



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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A SAPT Members Meeting will be held in **Glasgow on Monday October 28th** 2013.
18.30 – 20.30 in the Glasgow Mercure Hotel (formerly Ingram Hotel, in Ingram Street).

An update on the latest transport developments will be given:

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

All SAPT members are welcome to attend.

Subscription Renewal

Annual subscriptions are now due. Membership rates remain unchanged.

Members paying by cheque should return the **enclosed form** with remittance please.

Members paying by standing order should take no action, but for members where the correct payments are not being received by SAPT, an advice note is enclosed with this newsletter.

Corporate members will be invoiced separately.

New members who have joined this year are covered until next year.

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The SAPT AGM held on Wednesday 15th May 2013 welcomed Transport Minister Keith Brown MSP as guest speaker. Mr. Brown's speech, and answers to questions from members, are summarised below.

Introduction by Mr. Keith Brown MSP, Transport Minister

It is a pleasure to be invited to share with you this Government's approach to transport investment and how we support an integrated and sustainable transport system with public transport at its heart.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Christopher Harvie for his contribution in promoting your Association's work. I am sure you share my appreciation and thank him for his efforts as he retires as President. A role he has fulfilled for a decade whilst sharing his insight around integrated transport on the continent. I understand Chris is returning to Germany today and we wish him a safe journey.

Transport matters to Scotland:

- It makes a major contribution to Scotland's economic, environmental and social well being.
- It is one of the key enablers for enhancing productivity and delivering this Government's overarching purpose of sustainable economic growth.
- The Scottish Government has invested over £8.3 billion in transport since 2007, making good on the sustained under investment in previous years.
- During 2012 - 2015 £5.4 billion investment has been allocated for transport infrastructure and services to deliver on our strategic transport objectives.
- Ongoing investment in the public transport system connects regions, connects individuals to jobs, education, services and recreation, connects businesses with customers and suppliers and helps encourage modal shift.
- Last year the Scottish Government invested over £1 billion in public transport and other sustainable transport options such as Smarter Choices Smarter Places and community transport.

An integrated public transport system

- plays a vital role in improving connectivity.
- helps to reduce emissions.
- creates accessible and affordable transport choices.

We have the most ambitious carbon emission reduction targets in Europe and a stronger, greener public transport system will contribute towards achieving our goal. Whether it is by building capacity of our rail network to serve the continued growth in passenger numbers, by supporting the purchase of cleaner, more efficient buses or by creating an infrastructure that encourages a safer environment for more of us to cycle or walk in.

Ferries

- Ferries are essential to Scotland's transport network. They provide a vital link to our remote and island communities,
- At the end of last year we published our Ferries Plan
- It contains a number of proposals to further enhance ferry services for the benefit of local communities.
- Despite harsh cuts made by Westminster to our capital budgets we have continued to invest in vessels and shoreside infrastructure. And I am proud that we are providing record levels of financial support to underline our commitment to ensuring that all communities – be they remote, island or mainland – share in Scotland's future success.

Bus

- The Scottish Government's commitment to bus services in Scotland is clearly demonstrated by the quarter of a billion pounds provided every year for the Bus Service Operators Grant and Concessionary fares.
- Statutory Quality Partnerships have been established across 5 local authority areas. These partnerships will create opportunities for authorities to specify the quality of buses and minimum frequencies. And in return the authorities will improve the infrastructure. The Scottish Government seeks to encourage this type of approach and has established a £9 million Bus Investment Fund to support local initiatives.
- The Scottish Green Bus Fund has provided funding support of £7.7 million and has assisted the purchase of 94 low carbon buses. Bus subsidy funding changes introduced in April 2012 are designed to encourage further fuel efficiency measures.
- In addition to this investment we are committed to our national concessionary travel scheme for older and disabled people living in Scotland.
- Transport Scotland are using the experience of the smart ticketing systems installed on over 7,000 buses to inform the significant challenges faced in extending smart ticketing to rail, ferry, subway and tram networks in future.

