



## Scottish Association for Public Transport

# SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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*Abellio will replace Turbostars and Class158s with refurbished HSTs on northern InterCity routes. But this photo at Aviemore shows the need to also provide more double track on main InterCity lines. On Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014 the 10.45 Inverness-Edinburgh waits to pass the 08.33 Edinburgh-Inverness, while the Royal Scotsman also waits to depart for the south from the Strathspey line.*

### **Abellio ScotRail maps out the Future**

**Abellio are the guest speakers at this year's SAPT AGM.  
SAPT will also give updates on Bus Co-ordination and HS2 issues.  
The AGM will be held in Perth Library (Soutar Theatre)  
on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015** starting at 11.00**

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Abellio have been awarded the ScotRail franchise starting on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. Performance is to be 92.6% of trains punctual (within 5 minutes on suburban routes, and 10 minutes on longer routes).

Connecting buses are to be provided on some routes. Buses will not be operated by Abellio, but will be by agreement with bus operators.

New stations are being built at Winchburgh and Robroyston (promoter sponsored). East Linton and Reston stations depend on funding packages (with bus links from Reston to Duns and Eyemouth)

**HST InterCity Trains:** Abellio are refurbishing a fleet of HST trains for InterCity routes to (and between) Aberdeen and Inverness. These trains will be refurbished and fitted with retention toilets and electrically operated doors. The 2018 timescale depends on release of these trains by new IEP trains and electrification of the Great Western Main Line.

Thirteen trains will have 5 coaches (plus motor coaches), and fourteen trains will have 4 coaches (plus motor coaches). These HSTs, which are much shorter formations than existing HST trains, should have excellent performance compared with the rather under-powered Turbostars currently in use, and should allow significant acceleration of services. Unfortunately the 125 mph capability of these trains cannot be used on ScotRail routes (but see Section 2).

**New Electric Trains:** Hitachi is to supply and maintain a fleet of electric multiple-units for the Abellio ScotRail franchise. Hitachi Rail Europe will build 234 vehicles, formed into 46 three-car and 24 four-car EMUs. They will operate on the Edinburgh – Falkirk - Glasgow line, and from both cities to Stirling, Dunblane and Alloa once these routes are electrified: also on some Glasgow suburban lines.

This is the first order for the Hitachi AT200 EMU design. Consisting of 23m vehicles, the 160 km/h EMUs will have cab-end gangways for multiple operation. They will have aluminium bodysHELLS manufactured at Hitachi's Kasado plant in Japan. If more orders are received, bodysHELLS may be constructed in future at Hitachi's Newton Aycliffe factory in northern England, now being built.

The AT200 EMUs will have a 35-year design life, and meet the requirements set out by Transport Scotland for energy efficiency and weight reduction to minimise their impact on the infrastructure. Adequate table and toilet facilities, LED lighting and air conditioning will be fitted. Power sockets and wi-fi will be available throughout the trains.

Seven 4-car Class 321 trains will be transferred from London Midland in December 2015. The Class 321s will allow a cascade of Siemens Class 380s to begin limited electric services to start on the Edinburgh-Glasgow line from December 2016, in advance of the Hitachi train fleet being delivered from 2017 onwards.

**Tourist Trains:** SAPT was pleased to see scenic trains included in the ScotRail Invitation to Tender, issued by Transport Scotland, following our "Tourism and Trains" initiative in 2011. Abellio are to market tourist trains, with improved catering and commentary, on the West Highland, Kyle, Far North, Stranraer and Dumfries lines, and the Borders Rail Link.

Abellio are refurbishing Class 158 trains, aligning most seats with windows, for West Highland Line services (as on the Kyle and far North lines). Refurbished Class 156 trains with retention toilets are to be used to Stranraer and Dumfries. Turbostars or Class 158s will be used on the Borders line.

Steam trains are also being considered for up to eight routes (in addition to the Jacobite train operated by West Coast Railways on the Mallaig line). However, there is concern that this could lead to cancellation of some service trains if the Borders line is included in the steam programme, as insufficient double track has been provided to support extra services above the planned half-hourly frequency. The best solution for the Borders line would be to confine steam trains to Sundays.

