



Scottish Association for Public Transport

SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS



HS2 to Scotland will cross the Southern Uplands. A Siemens high speed train (above) is pictured in hilly country in Spain.

Contents

- 1 High Speed Rail to Scotland: HS2 Ltd Options
- 2 SAPT Annual Report
- 3 Rail News
- 4 Young Scot Bus Scheme
- 5 News around Scotland

SAPT AGM Friday 20th MAY 2016 10.45 for 11.20 hrs Teachers Building, St.Enoch Square, Glasgow

10.45 Coffee/Tea

11.20 Introduction by **Stewart Stevenson MSP, SAPT President**

11.30 Travel Smartcard Systems

The Bramble smartcard, using technology provided by ECEBS of East Kilbride, is now in use on the **Glasgow Subway**. **Dan Schoenhofen, SPT Ticketing Project Manager**, will explain how Bramble works, from smartcards and readers to back-office system.

11.50 Integrated Ticketing: **Bill Reeve, Commercial Director, Transport Scotland**, will outline smartcard potential for travel on public transport systems throughout Scotland.
Q&A

12.10 High Speed Rail to Scotland: A report on the latest work, and future prospects.

12.30 Glasgow Subway Modernisation

Automated driverless trains Modernised stations Platform screen gates
The £288 million modernisation of the Subway is now well under way.
Bruce Kiloh, Head of Policy and Planning, SPT, will describe this major project.

12.50 Q&A followed by short break

13.00-13.30 SAPT Business Meeting

SAPT Area Meetings 2016: All members welcome

Inverness	Tuesday 28 th June	14.00 - 16.00	Best Western Palace Hotel, 8 Ness Walk
Aberdeen	Friday 30 th September	Provisional date – see website www.sapt.org.uk	
Glasgow	Tuesday 25 th October	18.30 - 20.30	Mercure Hotel, Ingram Street

1 High Speed Rail to Scotland

1.1 Progress so Far: Since SAPT's ground-breaking "FastTrack North" conference in Glasgow in December 2005, it is gratifying that, after only 21 years (!), we may see High Speed Trains north of London by 2026. Phase 1 of HS2 from London to Birmingham and Lichfield (on the West Coast Main Line) is due to open in 2026. The parliamentary bill passed its 3rd reading in the House of Commons on 23rd March 2016 and is now passing through the Lords, with Royal Assent expected by the end of 2016.

Phase 1 will see the London-Glasgow journey time cut to 3 hours 56 minutes, using "classic compatible" trains able to run at 225 mph on the High Speed Line (HSL) and normal speed on the conventional network. This compares with a best current time of 4 hours 8 minutes. This small improvement is due to the lack of tilt capability on HS2 trains, which will take 15 minutes longer than Pendolinos between Preston and Glasgow, losing much of the benefit of higher speed gained on the HSL. HS2 Ltd has ruled out tilt technology for HS2 trains, because tilt technology increases the train weight and track forces.

HS2 extension northwards to Crewe has been brought forward to 2027 (Phase 2a). Journey time from London to Glasgow will then be cut to 3 hours 43 minutes.

Phase 2 is planned to open in 2033 to Manchester, Leeds, Bamfurlong (south of Wigan on the WCML), and Church Fenton (south of York for the ECML). The phase 2 plan envisages two trains per hour from London via Preston to Scotland. Each train would have portions for Glasgow and Edinburgh, with the trains splitting in Carstairs. Stopping and splitting the trains adds 6 minutes to journey times, so Phase 2 will cut journey time to Glasgow by only 5 minutes, from 3 hours 43 minutes to 3 hours 38 minutes. The Edinburgh portion will take 3 hours 39 minutes (current best time 4 hours).

Clearly Scotland will get only marginal journey time and economic benefit from the current HS2 plan while the north of England will see more impressive improvements. For instance London-Manchester journeys will be cut from 2 hours 8 minutes to 1 hour 8 minutes.

1.2 Scottish HS2 Studies: Transport Scotland (TS) established a High Speed Scotland Group comprising major councils, RTPS, business organisations, Transform Scotland and **SAPT** to develop and promote the case for high speed rail to Scotland. Options include developing an HSL route strategy that would enable an Edinburgh-Glasgow high speed route to be created, sharing much of the infrastructure with the potential HS2 extension to Scotland. The idea is that additional Edinburgh-Glasgow revenue could strengthen the financial case for HS2 extension. In 2012, Transport Scotland started a study of an Edinburgh-Glasgow HSL, with a link to the WCML south of Carstairs.

In 2013 the DfT commissioned HS2 Ltd to evaluate options to extend HS2 to Scotland. The target, agreed by the High Speed Rail Scotland group, is a journey time of 3 hours or less from London to Glasgow and Edinburgh. The results of both these studies were announced in March and are summarised below.

Previous to these HS2 studies, Network Rail's *Scotland Route* study identified upgrades needed to accommodate predicted passenger and freight growth on the WCML up to 2043. These include junction upgrades at Uddingston, Law and Carstairs, and 30 miles of track to be quadrupled over Beattock.

