



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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Edinburgh-Glasgow electrification and Borders rail re-opening are welcome projects, but the rail network in the North-east and Highlands also urgently needs development. The Inverness-Perth/Aberdeen lines suffer from long sections of single track, for instance the 19 miles between Elgin (pictured above) and Keith. The SAPT AGM will focus on transport aspirations north of the Lowlands, including InterCity rail links.

SAPT AGM

The AGM will be held in the **Perth Mercure Hotel** on **Thursday 8th May 2014**.

The main topic will be public transport developments north of the Central Belt.

HITRANS, NESTRANS and TACTRAN Regional Transport Partnerships will give presentations on their plans for public transport including rail to and within the Highlands, North-East, Tayside and Stirling.

The prospects for new **Scottish InterCity Express** trains will also be highlighted.

The meeting will start at 11.00, with coffee and tea available from 10.30.

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Scottish InterCity Express

Following SAPT's call for a Scottish InterCity Refranchising strategy to improve rail journey times north of the Central Belt (see Scottish Transport Matters 2013/3), this has been further reinforced by Transform Scotland's "InterCity Express" campaign. This calls for:

- Doubling and electrification of the Perth-Inverness line
- Faster journeys and better connectivity to Aberdeen
- Upgrade of the Inverness-Aberdeen line
- A new, direct Perth-Edinburgh line
- Creation of Perth as a major InterCity rail hub

These objectives are strongly supported by SAPT, and also by the Rail Freight Group, Capital Rail Action Group, and Friends of the Far North Line.

The case for better Scottish InterCity links will be examined at the **SAPT AGM in Perth on Thursday 8th May**

The three Regional Transport Partnerships north of the Central Belt (HITRANS, NESTRANS and TACTRAN) will also present their aspirations for public transport developments (see front page).

2

East Coast Refranchising

The three qualified bidders for the London-Edinburgh East Coast franchise (Virgin/Stagecoach, First Group, and Eurotunnel/Keolis) are now preparing their bids which have to be submitted by May 2014. The new franchise is due to start in February 2015.

A new timetable is to be introduced in May 2020 when the full fleet of InterCity Express IEP trains is expected to be in service. A few minutes will be shaved off Edinburgh-London journeys by faster braking and acceleration, though there is no DfT plan to increase the maximum operating speed of trains above 125 mph to give a more significant cut in journey times (The new IEP trains, like existing IC225 trains and West Coast Pendolinos, have a top design speed of 140 mph but this has never been achieved in service).

In discussions with the bidders, SAPT has stressed the need to increase rail's market share by:

- Reducing journey times
- Improving connections at Edinburgh to/from Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth and other major routes
- Continuing or expanding through services between London and Aberdeen and Inverness
- Improving reliability, particularly the incidence of overhead wiring failures
- Providing better passenger experience at Waverley (possibly with a "Eurostar"-type waiting lounge)
- Better P+R arrangements
- Co-operating with the sleeper operator to reintroduce "Executive Return" tickets offering daytime outward travel, and overnight travel for the return journey (or vice versa)
- Encouraging through travel by rail to and from the continent, now facilitated by the proximity of Kings Cross to the St.Pancras Eurostar terminal, by offering more attractive fares initiatives

The announcement by Arriva Trains (Deutsche Bahn) of plans to introduce a "GNER" Pendolino-based open access hourly service between Edinburgh and London by 2016, with a 3 hour 43 minute journey time, introduces a high level of uncertainty for bidders for the East Coast franchise. The Arriva bid is likely to be contested by the DfT, but if the Office of Rail Regulation gives the GNER Pendolino service the green light, revenue predictions for the East Coast franchise will be affected. The fast GNER service would also affect the case for High Speed HS2 services from London to Edinburgh, which have a predicted journey time of 3 hours 38 minutes but are not currently expected to start until 2033 at a cost approaching £50 billion! Perhaps the Arriva bid may encourage HS2 to develop more ambitious plans for Anglo-Scottish travel.



Network Rail has unveiled plans for comprehensive redevelopment of Glasgow Queen Street station. This work has been necessitated by the need for longer 8-car trains to be introduced in the modified Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP). The new station will have four of the platforms lengthened to accommodate 8-car trains. The concourse will be extended towards George Square. SPT's Consort House, and the ugly extension of the Millennium Hotel, will be demolished under a compulsory purchase order if the Transport and Works Order is granted.

Queen Street handles 20 million passengers per year. By 2030 this is predicted to rise to 28 million.

