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Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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The **Borders Rail** re-opening on Sunday 6th September 2015 will increase pressure for more towns to rejoin the ScotRail network. Track exists to **Levenmouth** and **Grangemouth**, which could be served economically by extending existing Fife Circle and Glasgow-Falkirk train services. **St. Andrews** and **Hawick** are also strong candidates, though new or rebuilt infrastructure would be needed to reach them.



Work at Galashiels former station (13th January 2015, left). On the first day of service, a Class 158 at Galashiels (right, photo: J Yellowlees). High demand has led to overcrowding on 2-car Class 158s, with ScotRail promising to strengthen weekend and some peak weekday services.



SAPT Members Meeting: *All members welcome*

Glasgow Monday 12th October 2015 18.30 – 20.30

Mercure Hotel, 201 Ingram Street, G1 1DQ

Topics: Scottish InterCity, electrification priority, transport competition, Edinburgh Tram, HS2

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1 Decision Time for High Speed Rail

At a High Speed Rail conference in Glasgow on 3rd September, Keith Brown, Secretary of State for Infrastructure, confirmed the Scottish Government's commitment to bringing HS2 to Scotland. The latest study is expected to make recommendations by February 2016. SAPT has long supported HSR, and organised the first High Speed Rail *FastTrack North* conference in Glasgow in December 2005. HS2 Ltd has taken a pessimistic view of the business case for HS2 to Scotland, which is surprising given the strong growth in Anglo-Scottish rail traffic and the large market share still using air transport. SAPT research suggests a cost-effective approach, summarised below, that the current HS2 study is likely to confirm:

West Coast Route: There is a commitment to reach London from both Edinburgh and Glasgow in 3 hours or less. It will be politically unacceptable to put Glasgow and west Scotland at an economic disadvantage by routing trains via an east coast route putting Glasgow 30 minutes further than Edinburgh from London.

Sections of HSR plus upgrades: To achieve a London-Glasgow/ Edinburgh target of 3 hours, given HS2's projected 1 hour 24 minute London-Preston journey time, the 192 mile Preston-Glasgow journey must take no more than 1 hour 36 minutes (a saving of 29 minutes on the best Pendolino journey time). This needs an average speed of 120 mph, which can be achieved with a mixture of sections of new 225 mph HSL, and sections of upgraded track. It is unnecessary, at least initially, to find the funding to build a full HSL all the way to Glasgow and Edinburgh, though this remains the long term objective.

Big time savings can be made by building HSL bypasses for speed restricted sections of route. For instance, a 27 mile Penrith-Gretna section of HSL bypassing Carlisle station will save 11 minutes compared with the current non-stop Pendolino timing. (Hourly HS2 London-Carlisle services would serve Carlisle station).

Hourly London-Glasgow and London-Edinburgh frequency: HS2 Ltd's proposal to operate two trains per hour to Carstairs, with sections for Edinburgh and Glasgow, was conceived to avoid the need for full-length 400 metre trains operating into Glasgow and Edinburgh. But this proposal has two disadvantages:

- Splitting/joining trains will add 10 minutes to journey times, and reduce punctuality and reliability
- Half-hourly high speed Preston-Carstairs trains will reduce available route capacity especially for freight

Separate hourly London-Glasgow and London-Edinburgh trains would **cut journey time**, and could be flighted to **optimise route capacity**. 400 metre-long platforms will be needed at Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Glasgow Terminal: Restoring the former Caledonian Railway bridge across the Clyde into **Glasgow Central** could accommodate two long platforms stretching to Bridge Street. The two disused platforms in Central Low Level should also be reinstated to provide extra terminating platforms for Lanark and Shotts trains.

Constructing a new HS2 station near High Street is favoured by Glasgow City Council but this would cost more and have poorer connectivity with Glasgow suburban routes, even if Glasgow CrossRail is built.