***Abellio ScotRail will give a full update on plans at the SAPT AGM on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015.***

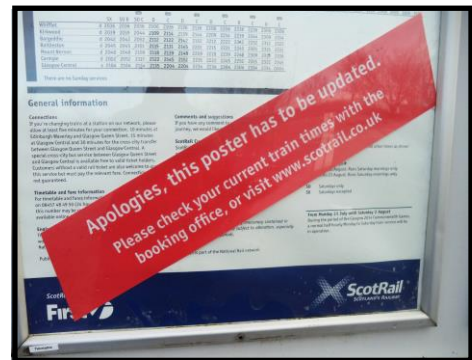
Electric trains started on Glasgow-Whifflet services on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2015. From that date, the Whifflet service was integrated into the Hamilton Circle route routed through Glasgow Central Low Level. Lanark trains now run limited stop into Central High Level.

On the first weekday of the new service, an old Class 318 is seen leaving Carmyle. There was little press publicity for the new services, and timetable posters had not been updated (see below right), meaning that at unstaffed stations there was no information on when, or where, trains were running!



Electrification of the main Edinburgh-Falkirk-Glasgow line has now started, with a completion target of December 2016 when a limited electric train service will start (see Section 1). Full electric service is expected by December 2018.

Extension of wiring to Stirling, Alloa and Dunblane will follow, along with completion of the Edinburgh-Shotts-Glasgow line.



### Priorities for 2019 Onwards

The Scottish Government has committed to electrify 100 track km per year until 2019. A policy is now needed for rail infrastructure upgrades for the subsequent periods up until 2029. This should establish priorities for electrification, and upgrades to rail capacity and speed.

Scottish road spending is continuing at very high levels after completion of the second Forth Road Bridge and the Aberdeen Western bypass, with £3 billion promised for A9 dualling, and a similar sum for dualling the A96 Aberdeen-Inverness. Meanwhile, much of the ScotRail InterCity network from Perth and Aberdeen to Inverness, and rural railways, remain single track. This limits train frequency and reliability and will seriously undermine rail's competitiveness against fast dual carriageway roads.

Abellio's train fleet plans should influence developments over the next ten years. The HST fleet has considerable potential to shorten rail journey times. As with InterCity routes in England in the 1980s and 1990s, opportunities should be taken to incrementally increase line speeds to take advantage of the HST 125 mph capability. Track curvature in many locations will limit what can be achieved. But sections of new line should be assessed where this would deliver significant benefits. An Inverkeithing –Halbeath route, coupled with upgrading track through Cowdenbeath to Thornton, would bypass the circuitous route along the Fife coast. A significant reduction of up to 30 minutes in InterCity journey times should be targeted.

On routes where double track was singled during the Beeching era, restoring a second track should be assessed. Doubling the track between Aberdeen and Inverurie, which is now going ahead, is a welcome start. Similar progress should also be made around Inverness, on lines to Aberdeen, Dingwall and Perth, and elsewhere where more capacity is needed.

Electrification over the period 2019-2024 should focus on completing Glasgow suburban lines (East Kilbride, Kilmarnock and Maryhill), and the Fife Circle lines from Edinburgh (assuming technical problems on the Forth Bridge can be overcome). Extending electrification to Aberdeen and Inverness should be phased with eventual replacement of the HST fleet in the period beyond 2026. By this time, HS2 should allow cascade of electric trains with tilt technology from the West Coast Main Line. This would be an opportunity for a further very significant cut in ScotRail InterCity journey times.

Martin Bignell of Serco gave an update on progress with the Serco sleeper contract at the Lochaber Transport Forum meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2014 in Fort William.