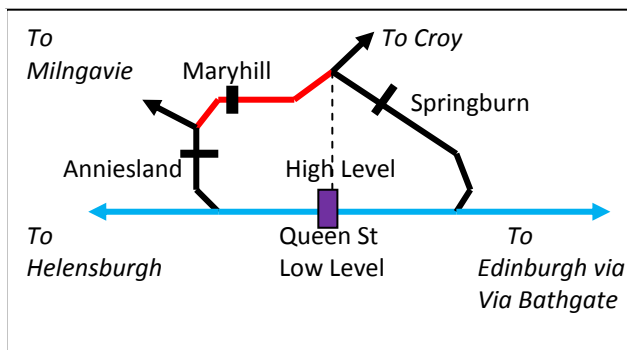
Major disruption will be caused by the need to replace the concrete slab track in the Cowairs tunnel. This will need Queen Street High Level station to be shut for FOUR MONTHS, probably in 2016. During this time, it is expected that passengers to and from Edinburgh will be diverted to expanded train services from Queen Street Low Level via Bathgate to Edinburgh, and also to routes via Shotts and Carstairs from Glasgow Central. Aberdeen, Inverness and Stirling services could be routed via Cumbernauld and Coatbridge Central to Glasgow Central.

In our response to the consultation, SAPT is asking for interchange improvements:

- Good access between the new station and Buchanan Street Subway station
- A direct pedestrian route to the Buchanan bus station
- Consideration of how passenger transfers to Glasgow Central station could be improved, possibly by extending the existing link to Buchanan Street Underground station onwards towards Central

We are also proposing a plan to minimise train disruption and avoid bus replacements during closure of the Cowairs Tunnel. This involves Maryhill line electrification and would give a long term benefit.

Bringing forward electrification of the Maryhill and Croy lines to 2016, and restoration of the link from Maryhill via Anniesland to the Queen Street Low Level line (see right) would create a loop for trains from Croy to run via Maryhill, Anniesland, and Queen Street Low Level then back via Springburn to Croy. This would allow some services from the Croy line to be maintained during closure of Queen St High Level.



The **Airports Commission Interim Report** was published in December 2013 with responses requested by the end of February 2014. A Final Report will be published later this year with decisions by the UK Government made by 2015. The Interim Report examines capacity and connectivity issues relating to UK airports to 2030 and beyond. It concludes that London and the South-east will remain the dominant zone for air travel to and from the UK. This is partly influenced by UK, EU and international law restrictions on the ability to reduce and redistribute growth in air travel but also by the view that the aviation connectivity provided by the South-east makes a major contribution to the UK economy. The conclusion is that the UK economy will be best served by a continuing focus on the south-east, but this conflicts with the UK government view that High Speed Rail (HSR), and especially HS2, can help a desirable shift in the balance of population and economic activity away from the south-east.

Transport policy alone will never be sufficient to deliver shifts in the present balance. But there is a need for fuller study of the overall economic and well-being benefits of a sustained shift in activity away from London and the South-east. This is mainly a matter for government rather than an Airports Commission restricted to looking only at airports and their surface access. Nevertheless, the Final Report of the Commission should include the implications of this issue. These include:-

- attracting traffic growth away from London airports to regional airports well connected with improved regional and inter-regional public transport networks, reinforced by an increased number of direct flights and those connecting with other flights at hubs outside London and the South-east
- improved rail links to regional airports to encourage cuts in car and taxi access and improve reliability on roads adjacent to airports – also a greater shift from air to rail of not only domestic flights to London but also of other flights within Britain and to the nearer continental mainland
- replacement of potential plans for Heathrow expansion OR a costly Isle of Grain hub airport (which could reinforce a South-east dominance and abstract funds from other projects) with:-
 - package of measures to promote use of regional airports (including action to place Glasgow Airport directly on the UK rail network by 2020, and Edinburgh Airport by 2030)
 - accelerated growth at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham and Stansted airports, and postponement of a second runway at Gatwick (based on stronger prospects for Stansted to attract traffic from London and from regions such as East Anglia, the West and East Midlands, Yorkshire and North-east England)

The regulatory and fiscal framework should be modified to support, rather than work against, the conclusions of economic and regional assessments. Possible changes are discussed in Chapter 4 of the Report but this concludes rather unambitiously that it is 'too difficult' to make beneficial changes in present arrangements.

