Trams, announced in June 2014 which had so far cost over £12M but was said to be making good progress. Trams resumed running on 28 March to St Andrew Square. The extension to Newhaven was reported to be on course for a spring 2023 opening. 70% of the track is already laid.

Ferries

Islanders have accused Caledonian Maritime Assets (CMAL) of a “deceptive, biased” procurement process that will result in costly replacement ferries and less frequent services. The Mull and Iona Ferry Committee said CMAL should have ordered 4 smaller ships rather than two large vessels for the Kennacraig-Islay routes, costing £105 million from a Turkish shipyard. Upgrades at Kennacraig and Port Askaig to take the larger ships will cost a further £25 million. Kevin Hobbs, CMAL Chief Executive, said the committee was being vexatious and making inaccurate claims. Cmal have 45 people in Port Glasgow qualified in naval architecture and marine civil engineering. (T).

Disrupted Arran sailings have led to cancer patients missing half of their consultations. February was the worst month on record, with 16 out of 32 appointments missed due to chaotic crossings. The two new ferries being built by Ferguson Marine (the first due early 2018) will be delayed until at least 2023, with construction costs more than doubled to £240M (T).

Air

Jet2 is the first airline to ditch the rule on mandatory masks. Jet2 is the Britain’s second biggest tour operator (T). The war in Ukraine could lead to a drop of four million passengers for Ryanair this year. Ryanair has been Ukraine’s biggest airline operator in recent years. Ryanair is expecting to carry 165 million passengers in 2022-23, 10% more than in 2019-2020 (T)

In March EasyJet operated at 80% of 2019 capacity but is still cancelling hundreds of flights due to high levels of staff shortages because of Covid.

Compulsory wearing of masks on flights to and within Europe are to be scrapped (T).