Edinburgh Terminal: Haymarket has good rail connectivity, including with the Edinburgh Tram, and is the logical terminal for high speed trains approaching from the south-west. To accommodate 400-metre long trains, new platforms and terminal building could be built at the west of Haymarket, perhaps requiring the Haymarket depot to be reduced or relocated (EGIP will cut the number of diesel trains based there).

We look forward to completion of the HS2 Scottish study which hopefully will be in time for preparatory work to be included in the High Level Output Statement for CP6 (2019-2024). To avoid impacting other rail developments in Scotland (particularly upgrades north of the Central Belt), it is important that a separate funding stream is allocated, optimally based on a Barnett share of the HS2 budget from the UK Treasury.

A further update on progress will be given at the SAPT meeting on Monday 12th October (see front page).

2 Trams to Leith and Newhaven

Edinburgh Trams carried 4,920,000 passengers in the first year of operation, 370,000 ahead of target. Passenger satisfaction is running at 95%, and service reliability is 99%. The high capacity of the trams (each tram can carry 250 passengers) has proved useful at events, for instance at Murrayfield stadium, allowing large crowds to be transported efficiently.

The City Council is considering extending the line from York Place. The best Benefit-to-Cost ratio is for a 4.7 km extension to Newhaven, estimated at £144 million. SAPT supports this option which will give:

- Better quality public transport integrated with trains and buses
- Zero emissions and lower traffic congestion
- Higher international profile for Edinburgh as an attractive city for business and tourism



Typical view in Princes Street (above). Not much space left for people, cycles, or trams!

Capital Transport

Edinburgh's main thoroughfare (above) compares poorly with city centres in Austria's capital Vienna (right) and the Swiss capital Bern (lower right).

Both these cities have environmentally friendly, integrated transport networks with zero-emission, high capacity trams playing a key role in carrying large numbers of people efficiently into the city centre.

City streets have lower congestion. Pavements are wider, giving citizens and tourists a much more pleasant experience than on the narrow and congested pavements on Princes Street.

Extending the Edinburgh Tram to Newhaven is an opportunity to integrate bus and more frequent tram services to reduce congestion and atmospheric pollution on Leith Walk and Princes Street.

SAPT is contacting Edinburgh Councillors to recommend the Tram extension for:

- **Better public transport**
- **Cleaner air**
- **Less city-centre road congestion**

Individual members can help by making their views known to the council and press



Trams reduce road congestion in Vienna city centre



The citizens of Bern enjoy a placid and pollution-free central zone

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Transport Competition or Co-ordination

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is conducting a consultation on open-access competition for rail services. Four options have been proposed by the CMA:

- Option 1 – retaining the existing market structure, but with increased open access operations
- Option 2 – two franchisees for each franchise
- Option 3 – more overlapping franchises
- Option 4 – licensing multiple operators, subject to conditions (including public service obligations)

The MCA observes that where open access operators compete with franchised rail services (eg from York), overall passenger growth has been higher than for stations without competition.

With the ScotRail contract due to last until 2025, any MCA recommendations will have no impact on Scottish trains in the immediate future. It is, in any case, highly unlikely that any Scottish rail services would attract open access bids. But Anglo-Scottish trains, and future HS2 services, could be affected if any MCA recommendations are accepted by the Westminster or Scottish governments.

Issues of cross-subsidy, route capacity, and infrastructure investment need to be taken into account:

- Open access operators competing with franchised services may increase rail usage on profitable routes, which is a good thing, but they also abstract franchise revenue, and so reduce premium payments to the DfT. As premium payments on profitable routes help to reduce the overall cost to the taxpayer of the whole rail network, revenue abstraction risks precipitating Beeching-style cutbacks to subsidies for regional rail services. One way of avoiding this would be to increase track access charges on profitable intercity routes for both franchised and open access trains, using the excess track access income to maintain unprofitable regional routes. But higher track charges on main lines would also affect the cost of regional services like Glasgow-Lanark or Edinburgh-North Berwick which use the WCML and ECML.
- Many parts of the rail network have reached capacity. A bidding war between competing operators for paths on congested routes may not result in the best allocation of capacity between long distance, regional and freight operators. This is already an issue with the rival East Coast Open Access bids by GNER and First Group. ECML Open Access bids contain useful initiatives for passengers, including faster 3 hour 43 minute London-Edinburgh journeys by tilting Pendolinos. But approving all the bids for London-Edinburgh paths would freeze out the CrossCountry services from Glasgow and Edinburgh via York to Birmingham and south-west England. There would also be no capacity left for the proposed regional Edinburgh-Berwick trains serving new stations at East Linton and Reston. Reliably maintaining the new half-hourly Edinburgh-Tweedbank frequency could even be problematic.
- The financial case for investment in new or upgraded infrastructure needs predictable returns. Uncertainty inherent in a competitive environment will undermine planning of major projects like HS2. So while competition could produce short term gains, long term investment could suffer.

The effect of deregulated transport competition has already been demonstrated in the bus industry. The lesson to be learned from bus deregulation is that focusing exclusively on transport competition ignores other much more important objectives like reducing congestion, cutting unhealthy emissions, investing in improved infrastructure, promoting connections between services, introducing Scotland-wide smart ticketing, and maintaining socially necessary transport in remote or deprived areas by cross-subsidy from profitable routes. Local bus use in Scotland has fallen by 12% over the last 5 years. The least significant fall occurred in the Lothians where municipally-owned Lothian Buses provides the majority of bus services (ScotRail journeys increased by 28% over the same period).

Public transport is too complex a subject to be left to the dogma of competition law. A transport strategy is needed for rail investment. And the Scottish Government should consider if bus deregulation, introduced by the UK government in 1986, is fit for purpose for 21st century Scotland. Do Bus Quality Contracts need to be made easier to implement? These issues will be discussed at the SAPT meeting on 12th October.

RAIL

Though aware of the situation before the General Election, the UK government delayed an announcement of major cuts in the rail programme until after the election. Network Rail costs were seen as out of control with Midland and Trans-Pennine electrification delayed to keep within available funds. ORR confirms that NR is over-spending and under-achieving. Future support for Network Rail is to be channelled through train operating companies, allowing them to influence infrastructure & signalling priorities and cost control. NR is also expected to gain extra funding from property development, especially at major stations.

The situation in Scotland is different, with the ScotRail/Network Rail alliance and Transport Scotland rail projects believed to be progressing satisfactorily.

The new UK Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has committed to renationalisation of both rail track and train services. Labour is also more cautious about a high level of HSR spend. With several Conservative MPs unhappy about HS2 through Buckinghamshire, this may delay HS2.

ScotRail has unveiled the first of 40 new-look Class 158 trains, modernised by Knorr-Bremse at Springburn. These will be used on prime tourist routes to the Borders, West Highlands, Kyle and Far North lines.

On appeal, the Scottish Government has given permission for a major inter-modal freight terminal expansion in the Eurocentral/Bellshill area. This would allow operation of 775m rail freight trains, raising West Coast and East Coast freight capacity but also requiring lengthening of some passing loops. A report from the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee of the Scottish Parliament has stressed the merits of a large expansion of rail freight, including better terminals and a return to rail of timber traffic. However, North Lanarkshire Council are continuing to oppose this worthwhile freight development.

ScotRail Abellio has suffered criticism for confused management and poor union relations since the franchise transfer from First in April. A union ban on Sunday overtime for drivers forced severe cutbacks in Sunday services though a two year-agreement on pay and revised rosters should improve the situation. Shortage of rolling stock and track/platform capacity bottlenecks remain serious problems as rail use in Scotland rises year on year. ScotRail plans for an over-50 Discount Club have been heavily criticised. A Herald editorial (29 July) called for more prominence for concessions for the unemployed and low-paid and others under 50 who could help fill the spare seats still available on many trains. There have been further complaints about the large number of cancelled trains on the northern section of the Far North Line to Caithness plus cancellations on the West Highland and recently improved Glasgow-Oban services. However, ScotRail are now recruiting 100 additional drivers. Overcrowding on peak Glasgow-Edinburgh trains has also caused complaints.

