



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

Contents

- 1 Meeting with Transport Minister**
- 2 Achieving Transport Policy Objectives**
- 3 Bus Policy and Parliamentary Petition**
- 4 News Around Scotland**

2017 Members Meetings

AGM:

EDINBURGH **June 6th** **10.30-13.00** Jurys Inn*, 43 Jeffrey Street
Guest Speaker: Transport Minister Humza Yousaf

Regional Meetings:

INVERNESS: **June 20th** **14.00-16.00** Mercure Hotel, Church Street
InterCity Rail north of the Central Belt

ABERDEEN: **September 22nd** **13.30-15.30** Jurys Inn, Union Square
Nestrans Transport Developments

GLASGOW: **October 31st** **18.30-20.30** Mercure Hotel, Ingram St
HS2 to Scotland, ClydeMetro, CalMac Developments

* Regrettably there is no wheelchair access to the meeting room in Jurys Inn Edinburgh

Subscription Renewal:

Annual subscriptions are now due (*no action required by those paying by standing order*). We hope you will choose to renew and continue to support the aims of SAPT in campaigning for improved public transport to, from and within Scotland. Non-members wishing to join should use the membership form available on our web site.

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1

Meeting with Transport Minister

Transport Minister Humza Yousaf met David Giles, John McCormick and David Murray-Smith of SAPT on 7th February at the Transport Scotland office in Glasgow.

New Bus Framework and Integrated Transport Bill: David Giles led this SAPT discussion, and submitted as background the SAPT response to the Bus Services Regulation petition which has been laid before the Scottish Parliament (see Section 3). The Minister indicated there is likely to be a new Transport Bill in the first half of this parliament. Transport integration is one objective. A range of bus frameworks is being considered, including local partnerships and franchising. Successful models include Lothian Buses which has introduced low emission buses and maintained passenger levels. CalMac have improved ferry connections with bus and train.

Arran mainland ferry terminal: The bid by Associated British Ports to attract the Brodick ferry to operate to Troon instead of Ardrossan was raised by SAPT. We stated our preference is to continue with Ardrossan Harbour where the station offers a seamless ferry/train transfer. Troon has a more frequent train service but a bus shuttle would be needed between the harbour and station, inconveniencing everyone, but particularly the elderly and disabled, and those travelling with children, luggage, rucksacks, dogs etc. The Minister indicated there is some merit in assessing the Troon option, and a decision will be announced within two or three months.

Rail Investment: John McCormick suggested that priority should be given to completing upgrades of the Scottish InterCity network to optimise the benefits from the HSTs being introduced by Abellio. This should include infrastructure to support an hourly Aberdeen-Inverness frequency. The Minister agreed, but expressed concern about Network Rail overspend, with the NR budgeting process for the five-yearly infrastructure programmes being not fit for purpose. There is an extra £200 million budgeted for improving Aberdeen-Central Belt rail infrastructure which still has a single-track section from Montrose to Usan. Other projects which may have a robust case, eg Levenmouth re-opening, are feasible.

ClydeMetro and Edinburgh Tram: David Murray-Smith advanced the case for expanding local urban rail services using light rail as an answer to congestion, pollution, and the cost of heavy rail extension. The Minister suggested this could be raised with local authorities after the local government elections. City Deals might be appropriate for this type of project.

Air Departure Tax: John McCormick pointed out that scrapping APD would reduce Anglo-Scottish rail usage, undermine the business case for HS2 to Scotland, and reduce tax income, while increasing flights and CO₂. SAPT suggest limiting APD changes to long-haul flights to achieve the objective of improving Scotland's international connectivity but reducing the adverse impacts. The Minister pointed out that measures could be taken to offset additional CO₂ emissions, while loss of tax revenue could be counterbalanced by possible economic benefits. The SNP has no parliamentary majority, so agreement would be needed with an opposition party on proposed changes. Also the Highlands and Islands are seeking better air links with London and Manchester.