SAPT recommends that the framework should be reviewed, with priority given to varying Air Passenger Duty (APD) rates to encourage greater use of regional airports by direct international flights. Fuller use of Air Traffic Distribution rules may also improve reliability and reduce environmental problems around Heathrow. Proceeds of APD and Airport Parking Levies should be available for transport and environmental programmes within the respective regions (including improved surface access by public transport to airports) and also to accelerate phased provision of an HSR service network by 2030.

In a separate aviation development, the Scottish Government has completed the purchase of Prestwick Airport and is embarking on a rebranding and flight development exercise. Glasgow Airport has expressed concern about possible conflict with state-aid rules while other comment, though agreeing that Prestwick has a future role (including aircraft repairs and training), sees Prestwick as having a relatively limited role skewed towards the leisure market.

Prof. Arnold Hendry

Arnold Hendry, former Professor of Civil Engineering at Edinburgh University and SAPT President from 1977 to 2003 died in December 2013. Prof. Hendry first became involved in transport and amenity issues in Edinburgh in the early 1970s. He became involved in the Lothian Group and National Committee of SAPT and later developed close links with the Cockburn Association. He was briefly SAPT Chairman before becoming President in 1977.

As well as seeking to improve city bus services and developing proposals for expansion of east-west local rail services, he was best known for his scheme for a light rail or tram north-south rail corridor, using existing tunnel north of Waverley station and serving important parts of the city lacking rail access. After much interest and discussion, Lothian Region's light metro scheme, endorsing the Hendry idea, eventually failed due to opposition to on-street trams and the high cost of additional tunnelling south of Waverley extending the tunnel section to Newington. However, the scheme did draw attention to tram opportunities in Edinburgh and plans for major roadworks within the city were cancelled. Tram priorities finally re-emerged with an east-west corridor favoured. The initial route is about to open and there is growing interest in an extension into south-east Edinburgh.

Some years after retiring from the university, Prof. Henry also retired as SAPT President and moved to be nearer family in England. His last major SAPT involvement was a warning against the high costs of government proposals for tunnelling under the airport and River Almond to place Edinburgh Airport directly on the Scottish rail network. His preferred priority was tram access though he continued to urge a tram network including Leith, Granton and access to the south and east. It is fitting that he lived to see approval of Edinburgh tram proposals with the initial route soon to open for public service.

Tom Hart, SAPT President

Alastair McPherson

The franchised ScotRail's inaugural managing director Alastair McPherson who served in that role from 1997 to 2001 unexpectedly passed away on 28 February after bravely battling many years of illness.

During his time at the helm, he exceeded National Express's commitment to new Class 170 and 334 trains, created the Club 55 offer which endures as a key product, pioneered a commuter service into Inverness from Tain, introduced the Edinburgh-Glasgow 15-minute-interval timetable and improved local services from Fife into Edinburgh.

He opened four new stations at Dalgety Bay, Drumfrochar, Dunfermline Queen Margaret and Howwood, embraced the Edinburgh Crossrail route which would lead to the forthcoming Borders Railway and kept the trains running in the aftermath of Hatfield.

On the West Highland Lines he reinstated the seated coach on the Sleeper between Fort William and Edinburgh, introduced the Garelochhead commuter service and brought in an additional train on summer Saturdays from Glasgow to Oban and back. Redundant station buildings were converted to new uses under Railtrack's Station Regeneration Programme.

Alastair was guest speaker at the SAPT AGM in 1999.

He was 62, and leaves a wife Sara and a young daughter Eilidh.

Notified by JohnYellowlees, First ScotRail

By Tom Hart

BUS, TRAM & TAXI

After Iain Gray's proposal for a Bus Bill, there are indications that this may be replaced by a Scottish Government Bus Bill in 2015. The government is committed to a higher level of rail, bus and ferry co-ordination. £4.2m of funding has been announced to assist 13 bus projects over the next three years

Fare complaints have included passengers overpaying due to not having the exact fare. The best way forward is an extension of smartcard ticketing supplemented by simpler flat fares in local travel zones. Lothian Buses report an encouraging takeup of paperless travel with users downloading etickets to their iPhones and Android devices. The system will also apply on the new tram route. SPT has also experienced a greater than expected takeup of electronic card registrations entitling users to lower fares on the Glasgow Subway. Users of conventional tickets now pay a premium and this has encouraged a shift to smart tickets in a system designed to incorporate extensions into regional rail and bus travel with options for wider use in Scotland

Stagecoach has won a £500,000 contract for bus provision to the Gleneagles Ryder Cup in September. Plans are now well advanced with rail and bus operators for the introduction of free travel for ticketholders for Glasgow Commonwealth Games events in July. Free travel will be available within specified distances of events in association with strict parking controls

Edinburgh Bus Station is to be renovated. It is used by 800 buses a day with annual running costs of £2.2m. Usage of Lothian Buses has risen from 110.7m passengers in 2012 to 115.4m in 2013. Bus use is now back to a level last seen in 1988. Use of Edinburgh night buses is 40% up on levels last July

Stagecoach has introduced a new bus service from Edinburgh to North Queensferry. Lothian Buses plan an orbital route using the City Bypass from the Gyle to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.