Network Rail and train operators are being urged to do more to improve the passenger experience in stations and access to and from them – in particular problems caused by excluding taxis from Waverley. Cyclists will however have better access to Waverley via a new cycle lane. Glasgow-based Spaceandpeople has clinched a 5 year deal with Network Rail for shopping mall marketing at major UK stations.

Throughout Britain, passengers delayed are now to receive cash compensation rather than vouchers. Transport Focus has urged more passengers to claim compensation for delays above 30 minutes. Abellio has also promised to improve wi-fi coverage across Scotland – the company also took over management of Dunbar station from 1 July. But a Transport Focus poll has also found that almost 9 out of 10 ScotRail passengers are satisfied with the service provided – higher than most of the rest of Britain.

HITRANS, the regional transport partnership for the Highlands and Islands, aims to submit a detailed planning application for a new railway station near Inverness Airport, at Dalcross, by end of the year. A key factor will be sources of funding, which could include the Scottish Stations Fund.

Closure of the Winchburgh Tunnel as part of EGIP electrification lengthened many trips and there is rising concern about alternative arrangements for travellers during the four month closure of Queen St High Level in summer 2016 to lengthen platforms and enlarge the concourse. The situation has been further complicated by the late announcement by Land Securities of delay or postponement of their plans for an enlarged Buchanan Galleries integrated with Queen St improvements.

Off-peak ScotRail fares are to be frozen for a third consecutive year, but peak fares will rise by 1%.

Shortage of rolling stock is expected to delay the opening of new stations at East Linton and Reston until 2018. NESTRANS is considering a new station at Bucksburn once doubling on the Aberdeen-Inverurie route is completed. Other stations on existing routes being studied by local authorities/RTPs include Allander, Woodilee and Westerhill (in East Dunbartonshire), Abronhill, Glenboig and Plains (in North Lanarkshire) and Robroyston (in Glasgow). Portobello is a suggested, but difficult, site in Edinburgh. In west Edinburgh, the Gateway station and tram interchange is due to open in 2016. Decking at Johnstone station has increased parking spaces from 340 to 423. Construction has started on a £13.5m new link at Anniesland as part of EGIP plans. A ballast train collision closed the Kilmarnock-Dumfries line for 2 weeks in early August.

FERRIES & SHIPPING

Grangemouth is now handling 155,000 containers a year with just under one-third of Scotland's gross domestic product going through the port. It is the UK's largest feeder port and the only one that exports more than it imports. Facilities for refrigerated containers are being improved. A feasibility study of deepening the channel to the port has started

BG Freight Line, wholly owned by Peel Ports, has extended its Irish Sea network with a new service connecting Rotterdam, Liverpool, Dublin, Belfast and Greenock. The service is expected to increase containers handled at Greenock from 50,000 to 58,000 a year.

The next round of West Coast ferry tendering has provoked further strikes and disputes regarding union and public fears of services passing out of CalMac hands to Serco, already running services to the Northern Isles. Public opinion surveys favour retention of CalMac. Whether EU law requires ferry service tendering is open to dispute. But CalMac faces criticism from Roy Pedersen and Alf Baird of being out of touch with modern ferry techniques which they say might offer better island services at lower cost. The successful bidder will be named in May 2016 and will be required to take forward smartcard ticketing allowing a single national travel card to be used on trains buses, trams, subway and ferries – including non-CalMac. An Arran correspondent says that reliable access to a mainland port is more important than smartcards. The revised North Ayrshire Council Transport Strategy has made improvements at Ardrossan a priority. Both weather and technical cancellations of CalMac services are now almost double 2004/05 figures.

Jim McColl who acquired bankrupt Ferguson Marine Shipbuilders in September 2014 has doubled the workforce and has hopes of acquiring a larger, covered yard again allowing the building of larger ships at Inchgreen on the lower Clyde. Fergusons have been announced as preferred bidders for two large ferries for the CalMac fleet. These are expected to serve on the Ardrossan-Brodick and Uig-Lochmaddy/Tarbert crossings.