Glasgow Airport Rail Access: There is now a high level board bringing together the councils, Network Rail and the Scottish Government. 80% of Glasgow Airport users are outgoing, who are less likely to use a rail link than incoming passengers. The project needs a good business case, though capital funding has already been earmarked in the Glasgow City Deal. John McCormick suggested that some private investment might be attracted, for example for a station at Glasgow Airport, repaid through annual infrastructure access charges.

SAPT AGM: The Minister agreed to an invitation to be guest speaker at the SAPT 2017 AGM. SAPT suggested a date after the local council elections in May would be a good opportunity to focus on local transport issues (*AGM now fixed for Tuesday 6th June, see front page*)

The SAPT representatives thanked the Minister for a constructive and informative discussion

2

Achieving Transport Policy Objectives

Three recent press releases confirm Scotland still has serious transport and environmental problems.

1. Streets in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth and Paisley are all listed in league tables of pollution released by Friends of the Earth Scotland. Nitrogen dioxide and particulates, emitted mostly by diesel vehicles, greatly exceed Scottish Government targets and EU limits.
2. Traffic congestion delays are worsening. Traffic congestion cost Scottish drivers a total of £2.4 billion last year with Aberdeen rated as the worst in the country. Edinburgh was second, while Glasgow ranked third.
3. Scottish Transport Statistics, released by Transport Scotland, show bus journeys declined by 5 million from 2014 to 2015 (-1.7%) while car traffic rose by 1.2% to an all-time high of 45 billion vehicle km.

Scottish Government transport policy is to create an integrated public transport system, increase walking, cycling and public transport use, and reduce road congestion and pollution, all admirable objectives.

But none of these objectives are being met because investment decisions are not consistent with policy.

For instance, £3 billion is earmarked for dualling the A9 (which was fully rebuilt in the 1980s), with a further £3 billion for the A96 Aberdeen-Inverness road. This was a commitment not based on credible cost benefit assessment. But only £160M (5% of the road spend) will be spent upgrading two loops on the mostly single-track Highland Main Line. Upgrading the Aberdeen-Inverness line to support an hourly InterCity service has no completion date. **The road investment choices will encourage modal switch from train to car.** Most car journeys start or end in urban areas, so urban congestion and pollution will continue to rise.

Buses carry 76% of public transport users but road congestion delays journeys and funding is limited.

Trams provide energy efficient, zero pollution transport. With each tram able to carry up to 250 people, they can reduce the number of vehicles in city streets. But while many of the 60 or so Western European and UK tram networks are being successfully extended, and Light Rail traffic increased by 5.8% last year in England, Scottish opinion is still tainted by initial contractual problems with the Edinburgh Tram project.

If the right outcomes are to be achieved for transport and the environment, the right investment choices need to be made. And the legislative framework has to allow more transport planning and co-ordination.

The forthcoming Transport Act needs to make it easier for local authorities to partner with bus operators in improving town and city centres. More bus lanes and priority measures can increase the speed of urban buses. Reviewing bus routes to reduce congestion and pollution in prime shopping streets can create a more pleasant and healthier environment. Expansion of cross-city electric rail, tram and tramtrain routes co-ordinated with buses is key to establishing zero-emission, traffic-free, yet accessible pedestrian zones.

The local authority elections in May are an opportunity to debate transformational developments:

Edinburgh: Extending Trams to Leith and Newhaven, and via a new TramTrain route using the under-used South Suburban railway from Haymarket to Cameron Toll and on-street to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, would create an extensive Metro network reducing road congestion throughout the city centre.

Glasgow: The under-used City Union Line could be developed to create a new cross-city Metro TramTrain route from East Kilbride, Barrhead, Newton and Cumbernauld via St. Enoch and Howard Street to Glasgow Central. This would also relieve pressure and reduce costs at Central High Level.

Aberdeen: Re-opening the railway from **Ellon to Dyce and Aberdeen** could subsequently be extended to towards Banchory, with rail and bus links to the city centre from P+R sites on the Western Peripheral Road.

New transport strategies are now needed for each city region, funded by **City Deals**. Transport Scotland's road spending spree must be replaced by a more sustainable transport programme in partnership with local authorities if the Scottish Government's transport and environmental policies are to be delivered.