Trams and Subway

- Edinburgh Trams, currently our second largest infrastructure project, is now making good progress with support from Transport Scotland and remains on schedule to begin passenger services by Summer 2014.
- Our £246 million support for the Glasgow Subway modernisation programme demonstrates our recognition of the valuable contribution the underground can make within the urban environment.

Rail

- We understand that railways are more than a means to move people and goods. They can spread prosperity, generate economic activity, strengthen communities, and create business and leisure opportunities. We are determined to deliver a modern and efficient rail network that is a source of pride and puts the needs of passengers at its heart.

Rail Investment

- Now more than 83 million passengers per year are travelling on ScotRail services. A remarkable growth of 33% over the past decade. Continued investment in better trains, stations and services will support further growth.
- We announced a £5 billion programme in June last year for the period 2014 to 2019. This includes over £3 billion capital investment in the rail infrastructure. Supporting substantial improvements between Edinburgh and Glasgow, between Aberdeen and Inverness, on the Highland Main Line and future electrification projects.
- We have also increased train services by 10% across Scotland opening eight new stations.

EGIP

- The £650 million Edinburgh Glasgow Rail Improvement Programme is a comprehensive programme of improvements to Scotland's railway infrastructure, rolling stock and service provision.
- The project has already delivered a number of key infrastructure improvements including new services on the Edinburgh - Glasgow via Shotts and Carstairs lines, introduced a year ahead of schedule.
- The £28 million redevelopment of Haymarket Station is well underway with the project scheduled for completion later this year.

Electrification

- Network Rail has begun the electrification of the Cumbernauld-Glasgow line. Electrifying 50km of railway marks the first phase of EGIP electrification to be delivered in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2014.
- The environmental benefits of electrification are substantial with electric trains producing up to 25% less carbon emissions than diesel trains. That is why we are committed to our national programme of electrification and we have set an ambitious programme of electrification of our rail network – 100 km per annum post completion of EGIP.

Aberdeen to Inverness / Highland Main Line

- Additional services and journey time improvements have already been delivered on the Highland Main Line.
- In collaboration with Network Rail we are seeking to take forward opportunities for new stations at Kintore and Dalcross.

Borders Railway

- Our commitment to the Borders Railway opens up the region for the first time in over 40 years with the longest section of railway in the UK to be reopened in modern times and remains on target for completion in 2015.

Communities

- Opportunities exist on smaller scale projects for local communities and the rail industry to work in partnership. We have committed to the development of Community Rail Partnerships in Scotland for the first time, aiming to build upon existing successful community involvement schemes such as ScotRail's Adopt A Station.
- Scotland's rural railway network takes people through some of Scotland's most spectacular scenery. The opportunity to develop our tourist markets and boost our rural communities is something we will support and encourage.

Franchises

- It is an exciting time for rail in this country, central to our thoughts is the re-letting of two franchises from April 2015. A 15 year Caledonian Sleeper franchise and a 10 year ScotRail franchise.
- The Sleeper contract is likely to be in excess of £200 million, with the ScotRail franchise being the single biggest contract let by Scottish Government, with a cost in excess of £2.5 billion.

High Speed Rail – Fast Track Scotland

- However, our vision for rail is not restricted to Scotland and we are strong advocates of the UK high speed rail network including Scotland.
- We recognise – as many of you do – the benefits that high speed rail plays in reducing journey times between countries and regions. Challenging the dominance of domestic air travel.
- The DfT's announcement last year enables us to take forward planning to deliver a high speed network in Scotland. Processes will see us work in collaboration and partnership with DfT and HS2 Ltd on planning routes northwards from Manchester or Leeds to Scotland.
- In November last year we announced our commitment to develop plans to create a high speed rail link between Edinburgh and Glasgow with journey times of less than 30 minutes. Development work on this ambitious plan has already begun.