The Serco contract is for 15 years from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. SERCO has appointed Aberdeen-born Peter Strachan as Managing Director of Caledonian Sleepers. New coaches built by CAF in Spain should arrive in 2018. (refurbishment of the old Mark 3 coaches was deemed too risky due to possible unforeseeable problems with corrosion). Overall capacity will be slightly increased. Business class offering en suite toilet and showers will take more space, but the new airline-style flat bed seats will take less space per passenger, and avoids two strangers having to share one confined cabin, as now. Catering will be managed by Inverlochy Castle.

The current operational model of two 16-coach trains each way will continue, one for the Lowlands, one for the Highlands. All coaches will be the same length (currently sleeper coaches are 23 metres, Mark 2 buffet and seated coaches are 20 m) but the total train length will not change, limited by Euston platforms. One disabled-accessible berth will be provided on each pair of sleeper coaches. The current rotation of eight 8-car sections through Inverness for maintenance will no longer apply, giving more flexibility to alter capacity on each of the train sections to cater for fluctuations in demand. Some maintenance will still be undertaken at Inverness.

Class 73 locos are being reconstructed by GB Railfreight. These are lighter Route Availability 5 so will not be as severely speed limited as Class 67s on some sections of route, eg the West Highland Line.

Train timetables will not be changed much, but the northbound Fort William portion will run earlier from Edinburgh, giving a connection at Crianlarich into the 05.20 Glasgow-Oban train. The seated coach from Edinburgh to Fort William will continue as now, and will continue to accept local passengers (and ScotRail tickets) on the WHL. Boarding at starting stations will begin earlier, particularly at Euston.

Up to £6 million from the £30 million Scottish stations fund is ring-fenced for sleeper station upgrades. A first class lounge is being installed in Inverness. Waiting rooms at other stations are being upgraded, jointly with Abellio. Showers at Crianlarich (specified in the ITT) will be by arrangement with the hotel (though the general view of the meeting was that there would be no demand for showers at 07.00 at Crianlarich and it would be better to provide facilities at Oban). Customer information totems consisting of touch-sensitive screens are planned for each station. But all stations will remain controlled by ScotRail (or NR in the case of Waverley and Central).

A new website has been developed and will be launched, along with a marketing campaign, in January 2015 (for journeys from April onwards). Tickets will be available up to one year in advance. Dynamic pricing will be used to fill off-peak berths.

A number of questions were raised at the meeting:

Q: Will control issues (eg in the case of late running of trains or ferry connections) be passed over to Serco by Abellio?

A: Serco will co-locate with Abellio and Network Rail in the Glasgow HQ so control will be centralised

Q: Has the option of routing one of the sleeper trains via Birmingham been looked at?

A: This presents difficulties but may be reviewed in the future

Q: Is an arrangement with Eurostar, giving through tickets to/from Paris, Brussels etc, being looked at?

A: There could be potential in this.

Q: With the coaches costing around £150 m and the promised government grants less than this, how will Serco finance the funding gap?

A: Coaches will be owned by a finance house (believed to be Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation )

## 4 The Smith Commission and Transport Reorganisation

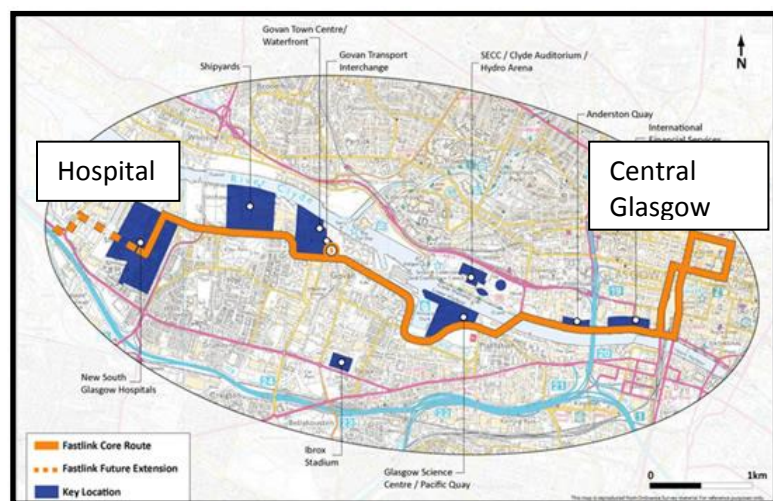
SAPT made a submission to the Smith Commission in November. With most responsibility for transport already devolved to the Scottish Parliament, our recommendations were limited to observing that rail infrastructure should continue to be maintained to a UK-wide set of standards by Network Rail (albeit with Network Rail Scotland working in a deep alliance with ScotRail), and that Air Passenger Duty should be maintained on UK domestic flights to avoid encouraging a shift from rail to air. We stressed that Network Rail Scotland, with the ScotRail network funded by the Scottish Government, must not be adversely affected by the recent transfer of NR to the state sector which is ultimately under Treasury Control. We also suggested bus funding (operator grant and concessionary scheme) should be channelled through local authorities/ RTPs to facilitate transport co-ordination (although of course this could be done now by the Scottish Government).