The **InterCity rail infrastructure to Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness also needs to be upgraded.** Doubling more single track sections, and establishing fast hourly (or better) rail services between all cities (including Aberdeen-Inverness) is urgently needed if road traffic growth and congestion are to be reversed.

Transport Scotland's STAG process and Network Rail's GRIP assessment should be revised to give more positive weighting to projects that contribute towards achieving strategic and environmental objectives.

Petition to the Scottish Parliament: Bus Services (Regulation) (PE1626)

This petition raised by the Unite union is “calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to legislate to regulate bus services in Scotland and to carry out an inquiry into the benefits of bringing bus services in Scotland into common ownership”.

Response to the Scottish Parliament Petitions Committee from the Scottish Association for Public Transport

SAPT believes that a new framework for public transport in Scotland is needed. Issues we have identified following discussions (see Scottish Transport Matters 2016/4 “Changing Buses”) are:

1. Bus journeys have **fallen by 10%** in 5 years in Scotland (but **only by 1%** across Great Britain)
2. Bus fares have risen by **only 2% in real terms** over the last 5 years
3. Government support (incl local authorities) at **£297m** has **fallen in real terms by 14%** over 5 years
4. Passenger revenue (excl govt support) at **£357m** has **fallen in real terms by 2%** over 5 years
5. **Road congestion** affects bus journey times and punctuality in urban areas. This is worsened where road works are being carried out. Operating costs rise as extra buses are needed to maintain schedules.
6. Town and city centre streets can be unpleasant and unhealthy for people due to **pollution and congestion** caused by road vehicles including buses. Competing buses can unnecessarily increase traffic
7. There is little or **no co-ordination** between buses, trains, subway and trams, unlike in other countries.
8. Local bus use in rural areas is declining. Better bus/rail connections could attract long distance users.
9. The quality and accuracy of **timetable information** at main bus stops is variable across Scotland
10. The fall in bus use is greatest in the SPT area (-21% in 5 years) but around Edinburgh traffic grew by 1%

Conclusions:

A number of initiatives could **improve bus travel, without requiring regulation or changing ownership**:

- Review bus lanes, road junction and bus bay designs and traffic light priorities to raise urban bus speeds. This could be achieved through Quality Partnerships or Quality Contracts with local authorities
- The Road Works Commissioner should liaise with contractors and bus operators to minimise disruption
- Bus stop service information should be maintained and updated to a high standard throughout Scotland. This could be funded by the Scottish Government through Traveline Scotland, subcontracted to bus operators where appropriate, with a quality assurance penalty regime to ensure accuracy.

Buses in the SPT area (where there is competition between three main operators and many smaller bus companies) have performed worse than around Edinburgh where Transport for Edinburgh operates most services. This suggests that an **integrated metropolitan transport network** (as in London and many continental cities) attracts greater use than a deregulated bus market with multiple competing operators.

Our Association believes that **greater transport integration** would benefit passengers and boost usage by:

- **Enabling interchange from bus routes to rail, subway or tram services using one ticket or smartcard**
- **Rationalising routes to minimise duplication, and road congestion in town and city centres**
- **Co-ordinating timetables, with common periods of validity, to provide reliable connections**

This could be achieved through **four alternative frameworks**:

- a) Enhance the **Quality Partnership or Quality Contract** mechanism and simplify the procedures. The *Strathclyde Bus Alliance* is a promising initiative with bus operators in the west of Scotland.
- b) Introduce a **bus concession model** as in London, with a fixed percent profit margin for the operators
- c) **Franchise routes**
- d) **Common ownership**. Note that the nationalised Scottish Bus Group never integrated bus services with British Railways trains. Bus traffic **dropped by 66%** over the last 20 years of nationalised operation.

Option (a) above would probably require the lowest level of public funding.