Passengers – Fares

- Although infrastructure projects are important for the development of our rail network there are other equally important issues for passengers. We have listened carefully to passenger concerns including through the Rail 2014 consultation undertaken last year.

- Affordable fares are a key consideration. That is why we are putting a stop to inflation busting fares. I recently announced the removal of over 1,500 fares anomalies. I am delighted the Scottish lead in freezing ticket prices and removing 'split ticket' anomalies has been endorsed by Stephen Joseph, Chief Executive of the UK Campaign for Better Transport who said :-
"The rail fares review must follow the example set by the Scottish Government. North of the border they are making rail travel affordable and simpler. That commitment should be matched in England and Wales, ending fares hikes and simplifying the frustrating and complicated way ticket prices are calculated".

Conclusion

I hope I have provided evidence of this Government's commitment and ambition to create an integrated and sustainable public transport network. The significant investment we have made in our services and infrastructure is only one part of the picture.

This Government makes a substantial investment each year in the provision of cross-modal information and connecting infrastructure. We work with all our transport partners in developing timetables which offer travellers effective connections between services and between modes. We will also be looking to commercial and franchised transport operators to continue to work together to deliver more for their customers in future. It is through the successful development and promotion of a fully integrated transport system that we will be able to challenge attitudes and change behaviours towards greater modal shift.

The role your association plays in promoting public transport and challenging Government enables the travelling public in Scotland to have a voice. Input from organisations such as yours helps shape our policy and strategy over the longer term.

I thank you again for the opportunity to join you this morning and I have no doubt we will continue to debate these issues in the future towards achieving our shared vision for a fully integrated, sustainable public transport system in Scotland.

QUESTIONS

Five questions were submitted to the Transport Minister, with responses summarised below:

From Scott Simpson, SAPT:

Has the Scottish Government considered introducing the philosophy of Transport for London, with a fully integrated system for trains, buses and ferries? Rather than competing, bus operators would bid on a route-by-route basis to operate the timetable specified by Transport Scotland or Regional Transport Partnerships?

[Scotland's situation is not analogous to London's but we can learn from the Oyster Card system.](#)

From Bob Barnes-Watts, SAPT:

On the 21st June 2012, in a statement concerning the new rail franchise for Scotrail, you said that "... we will require bidders to develop plans and proposals on the actions that they can take to link with other forms of transport – bus, bike, ferry; it is absolutely essential that buses meet the trains, etc."

Currently one operator provides rail services and another major group runs the bus services serving the majority of Scotrail stations; what power will the rail franchisee have to compel the bus operator to tie-in with train services?"

[We are legally obliged to franchise rail services, and won't re-regulate buses, although ScotRail bidders will have to set out how they will connect with other modes. In relation to connections at interchanges, buses have greater flexibility for waiting when necessary, than do rail operators.](#)

From Councillor Collins Dumfries & Galloway Council:

As Chair of SWestrans, Depute Leader of Dumfries & Galloway Council, and Vice Chair (Scotland) of West Coast 250, I welcome the conclusions of the SAPT report on High Speed Rail, in particular as it reinforces the argument for a west-coast alignment, and for acceleration of HS2 for Scotland.

I am, however, concerned over the emphasis on reducing the journey time from London to Glasgow / Edinburgh, and the potential for access to and from south-west Scotland to be lost.

Does the Transport Minister agree that retention of Carlisle as a rail hub on HS2 is essential, not only to ensure access to Cumbria and western Northumberland, but also to prevent further erosion of the economic position of Dumfries & Galloway?

Holyrood is not responsible for the design of the Anglo-Scottish HS2 route, and there is still no commitment by the DfT to an HS2 extension to Scotland, although the Scottish Government is pressing for this.

From Chris Day, Edinburgh City Council:

With regard to High Speed Rail, you've announced the intention of building a route between Edinburgh and Glasgow by 2024, comprising the first step towards an HSL to the south.