A passenger 'Pilgrims' Ferry' between North Berwick and Anstruther has been re-introduced this summer in a collaboration between the Scottish Seabird Centre and Safari Adventures to strengthen tourist links. A new cruise boat, "The Rebel", has been introduced on Loch Ness by Jacobite Cruises. Maid of the Loch on Loch Lomond has received a £3.8 million promise from the Heritage Lottery Fund, though a further £1.7 million needs to be raised to restore the paddle steamer to operation.

The Princess Royal has officially opened the Kelpies attraction at Falkirk/Grangemouth. This includes an extension of the Forth and Clyde Canal. Scottish Canals has announced a £35 million repair and refurbishment programme. The network, encompassing the Forth and Clyde, Crinan, Monklands, Caledonian and Union Canals, is a major leisure attraction, with 22 million visits each year.

AVIATION

Herald editorial (7 August) commended a proposal by Green MSP Patrick Harvie for the Scottish Government to increase, rather than cut, APD provided that those flying only once a year are exempt but a PwC report for the aviation industry claims that halving APD could boost the Scottish economy by £1bn and create 4,000 jobs. The report claims that abolition could create 61,000 jobs across the UK by 2020 with income lost from APD more than made up by rises in other tax proceeds. At present, the annual income from APD paid in Scotland is £230m.

The Airports Commission has recommended an additional runway for Heathrow Airport but there are disputed views on the benefits for Scotland. There is a risk that new slots would be taken by global, not domestic, carriers with a depressing impact on direct long-haul flights to and from Scotland. Within the Conservative party, there are also strong opponents of any Heathrow expansion.

Jet2 is to double operations at Edinburgh, including four new routes. Etihad introduced direct flights from Abu Dhabi to Edinburgh in June. Edinburgh and Glasgow are competing to attract direct flights from China. Wizz Air is launching two flights weekly from Glasgow Airport to Bucharest. EasyJet is to start direct flights from Glasgow to Milan in December.

Two new 19-seater planes are operating on services between Glasgow, Campbeltown, Tiree and Barra. Two new air ambulance helicopters are now part of the Scottish Ambulance Service. The existing two helicopters have also been refitted. The fleet is based at Glasgow, Aberdeen and Inverness.

Edinburgh Airport has apologised to passengers for severe delays in the new security hall. There have also been calls for Edinburgh Airport to abandon trials of a new flight path because of noise. Low-flying aircraft from around 05.00 until midnight have been blamed for causing sleep deprivation.

Pre-tax losses at the Scottish Government owned Prestwick Airport are up from £4.6m to £8.9m, mainly due to a writedown of assets. Passenger traffic is 30% down on previous year. Writing in the Herald (27 July) Pinstripe has urged closure as the best option for the Scottish economy.

Calls have been made for Scottish airports and ports to minimise continuing disruption of freight and perishable goods due to immigrant problems at the Channel Tunnel and Eurotunnel.

Glasgow Airport recorded a 12% increase in passenger numbers in August, compared with the same month last year. Domestic traffic rose by 10.7% to 350,420, with international passengers up 13.4% to 528,095.

Edinburgh Airport saw a rise of 8.7% in August. Domestic passenger rose 8.9% to 467,120, while international traffic increased by 8.5% to 691,674.

Aberdeen Airport passenger numbers totalled 321,442 in August. Domestic traffic declined by 8.5%. Up to 80 airline staff in Aberdeen face the axe, following a merger of bmi regional with Loganair. Loganair will take over the current bmi regional hangar at Aberdeen Airport.

Regional airports in England could lose more than 2 million passengers by 2025 if air passenger duty is cut in Scotland. An alliance of eight English regional airports including Newcastle has requested the Chancellor of the Exchequer to introduce mitigating reductions in regional APD for regional airports in England.