AVIATION

Except for the Scottish Conservatives, there has been strong adverse reaction to the Scottish Government's support for a third runway at Heathrow, now endorsed by the UK government but with delivery unlikely before the mid 2020s. Iain Macwhirter (Herald) was puzzled by Scottish Government support for a third Heathrow runway while a Herald editorial argued that, if Heathrow expansion proceeds, 'it is imperative that a similarly ambitious plan is put in place to ensure our railways are ready to play their part in Scottish economic growth'. The rail network had to be made fit for the 21st century demands already falling on it.

Edinburgh Airport's long-term plan includes release of the present second runway for other purposes and building a new runway parallel to the existing one by 2050. Opposition to changes in flight paths is increasing BA will introduce wi-fi on short-haul flights from summer 2017 and plans to increase seats on Boeing 777s from 280 to 332. Ryanair has cut profit forecasts by 5% due to a falling pound yet EasyJet is planning extra flights from mainland European airports to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness. FlyBe is introducing new routes from Aberdeen and Edinburgh direct to Heathrow from March 2017

Thomson is to introduce direct flights from Glasgow Airport to Montego Bay from 22 June 2017. Qantas is planning to use Dreamliners to introduce the first non-stop flights from London to Australia in 2018. Eurowings is introducing direct flights from Munich to Edinburgh and to Glasgow but Flybe has stopped the only overseas flights (to Amsterdam) from Dundee. These may be restored if radar coverage improves. Loganair is switching expanded flights from Edinburgh to Glasgow due to a new morning rush-hour congestion charge at Edinburgh Airport. In April, overall landing charges at Edinburgh will rise 8% compared to a Glasgow rise around 1%. Prestwick Airport has struck a deal with Houston Spaceport with hopes that space tourism flights could be operating within three years.

RAIL

A media campaign against Abellio ScotRail may have contributed to the decision of MD Phil Verster to take charge of the Oxford-Cambridge rail project. Yet ScotRail performance remains good compared to other operators, with NR track and signal problems and engineering work contributing to recent problems. The new MD Alex Hynes (from Northern Trains) has a reputation for flair in customer and staff relationships.

Full redevelopment of Glasgow Queen St station may be delayed a further seven months due to complex negotiations over the nature of the delayed Buchanan Galleries shopping and entertainment project.

The Scottish Government has been attacked on "back of a fag packet" plans for a temporary rail fares freeze. A Dalton argues for more dramatic fares reductions to fill empty seats available on many off-peak trains.

Carillion has won the £49m contract for wiring the Carfin-Shotts-Midcalder line by 2019, giving five electric routes from Glasgow to Edinburgh. Electric trains for services across central Scotland are now being delivered

Glasgow City Council is contributing £10m to the £18.3m cost of a new station at Robroyston opening in 2019. It is close to land already developed to the north and a further 1,600 homes are expected to the south. Glasgow's contribution will be repaid from a section 75 deal contributing £11,000 per house built.

The balance of funding will be met by £7.1m from Transport Scotland Stations Fund and £1.25m from SPT. The site is close to an M80 junction and will include park-and-ride opening late in 2019. Trains from the station will include direct services to Glasgow, and to Edinburgh via Cumbernauld and Falkirk Grahamston.

A new station at Dalcross, close to Inverness Airport and planned new housing, is likely to open by 2019. Costs are around £5.5m including £3.3 m from Scottish Stations Fund.

SWestrans has delayed plans for reopening Beattock station but hopes applications to the Scottish Stations Fund could allow reopening of Eastriggs and Thornhill.

Toilets and a café have been provided at Tweedbank station and some trains to and from Edinburgh have been lengthened. CBR (Campaign for Borders Rail) is developing a case for rail extension, and land safeguarding, from Tweedbank to Carlisle. The Scottish Government is assessing this but funding may restrict reopening in the next decade to the section between Tweedbank and Hawick.

BUS and LIGHT RAIL

Subway use in Glasgow is still 3% below usage prior to the July closure as part of the modernisation programme. Plans for a £144m tramtrain route from Glasgow Central to Glasgow Airport to be open by 2025 have been endorsed by Renfrewshire and Glasgow City Councils but await approval in the City Deal programme.