Practice running of Edinburgh trams is now taking place on the entire route. To encourage use, proposed fares from Ingliston park and ride stop will be cut from £2.50 to £1.50. Over time, business and housing developments, as well as airport traffic, will contribute to rising usage with opinion on tram extensions also becoming more favourable. Tram/bus co-ordination is expected.

Left: A tram leaves York Place for Edinburgh Airport on a test run on 24th February 2014. Photo:John McCormick

Transport Minister Keith Brown has announced that a tram-train link from Glasgow Airport to Glasgow Central is to be considered. This is the "alternative solution" advocated by SAPT since the heavy rail GARL scheme was cancelled by the Scottish government. The tram-train (or light metro) would share the Paisley Gilmour Street – Glasgow line with trains. This line was recently upgraded with a third track.

After Glasgow City Council approval, a 3.3% rise in city taxi fares was applied in February. Taxi drivers in Glasgow now have permission to install CCTV cameras in efforts to deal with assaults and fare disputes.

A new feature of taxi comment has been disquiet about inadequate taxi rank provision at major rail stations, especially Waverley, Haymarket, Glasgow Queen St and Glasgow Central. Due to anti-terrorism precautions, taxi entry to Waverley is now severely restricted with many forced to walk to and from external taxi ranks. Similar problems arise in the newly announced proposals for Glasgow Queen St.

Rail

Physical progress is now evident on the Central Borders rail route with details of timetables and fares also announced though the debate continues about likely usage south of Gorebridge. There is concern about the extended length of single track sections in the scheme, and that the design of much of the infrastructure does not make passive provision for future doubling.

The Strathspey Railway Company is making progress on restoring the last section of the tourist railway from Aviemore into Grantown-on-Spey. Campaigners are strengthening calls for a change in the balance of proposed road and rail investment from Inverness to Aberdeen and to Perth in favour of accelerated rail improvement, shorter train journey times, improved passenger frequency and expanded rail freight.

Though staying high, the National Rail Passenger Survey has found overall satisfaction with ScotRail has fallen from 90% to 87%. A Which survey has found only 56% satisfaction with ScotRail, seventh among 19 UK rail operators. But ScotRail was named Best Rail Operating Company in a First Group environmental contest, after impressing judges by reducing water, gas and electricity use at depots and stations by 24%, 6% and 5.9% respectively. Across Britain, surveys have found that many passengers are unaware of their rights to partial or full refunds if trains are more than 30 minutes late. Operators have promised better publicity. Network Rail has agreed an ORR determination that NR has to improve punctuality and cut costs by 20% over the next five year control period.

Due to subsoil problems and heavy coal trains, major track repairs on the Stirling-Alloa-Longannet line costing £15 to £20m will be needed over the next five years. Work has started on a £3.8m scheme to upgrade Gleneagles station in time for the Ryder Cup

The alcohol ban on evening and early morning services has cut alcohol-fuelled crime on ScotRail trains by one third.

TACTRAN has found a positive case for relocating Invergowrie station to an adjacent site, West Dundee, with prospects for doubling usage. There may also be justification for relocating Bridge of Allan station closer to housing in north Stirling. Applications to the small Scottish Government fund to assist with new or improved rail stations are being prepared. Kintore, Dalcross, Winchburgh, East Linton, Reston and Robroyston may have strong prospects but no early action is expected on sites at Bonnybridge and Grangemouth. SWESTrans has expressed interest in new halts at Eastriggs, Beattock, Thornhill and Dunragit with the last of these possibly gaining from low costs and a good fit with a Community Rail Partnership for the area south from Ayr and Girvan.

P D Stirling and Carnbroe Estates are seeking permission for a £250m expansion of the Eurocentral rail/road freight interchange adjacent to the new M8 between Baillieston and Newhouse. The project makes provision for 90 box container trains compared to the present 30 box maximum at Eurocentral. By cutting operating costs, this is seen as necessary to encourage shifts of trunk freight from road to rail.