BUS, TRAM, TAXI, ROADS

Transport for Greater Manchester has terminated a contract with ATOS to design, build and operate an Oyster-style smartcard for the conurbation on the basis that the technology is being superseded by smart phone apps and contactless payment cards. This contrasts with the actual working of the SPT Bramble card designed and managed by Nevis Technologies, an SPT/Ecebs partnership. This is being adopted by ScotRail and is capable of bus use as well as the making of other small payments for newspapers, etc. The Nevis system includes arrangements for payments to those from whom purchases are made.

The ScotRail summer offer of free off-peak travel for up to two under 16 to travel with an adult has been extended to include 'the Loop' bus service linking tourist attractions, including the Kelpies, around Falkirk

Edinburgh City Council has approved a trial resulting in bus lanes being open to other traffic except at peaks (7.30 to 9.30 am and 4 to 6.30 pm on weekdays.) Walking and cycling groups see this as a backwards move compared to Glasgow reserving bus lanes from 7am to 7pm all week. Edinburgh also becomes the first city in Scotland to allow motorcyclists to use bus lanes at all times.

North Ayrshire Council is spending £250,000 from an SPT fund to introduce bus lanes at the Hawkhill roundabout in Stevenston.

Complaints have been made about the high cost and slow progress in completing Glasgow Bus Fastlink works to the new Glasgow South (Queen Elizabeth) Hospital. It is claimed that better results would come from re-regulated buses, including action to improve bus times in the city centre

Since 2008, SPT has spent £10m on 110 smaller buses leased out to operators on a 'full-repairing basis' and cutting previous support costs for non-commercial services. However, 14 of the vehicles have proved 'extremely unreliable' and are to be replaced by 5 new vehicles. SPT is seeking permission for a £1 million upgrade of the offices at Buchanan Bus Station, Scotland's largest bus hub.

Lothian Buses is now operating 20 new low-emission hybrid buses bought with help from the Scottish Government's Green Bus Fund. Edinburgh's brand new bus shelters, replacing older shelters over six months, have been attacked as a triumph of design over practicality. They increase weather exposure.

Police are investigating the abrupt ending of City Sprinter services from Eastwood Toll to Glasgow city centre. The Traffic Commissioner is also involved.

Stagecoach has opened the UK's first private bus park and ride in Stockport, Greater Manchester and looks to copying this in Scotland. The 400 space facility will be served by a £12m fleet of hybrid electric buses with free hi-fi. A part-subsidised cycle hub is included.

Stagecoach boss Martin Griffiths has launched a strong attack on plans to allow local authorities to take charge of bus networks in England and Wales, saying there is "no business case" for the proposal. It is claimed that bus franchising would cost more than £3.2 billion a year across England.

Aberdeen City Council is building a 999 space park and ride at Dyce close to the Airport business zone and the new peripheral road. The Council has no funds to provide dedicated bus services so it will be up to private operators to provide a service. The feature will include cycle parking and electric charging points but it is possible that it will be used as a parking zone for surrounding businesses rather than for trips into the city. The park is due to open mid 2016.

Edinburgh City Council has amended taxi regulations so that electric taxis can be used. Dundee is 1 of 8 British cities chosen by UK Government for an electric taxi study. £20m is available for the best bids

A surge in applications for private hire licences in Edinburgh has been linked to web-based Uber coming to the city soon. Gett Taxi has launched a similar service with both firms a threat to existing black cabs. Scotland's local authorities have spent over £90m in taxi fares over the past three years. £15m was spent by Glasgow (mainly on school transport for special needs children). Better organisation could cut costs.

The first phase of the £3 billion A9 upgrade has started on the five mile Kincaig to Dalraddy stretch. This is due for completion by 2017, with the full 80 mile upgrade expected to be completed by 2025. The first section of roadway was installed in the new Queensferry Crossing in September. When complete, the bridge will be the longest three-tower bridge of its kind in the world.

Despite all the recent road improvements, road congestion is still costing the UK £4.5 billion per year, according to a recent study. Encouraging people to use public transport is the only effective solution.