In a rare example of a scheduled bus passenger fatality, an 82 year old Midlothian woman has died of injuries when a Lothian Bus was forced to brake suddenly. Former diplomat, David Frost, has criticised Edinburgh for allowing Princes St to be clogged with buses and street furniture while not including a tram stop with easy access to Waverley station. In London's Oxford St. there are plans to cut the buses by 40% to improve the environment of this shopping and tourist area. Edinburgh may consider similar action on Princes St. Part of the Glasgow Broomielaw Fastlink buslane has been closed due to another pedestrian being knocked down within two weeks. Distraction by walkers using smartphones may have been a factor. Additional barriers are to be installed with pedestrians directed to official crossings (H2Nov). Edinburgh has made permanent a pilot scheme to allow cars to use bus lanes outwith peak periods.

First Group Chief Executive Tim O'Toole has called for stronger action on city centre congestion and lower long-stay parking charges contributing to falling bus use in Glasgow. Other factors may be falling car fuel costs, the fuel duty freeze, falling footfall in city centres and rail alternatives (H15Nov)

MacTours vintage London Routemasters used in Edinburgh since 2002 have been withdrawn on the news that Lothian Buses is introducing a £6.5m fleet of 30 open-topped double-deckers meeting high environmental standards (EN 7Nov).

Lothian Buses have been shortlisted for five UK Bus Awards. New weekend night buses have been introduced from central Edinburgh to Dunbar and North Berwick. Joint offers for day bus use to visit East Lothian attractions have also been introduced.

Stagecoach West Scotland has launched mobile ticketing through its smartphone app (ASH 21Dec)

In North Ayrshire a major row has arisen over Council decisions not to provide free school bus travel for the replacement Garnock Community Campus which is less than 3 miles distant from the adjacent towns of Beith and Kilbirnie. £1.4m has been spent on improved access by foot or bicycle but parents are seeking a continuation of free bus travel. Pupils from Dalry will be able to travel by rail to Glengarnock station which is adjacent to the campus (ASH 21Dec).

Overhanging trees are an increasing problem for double-deck bus operators in Scotland.

Despite tough trading conditions, McGill's Buses report a 12.5% rise in profits last year to £3.6m.

FERRIES

To ease temporary problems, CalMac has transferred vehicle ferry MV Coruisk to operate as a passenger ferry on the Gourock-Dunoon route over the winter period.

The head of Argyll's Transportation Committee has suggested examination of a tunnel from Lochaline to Fishnish to cut ferry costs and end uncertainty over ferry cancellations (but this would offer a very indirect route to Oban even if the Corran ferry were replaced by a bridge).

CalMac carried over 5m passengers in 2016 - mainly due to extension of RET cut-price ferry fares. Ardrossan – Brodick was the busiest route with 828,262 passengers (up 8.7%) and over 200,000 vehicles (up 6.8%) The next busiest routes were Largs-Cumbrae (738,549 passengers) and Wemyss Bay-Rothesay (675,714 passengers). Cars on the Rothesay route were up 19% and by 40% on Oban-Craignure route (the fourth busiest for passengers). The steepest rise (from a low base) was 74% on the Tobermory-Kilchoan route. Over the year, more than 5,000 sailings were cancelled. The larger new ferry being built for the routes from Uig to Lochmaddy and Tarbert will require Highland Council to spend £23m on harbour improvements at Uig.

Western Ferries (Clyde) report a marginal dip in annual profits from £2.7m to £2.6m but plan to upgrade quayside infrastructure at McInroy's Point and Hunter's Quay.

Ten years of community operation of the small Glenelg-Kylerhea vehicle ferry to Skye is being celebrated by a £60,000 modernisation of the wheelhouse of the vessel which used to provide the Ballachulish ferry until the bridge there opened in 1975. Despite the Skye bridge, the Glenelg ferry carried 36,000 passengers and 12,500 vehicles in 2016.

The question of a hovercraft link from Fife to Edinburgh has again been raised. Maid of the Loch, mothballed at Balloch, may return to regular service on Loch Lomond in 2018 if fundraising efforts are successful.

Freight on the P&O Cairnryan-Larne route has reached its highest volume for five years, up 7.5% on 2015.