FERRIES & SHIPPING

Prof. Neil McKay has quit the Scottish Government expert ferry group saying it has sidelined the interests of passengers. Shetland(1984) is seeking damages for losing out on the mainland ferry service contract. Transport Minister Keith Brown has stated that, even with independence, there would not be a return to cheap ferry fares for commercial vehicles

Users of the Arran ferry have complained about disruption due to bad weather since November. They are seeking study of either plans to ensure more reliable access to Ardrossan in bad weather or a shift, either permanent or in emergencies, to an alternative port. The new winter Lochboisdale- Mallaig link introduced in November 2013 has experienced difficulties by the ferry "Lord of the Isles" entering Mallaig harbour in this winter's stormy weather.

In their 40th year of trading, Western Ferries report a 17% rise in profits, aided by the withdrawal of the rival state-run vehicle ferry between Gourock and Dunoon. Scottish ports report an upturn in the market with a 5% rise in trade flows expected in 2014. Cruise passengers are expected to rise to 390,000 in 2014

ROADS & PARKING

Transport Scotland has agreed contracts for a £310m package of M8/M74/M73 improvements, including completion of the M8 on a mainly new route between Baillieston and Newhouse. An additional £190m is being spent on other aspects of the project, including land acquisition. Completion is scheduled for 2017 with some Glasgow-Edinburgh trip times at peaks being cut by as much as 20 minutes. Funding will come from the European Investment Bank and a group of other investors with repayments over 30 years but the contracts also include ongoing maintenance over this period. This is the first UK roads project to use bond finance since the credit crunch.

Despite strong previous support, Labour's infrastructure spokesman, James Kelly, has branded the new Forth Crossing a 'vanity project' with few benefits for Scottish companies. Transport Minister Keith Brown hopes that sections of the £653m Aberdeen bypass can open early. A preferred bidder would be announced this summer with the aim being completion of the entire project by spring 2018.

Despite some £7.5m spent on protecting the A83 from landslides and providing a relief road, a further landslide has affected the road on the north side of the section previously most affected.

Scottish Government is proceeding with plans for average speed cameras on single-track sections of the A9 between Perth and Inverness associated with a three-year trial cutting maximum speeds from 60mph to 50mph but also raising HGV speed limits from 40 to 50 mph. Cameras should be installed by autumn 2014. Scrubland is also to be cleared from the sides of the road. The busiest sections of the A9 already carry 21,500 vehicles a day with further growth expected and supported by plans for full dualling by 2025. Critics have queried whether traffic volumes and economic benefits justify full dualling and have called for a corridor package encouraging greater shifts of passengers and freight to an improved railway. Phil Flanders of the Road Haulage Association has queried the view that it would be straightforward to shift significant freight volumes on this corridor from road to rail and argues that keeping the (unenforced) HGV limit at 40mph would be less safe than a 50mph maximum for all traffic.

Variable speed limits on the congested approaches to the Forth Road Bridge have cut accidents from 12 a year to 2 'slight injury' incidents with traffic flow also smoothed. Speed limits fall as low as 30mph at times of heavy traffic. The mandatory system was installed in December 2012.

The Scottish Government is consulting on the introduction of 20mph limits on sections of trunk road in Biggar, Langholm, Largs, Maybole and Oban.

North Ayrshire Council is planning B714 improvements in phase with completion of the A737 Dalry Bypass to improve access from Glasgow and the Erskine Bridge to Saltcoats/Ardrossan

Drivers in six more rural postcode areas in Scotland are set to have fuel prices cut by 5p a litre subject to EU approval. However, there is already evidence that the gap between urban and rural fuel prices has narrowed from 5p a litre to 2p a litre with average UK petrol prices now just under 130p per litre

Potholes are still costing Councils £1,600 a day in vehicle repair claims – actual costs to users are considerably higher with much work still to be done to improve maintenance.

Conservationists are seeking the application of planning controls to stop estate tracks blighting scenic areas.

Glasgow City Council is considering cuts in annual parking charges for West End residents from £135 to £50 but businesses will have to pay more for parking, and on-street charges for non-residents rose in January. The aim is to ease traffic flow, improve safety and raise net income. Police Scotland is planning to withdraw traffic warden funding, leading either to increased problems related to parking or to replacement funding for traffic wardens from cash-strapped local authorities. The Scottish Parliament is considering a Bill to tackle misuse of blue badge parking for those with disabilities.