The final Smith Report made recommendations concerning the Marine and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Northern Lighthouse Board. Public sector organisations are to be allowed to bid for rail franchises funded by the Scottish Government. Powers to change road speed limits and road signs will be devolved, as will the functions within Scotland of the British Transport Police. And Air Passenger Duty for flights leaving Scottish Airports will be devolved (this could lead to England-Scotland flights costing more than Scotland-England flights!).

## 5 Clyde Fastlink Takes Shape

The Fastlink busway from central Glasgow to the new Southern General Hospital is nearing completion and should be opening in May 2015. The route uses some reserved busway along Clydeside but also has sections on normal roads, where traffic lights will be phased to give priority to buses.

The new hospital will be the largest in Scotland with 10000 employees, 1365 beds, 3500 car parking spaces. Sited far from good public transport routes, a new link was needed.



*Fastlink route as shown on SPT website*

Fastlink services will be provided by commercial bus operators who will have to sign up to a rigorous statutory bus quality partnership with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT). Buses will be low emission, low floor, and carry Fastlink branding. The budget for the Fastlink project is £40 million.

Govan will be a major interchange with the Subway and other bus services. In central Glasgow, buses will follow a loop past Central and Queen Street stations and Buchanan Bus Station. A new six stance bus hub will be developed in Union Street, which is currently a pollution and traffic blackspot.

Future extension of Fastlink to Braehead and Renfrew is envisaged.

In addition to the Fastlink bus route, SAPT is recommending a shuttle bus and improved walking route to the hospital from Cardonald station on the Glasgow-Paisley line. Service frequency could be improved to four trains per hour by stopping some Glasgow-Ayrshire trains at Cardonald.

By Tom Hart

## Scottish Government Changes

Following resignation of Alex Salmond as First Minister, former Transport Minister Keith Brown has been appointed Infrastructure Investment and Cities Secretary by new FM Nicola Sturgeon. Derek Mackay, MSP for North Renfrewshire, has been appointed Minister for Transport and the Islands.

Keith Brown has said that he hopes to advance completion of the £745m 28 mile long Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route to winter 2017. Connect Roads will be the contractor and maintainer of the route. Mr Brown said the scheme will boost the north-east economy by some £8 billion and create 30,000 jobs over the next 30 years. On the A96, priority will be for a new Inveramsay bridge.

## AVIATION

Turkish Airlines has formed alliance with Scottish Chamber of Commerce to boost flights from Edinburgh to Istanbul, as a hub with improving access to other destinations (following on from the success of hubs in the Persian Gulf served directly from Scotland). This competition has cut the cost of flying from Scotland to the Middle East and Australia. Edinburgh Airport is also stepping up efforts to attract passengers with origins or destinations in the west of Scotland. Edinburgh has opened a new retail wing close to the tram stop as the first part of £150m improvements at the airport

Low-cost Canadian carrier WestJet is to introduce Nova Scotia-Glasgow flights in summer 2015. Glasgow and Aberdeen Airports have been acquired by a Spanish/Australian consortium, promising more investment and more routes. EasyJet is now more confident of further growth at Aberdeen Airport, though this may be affected by the downturn in North Sea oil and gas prospects.