How will you convince Scotland outwith the Central Belt that the Glasgow-Edinburgh component is not just more spending in the Central Belt, but that it will benefit the rest of Scotland?

(NB the question assumes that Scotland generally supports HSR, but all of Scotland does not necessarily support the Glasgow-Edinburgh component of HSR)

An HS rail route between E and G will alleviate pressure on the Edinburgh-Falkirk-Glasgow route and allow other services and intermediate stations to be developed.

From Paul Tetlaw, Transform Scotland: In 2008 the First Minister stated that railways must at least compete with roads on journey time - he was speaking about the Highland Main Line.

Given the current plans to dual the A9 road, the journey time by rail will never be competitive unless the railway is doubled tracked and electrified. Will the Transport Minister review the current plans so that road and rail enhancements are considered together as would be normal practice under the STAG appraisal process?

Holyrood is looking to complete A9 dualling by 2025 and the A96 by 2030, but cannot do all that is needed. Road schemes will not be reviewed. There is a timetable for electrification, rolling-stock ordering, smart ticketing is planned, and a Stations Improvement Fund has been established.

The following questions could not be answered due to time constraints at the AGM. However, the Minister subsequently provided written answers which are given below.

From John McCormick, SAPT:

When will electrification of the main line from Glasgow to Edinburgh via Falkirk, and to Alloa and Dunblane, be completed? First announced in 2006, it appears that electrification of these routes may still not be finished until well after 2016. Electrification in England is now progressing much faster than in Scotland. And when will new electric trains be ordered for these routes?

In recent years, we have increased the number of routes that have been electrified in Scotland. These include the reopening of the Airdrie to Bathgate line in 2010, which provides a new electric through line from the West of Scotland to Edinburgh. Also, the electrification of the Paisley Canal line was completed in December 2012.

This Government is committed to the electrification of our rail network and our ambitious programme of electrification includes the electrification of approximately 160 single track kilometres across the Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk High, Cumbernauld and Whifflet lines. The electrification of the Cumbernauld line will be completed in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

Following the completion of the Edinburgh-Glasgow via Falkirk route by December 2016, the electrification of the Stirling/Dunblane/Alloa and Shotts lines represent the next logical step in our programme. Together with Network Rail we are exploring options to deliver the electrification of these lines following the completion of the Edinburgh-Glasgow route before the end of the next control period in 2019. **(see also update on page 7)**

From Calum McCallum, SAPT: Does the Minister support extension of rail services to Glasgow Airport? And what plans are there to speed up progress on the introduction of smart multi-modal and inter-company ticketing at prices no higher than the costs of car use and parking?

Glasgow Airport: The Scottish Government has no plans to fund or promote the extension of rail services to Glasgow Airport.

Smartcards: In October 2012 we launched a smart ticketing delivery strategy to take us at least through the first stage of working towards the long term vision: "That all journeys on Scotland's bus, rail, ferry, subway and tram networks can be accessed using some form of smart ticketing or payment". There are substantial challenges to be overcome. Not least finding the appropriate compatible technology.

The first step was to identify willing partners amongst RTPs, local authorities and transport operators in Scotland, and establish a number of demonstrator smart ticketing projects. Around 20 such projects have now been established, forming a substantial programme. As well as working closely with various RTPs, local authorities and operators across these projects, we have forged particularly close links with the Seven Cities Alliance. The Alliance is pursuing, with our support and input, a workstream on smart ticketing led by Dundee City Council. A programme board has also been formed, with representation from all the key delivery stakeholders in Scotland.

From Ray Flint, SAPT: Are there plans contained in the provisional specification for the new Sleeper franchise to require the new contractor to develop a formal partnership with Eurostar to provide significantly enhanced through travel opportunities to/from Europe - and if not could you personally intervene to instruct Transport Scotland to remedy this omission'

While there is no requirement for the new contractor to develop a formal partnership with Eurostar, we would encourage close working between the new franchisee and Eurostar to provide enhanced rail travel opportunities between Scotland and Europe. As Eurostar is operated by Eurostar International LTD, the Scottish Government could not intervene and instruct them to work in partnership with the new franchisee.