The Airports Commission has invited views on the alternative options of a Heathrow expansion or a second runway at Gatwick. Glasgow interests support Heathrow expansion but expansion at Gatwick is favoured by Edinburgh Airport. The Scottish Government's preference is for increased direct flights from Scotland

October passengers at Glasgow Airport were 2.7% above October 2013 with international growth at 2.8%. November figures totalling 574,380 passengers (up 11.8% on 2013) showed steeper growth, with international traffic up 18.3% on last year, and domestic traffic up 7.7%. Aided by new Ryanair services, Glasgow will exceed pre-recession passenger levels by 2015. Aberdeen October usage rose 8%, aided by the oil market and an improved October school break performance. Edinburgh passengers in October fell by 0.2% with international travellers down 2.5% due to fewer routes to European destinations. However, November figures at Edinburgh show a rise on last year, with 707,067 passengers (up 3.1%). Domestic traffic grew 4.3%, and international traffic by 1.4% in November.

Virgin has announced that services between Aberdeen, Edinburgh and London Heathrow, introduced in April 2013, will be withdrawn due to low usage and a meagre package of Heathrow slots. (There is a suspicion this may be related to the Virgin/Stagecoach successful bid for the East Coast Main line). Ryanair is to establish a base at Glasgow, in addition to Prestwick and Edinburgh, and will launch 3 times a day services from both Edinburgh and Glasgow to Stansted with bargain fares from £19.99.

The Scottish Government has agreed a contract to buy two new planes to cover routes from Glasgow to Campbeltown, Tiree and Barra. The routes will go out to PSO tender with the new planes in use by 2015

Concerns continue to be expressed about the viability of the now publicly-owned Prestwick Airport unless falling usage can be reversed. New ideas for the airport include a Donald Trump suggestion to use it as a base for private jet access to Scotland's golf resorts, especially those in Ayrshire. Prestwick is also in the running to be the UK's first base for space tourists.

## FERRIES & SHIPPING

Scottish passenger ferry users in 2014 are 4.2% up (to 4.5m) on 2013 – cars up 3%.

RET has been extended to Arran, cutting car returns from Brodick to Ardrossan from £70 to £29.70 with passenger fares down from £11.35 to £7.30. The scheme will be extended to 14 other ferry routes by October 2015.

The £42m new Loch Seaforth (photo below), financed via Lloyds Bank, has been delivered from Germany for use on the Ullapool-Stornoway route but the new linkspans at Stornoway and Ullapool are not ready. The Stornoway-Ullapool service by “Loch Seaforth” will be passenger only for 6 weeks from 23rd February until 7<sup>th</sup> April while work at Ullapool is carried out, with alternative sailings for vehicles from Stornoway to Uig on Skye provided by the “Isle of Lewis” during this period.

The new hybrid ferry Hallaig (normally used on the Raasay-Sconsor route) won the most innovative transport project at the Scottish Transport Awards. A third hybrid ferry has been ordered from the re-opened Ferguson shipbuilding yard for CalMac service, though academic Prof Alf Baird has expressed reservations about the high cost and additional battery weight of these hybrid ferries.

Mull businessmen are seeking an improved ferry frequency and earlier and later sailings, secured if necessary through a rival ferry company. Recent service cancellations have been the highest in the past 16 years. Two vessels are planned for the Oban-Craignure route but will not be available until 2016.

Cromarty Firth Port Authority is opposing plans for a private group to control the entrance to the Firth, fearing that this could have adverse impacts on visits by cruise ships. Cruise ships visiting Orkney have brought in £4m this year with even more cruise ships expected in 2015. Income from cruise ship calls has topped £1m for the first time. Lerwick Port Authority has concluded a £16.5m contract for expansion of oil and fish facilities.

The Environment and Climate Change Minister has arranged refit of a small Greek ferry as part of the Strategic Timber Transport Scheme for moving timber by sea to Troon from 7 locations in Arran and Argyll. Port of Grangemouth reports handling a record weekly number of containers in November. 4,200 containers were moved compared to the previous high of 4,000



*The new ferry Loch Seaforth (photo above provided by Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd) for the Stornoway-Ullapool route will be significantly larger and faster than the Isle of Lewis, with capacity for 142 cars compared with 101 on the older ship. Three return sailings will be made round the clock, making it unnecessary to provide a separate overnight ferry for lorries. The ship is designed for greater reliability, with four engines providing resilience against breakdown.*

## **BUS, TRAM & TAXI**

The Edinburgh tram inquiry by Lord Hardie may take two years but now has statutory powers to compel witnesses to attend. Including loan repayment charges, total tram costs will be around £1bn. Better value may be delivered by extension of the initial route to Leith and Granton, with recommendations to Edinburgh City Council to carry out an updated survey of this.

Progress continues on the renovation of Glasgow Subway stations with the final £5.3m stage of revamping St Enoch station including eye-catching curved roofs over entrances by summer of 2015. Work is ongoing on tenders for new rolling stock.

The Bus Fastlink route from central Glasgow to the new South Glasgow University Hospital (Southern General) is expected to be open by May 2015 though there may be some delay on the final stretch through central Glasgow to Buchanan Bus Station. An extension to Braehead and Renfrew is anticipated. Work proceeds on Quality Bus Partnerships for an improved network serving the Hospital and integrated with other local public transport and park and ride. Parking at the new hospital is limited so significant shifts to public transport and active travel will be necessary.

SPT and Scottish local authorities are facing increasing pressure to make greater savings on bus support while still maintaining and enhancing core networks and social priorities. There are some indications of revived growth in local bus travel as well as in the more buoyant longer-distance sector.

SPT has made emergency arrangements after the sudden collapse of Lanarkshire-based Henderson Travel. McGills Buses have temporarily taken over 13 of the 20 subsidised bus service contracts held by Henderson. Greenock-based McGills report a rise in profits from £659,000 to £1.7m in the year ended 31 Dec., 2013 – this being despite curtailment in government compensation for free bus travel.

McGills is unhappy with any moves to Statutory Bus Quality Partnerships unless there is firm evidence of local authority commitments to improved bus infrastructure, traffic management measures, a review of parking policies/charges and better control of road works. Lothian Buses report that, despite the coming of the trams, Lothian bus use is running at its highest ever level. Transport for Edinburgh has launched an Oyster-type card allowing commuters to pay in advance for up to 50 trips by bus and tram. Critics say the £3.50 day ticket remains better value for those making more than two trips per day.

The bus gate introduced in June at Nelson Mandela Place in Glasgow is having the desired effect on reducing car flows and improving bus efficiency. Other bus gates are planned in the city centre. First Glasgow is allowing the use of euros on some bus routes when special international events are being held – passengers are also able to use smartphones as tickets if an mTicket app is added.

Scottish Conservatives see free bus travel for those over 60 as unsustainable and likely to involve annual costs well over £200m to the Scottish Government in the near future. The party spokesman Alex Johnstone has called for eligibility to rise in line with rises in the pension age. SNP is determined to maintain the present system and points to health and social benefits. At present, almost 147m annual trips are made using the free pass.

First is introducing 18 new buses on routes linking Livingston and Broxburn with Edinburgh. Specifications include wi-fi and leather seats. The Broxburn-Edinburgh service is raised from 3 to 6 buses per hour. Scottish Government has announced a further £3.7 grant from the Green Bus Fund for the purchase of another 83 low-carbon buses

Though the benefits of removing taxis from increasingly busy principal stations have been recognised, complaints continue that not enough attention is being given by rail and local authority planners to the need for better arrangements for taxis and for other drop-off/pick-up traffic with easy access to principal stations including Waverley and Haymarket in Edinburgh and Queen St and Central in Glasgow

*We wish all our members a Happy New Year!*