From William Moffat, SAPT: Access to Williamwood station is via a steep stairway, followed by negotiation of a footbridge. Can Williamwood station be included in the Scottish Government's recently announced £5.27 million upgrade programme?

The Scottish Government is investing £41 million through the Access for All programme, dedicated to improving access at stations across Scotland. The current programme indicates that by April next year, 19 additional stations will have been made step free. Priority for investment is based on a number of factors including passenger numbers, proximity to other accessible transport or major facilities such as hospitals, and value for money. On this basis, other stations have been given greater priority so far, but we will continue to keep Williamwood under consideration for future investment.

ELECTRIFICATION UPDATE

At the Scottish Parliamentary Transport Debate on Thursday 30th May 2013, the Transport Minister announced that the Whifflet line (from Rutherglen) will be electrified by summer 2014. Whifflet will be a low cost scheme like the Paisley Canal electrification. It is understood that ScotRail has sufficient electric trains to cover these services from the existing fleet.

While the EGIP electrification of the Edinburgh-Glasgow line will be completed by December 2016, the target 42-minute journey time will not be achieved until two years later when the Stirling/Alloa/Dunblane lines are electrified. This is because the slower diesel trains to Stirling, which stop at all the intermediate stations, will delay the following electric services. During electrification work in Winchburgh Tunnel, while slab track is installed, trains will be diverted via Dalmeny (reversing) for a period. This will increase congestion on the Dalmeny route, so opening of Edinburgh Gateway station (at Gogar) has been postponed until 2016. Also lengthening of platforms at Glasgow Queen Street to accommodate 8-car electric trains will not be complete until 2018, so the initial Edinburgh-Glasgow electric service will operate with up to 7 car trains, with 8 car trains at peak hours from 2018.

The Edinburgh-Glasgow via Shotts line is expected to be electrified (Midcalder-Holytown) by 2019.

Rail: SAPT has made proposals to Transport Scotland for a national regular interval ScotRail timetable. With the new ScotRail franchise now delayed until 2015, there should be time to prepare a new, improved timetable specification for the franchise bidders. The full strategy depends on long-awaited upgrades to the Perth-Inverness and Aberdeen-Inverness lines to support an hourly frequency.

As a condition of extending First ScotRail's existing franchise until 2015, the Scottish Government has secured a major improvement to the Oban train service from 3 trains per day to six from May 2014. This results from the SAPT campaign, jointly with Friends of the West Highland Lines, for improved Oban train services, as part of our "Tourism and Trains" recommendations which were discussed with the Tourism and Transport Ministers. The extra trains are made possible by electrification of the Paisley Canal line (completed under-budget in December 2012) and the Springburn-Cumbernauld line, due by May 2014.

A briefing on the modified EGIP project (Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme) in November 2012 revealed the challenges of redeveloping Glasgow Queen Street station to accommodate 8-coach trains. Given the Scottish Government's announcement of plans for a High Speed Edinburgh-Glasgow line by 2024 (probably terminating in Glasgow Central), SAPT questioned the need for longer trains on the Queen Street route in the longer term.

The SAPT Chairman attended a Community Rail event organised by the Scottish Government. Transport Minister Keith Brown outlined plans for setting up Community Rail Partnerships, co-ordinated by ACorp (the Association of Community Rail Partnerships).

Buses: SAPT produced a paper, "A Better Future for Buses", in January 2013, arguing for a new framework for funding and co-ordination, focusing public funds on supporting and enhancing local urban and rural bus services as part of an integrated public transport system. We held a meeting with First Glasgow management, and are planning to invite views from other bus operators before making a revised submission to the Scottish Government.

HS2: Since the announcement of the HS2 Phase 2 proposals for Birmingham-Manchester /Leeds routes in January 2013, SAPT has updated our previous analysis of the case for a "FastTrack North" route, initially announced at our conference in December 2005. HS2 Phase 2 promises greatly reduced journey times from London to Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds, but only marginal improvements to Edinburgh and Glasgow. The new SAPT analysis recommends phased construction of High Speed "HS2-S" Line from the North of England to Edinburgh and Glasgow. The first phase would reduce London-Edinburgh/ Glasgow journeys to 3 hours when HS2 Phase 2 opens, hopefully by 2030. A subsequent phase would complete High Speed track all the way, cutting the journey time still further to only 2 hours 30 minute. If this phased approach is to achieve a 3 hour journey to London from Glasgow AND Edinburgh by 2030, a West Coast alignment from Preston seems the most affordable option.

Following a meeting with Transport Scotland to discuss our "HS2-S" analysis, SAPT has been invited to join the FastTrack Scotland Partnership Group.

Edinburgh Tram: Construction is now nearing completion, with the Airport-York Place line due to start service in summer 2014. SAPT will continue to advocate completion of the line to Leith once the initial system is up and running. We will also seek a full analysis of the potential for "TramTrains" to the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh via Haymarket, the South Suburban Line and Cameron Toll. In the long term, TramTrains from south Fife via Haymarket to Princes Street could alleviate rail congestion in Waverley if this becomes a more serious problem.

Airports: SAPT Vice President Tom Hart was involved in discussions with BAA about access to Glasgow Airport following cancellation of "GARL". A study is ongoing.

Ferries: Transport Scotland's Ferries Plan for the Western Isles and Clyde was released just before Christmas 2012. The plan contained some good proposals, retaining the ferry network as an integrated operation. An hourly Oban-Craignure summer frequency is promised, and a two-ship Ardrossan-Brodick service with some sailings to Campbeltown. However, there was very negative reaction from islanders to proposals to replace "Loch Nevis" on the Small Isles route with a basic RIB, and transfer "Loch Nevis" to the exposed and longer Oban-Colonsay route, for which it is too small and slow. Transport Scotland is also resolutely opposed to introducing Lochboisdale-Mallaig sailings, preferring the longer and more expensive route to Oban. Also Rothesay-Wemyss Bay sailings will continue to stop early in the evening, despite other routes (eg to Arran and Mull) having much improved service over a longer day. There is also no improvement promised for the unreliable Gourock-Dunoon "Argyll Ferries" operation. SAPT are preparing a response to the Ferries Plan, highlighting these deficiencies.

Meanwhile, award of the Northern Isles franchise to Serco has shown the risk of not having a back-up strategy, leaving Orkney's link to Scrabster out of action in May 2013 after "Hamnavoe" broke down.

3 AGM Business Meeting

SAPT Committee: President Chris Harvie has announced his intention to stand down at the 2013 AGM, as he feels his focus on the 2014 independence referendum will prejudice SAPT political neutrality. Thanks are due to Chris for his inspiring innings as President since 2003 which has raised the profile of SAPT.

Jordan Halliday, appointed as Treasurer at the 2012 AGM, has found that increased work commitments means he no longer has spare time and is stepping down as Treasurer. Previous Treasurer John Ferris has prepared the accounts for 2012 on a simplified receipts and payments basis, and has indicated willingness to resume his previous position.

We are indebted to John for preparing the accounts, to Jordan for his input, and to other members of the Committee who have contributed through the year, including Arthur Homan-Elsy for minuting committee meetings, Scott Simpson for dealing with membership and newsletter distribution, and Tom Hart as an active Vice President. Thanks are due to Robin McGregor who has agreed to validate the accounts.

Committee meetings continued to be held approximately monthly in Mercure Hotel conference rooms alternating between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Accounts

SAPT reserves fell from £6662 in 2011 to £6334 in 2013, but as this was due to the one-off cost of printing the "SAPT50" booklet (£1295), there is no need to change subscription rates. The accounts have still to be validated.

Committee 2013

Treasurer Jordan Halliday and Secretary Alastair Reid indicated intention to stand down due to work commitments, which, together with Chris Harvie standing down as President, created three vacancies.

Tom Hart was elected as President, Arthur Homan-Elsie as Secretary, and John Ferris as Treasurer. Professor Dave Murray-Smith was elected as a new committee member for Strathclyde.

President:	Tom Hart	Vice President:	Lawrence Marshall
Chairman:	Dr. John McCormick	Vice Chairmen:	Calum McCallum, Ralph Barker
Secretary:	Arthur Homan-Elsy	Membership Secretary:	Scott Simpson
Treasurer	John Ferris		
Committee:			
Fife:	Laurie Naumann	Highlands:	John Logie, Rolf Schmidt
Lothian:	Graham Atkins, Alastair Reid		
Strathclyde:	David Brown, Dr. Ann Glen, Prof David Murray-Smith		
Borders:	Chris Harvie	General:	Paul Tetlaw, Stewart Leighton

There are vacancies for Dumfries & Galloway, and the North-East.

It was agreed to invite Professor Iain Docherty and Louise Batchelor to become Vice Presidents.

Aviation

Edinburgh Airport officials have visited the Middle East in a new drive to encourage direct flights from Edinburgh. Virgin has filled the gap left by the loss of BMI services from Edinburgh and Aberdeen to Heathrow.

There is concern in Inverness that FlyBe is to withdraw its thrice daily flights to Gatwick from March 2014, with the slots at Gatwick being sold to Easyjet for £20m. Transport Minister Keith Brown is to contact Easyjet to discuss if they can continue the flights.

A campaign to start commercial flights between Skye and Glasgow has been launched by local business.

Ports and Shipping

Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has announced a new summer ferry three times a week for Campbeltown-Ardrossan with the Saturday service also calling at Brodick. South Uist is seeking a direct ferry service to Mallaig, much shorter than the trip to Oban. CalMac has been affected by staffing concern as it seeks to cut costs.

Rail

Virgin is considering a bid for the East Coast passenger franchise and is also proposing action to cut West Coast journey times in advance of an HSR route all the way from Glasgow/Edinburgh to London.

ScotRail reports a ninth successive year of passenger growth from 64m in 04/05 to 81.3m in 12/13.

ORR reports that rail industry income in Britain, exclusive of government support, has risen to 68% of costs. In England, government support contributes 28% of income but rises to 57% in Wales and 61% in Scotland, mainly due to lower population density but relatively high route mileage and high frequencies of services with lower loadings per train mile.

There are now more than 60 proposals for new or reopened stations on existing routes and on reopened lines such as to Leven, St Andrews, Hawick, Deeside and Buchan. About a dozen may emerge as priorities open by 2020, but only if existing Scottish Government aid towards new stations and better interchanges is increased.

Bus

Using ten new coaches, Stagecoach is to start improved Anglo-Scottish sleeper services this summer under the Megabusgold.com brand. They will serve 11 Scottish destinations ranging from Aberdeen and Inverness to the Scottish Central Belt.

Other bus services are seeing fares rising above inflation. Lothian Buses has raised standard flat-fare from £1.40 to £1.50 though this remains below rates in many other cities. First has reduced some fares in Manchester due to passenger resistance but First Glasgow expects that bus usage will be helped by the 25% rise in on-street parking charges being introduced by the City Council. First Glasgow has also cut child fares in the city from 75p to 60p, offset by a rise in 'short hop' adult singles from £1.15 to £1.20 and from £1.85 to £1.90 for 'long hop' singles.

In advance of tram operation in 2014, Edinburgh City Council is consulting on plans for a high-quality Princes St environment with reduced numbers of buses. Plans envisage restricting buses to operate westbound in Princes St and eastbound in George St. SPOKES, the Edinburgh cycling group, has called for a total bus ban on Princes St. but other groups and the City Council do not see this as feasible unless greater progress is made towards a tram network rather than a single route.