1.3 Glasgow - Edinburgh HSL Study: TS appraised an HSL from Glasgow Central to Edinburgh Waverley. Journey time would be less than 30 minutes based on 140 mph "Javelin"-type trains, running four times per hour. The HSL would have a spur southwards to connect to the WCML south of Carstairs. This would bring a number of benefits:

- Faster Glasgow-Edinburgh journeys
- Capacity freed on the E&G via Falkirk for more local services and stations, eg Winchburgh, Woodilee
- 10 minutes saved on West Coast Anglo-Scottish services from both Glasgow and Edinburgh
- 20 minutes saved on Cross-Country journeys from Glasgow Central via Edinburgh and Newcastle

The Glasgow-Edinburgh HSL would cost £10 billion but yield a present value of benefits (over 60 years) of only £3.2 billion. But if built as an integral part of HS2 extension to Scotland via the west coast, benefits could exceed costs. This is because an HS2 extension via the West Coast would provide a "Y" route from Carstairs to Glasgow and Edinburgh, with the Glasgow-Edinburgh project just required to provide a short link between the east and west legs of the "Y".

1.4 HS2 Ltd Broad Options Report: Around 200 individual interventions were analysed. HS2 Ltd's report made no recommendations, but identified six main representative packages of interest:

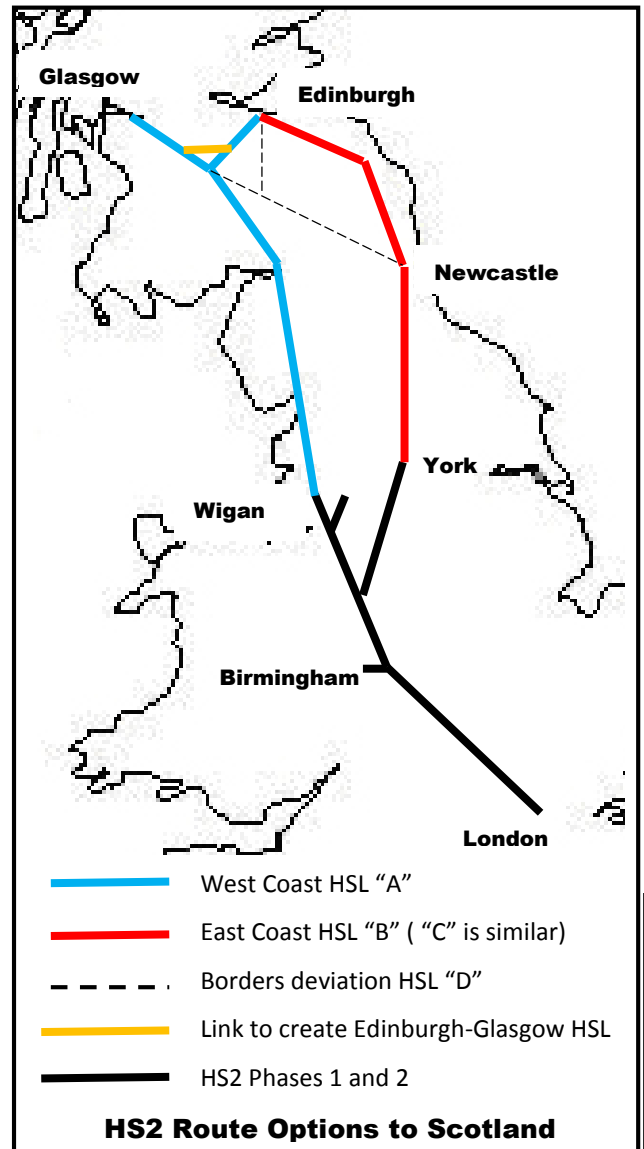
West Coast HSL "A": Constructing a new high speed line all the way to the outskirts of Glasgow and Edinburgh via the West Coast from HS2 Phase 2 near Wigan would cost around £32 - £34 billion and cut journey time to 2 hours 30 minutes from London to Glasgow and Edinburgh. A short additional piece of HSL could provide an Edinburgh-Glasgow HSL.

Lower Spec West Coast HSL: A new West Coast route, but with reduced specification and speed compared with route "A", to a point midway between Edinburgh and Glasgow would cost around £22 to £25 billion, but the cost of an Edinburgh-Glasgow HSL must be added, bringing the total to around £32 to £35 billion.

East Coast HSL "B": To reach both Glasgow and Edinburgh in 3 hours from London via an east coast route, new high speed infrastructure would be needed all the way from the north end of HS2 Phase 2 near York to Edinburgh and Glasgow. Route "B" would pass west of Newcastle and run inland. The cost would be between £27 and £29 billion, excluding the Edinburgh-Glasgow section which would cost an extra £10 billion (ie a total of £37 - £39 billion).

East Coast HSL "C": An alternative to "B" running east of Newcastle and following the ECML along the coast.

Borders HSL "D": A route "D" running from HS2 Phase 2 near York to Newcastle, then taking a direct route from Newcastle to Glasgow via Peebles, with a branch from Peebles to Edinburgh, would cost around £41 - £43 billion. This would not provide an opportunity to develop an Edinburgh-Glasgow HSL.



West Coast Upgrade: A representative package of upgrades ("Package 1"), comprising 137 miles of new line to bypass sections of route, could achieve a 3 hour journey to both Glasgow and Edinburgh, and would also address capacity problems between Wigan and Preston, and over Shap and Beattock summits. The cost estimate for this upgrade, at £17 billion to £19 billion, is lower than for a continuous new HSL. This particular package of interventions would not provide new track north of Carstairs.

1.5 SAPT recommendations

- Transport Scotland's Glasgow-Edinburgh HSL clearly has strong synergies with HS2 extension to Scotland. Further packages of interventions that include a Glasgow- Edinburgh HSL should be analysed
- The benefits to be gained from fast HS2 links between Scotland and cities in the north of England and Midlands should be fully quantified. Rail traffic is already growing strongly on these routes.
- The proposed timetable from London to Scotland should be optimised. The time-wasting splitting of trains at Carstairs (or Preston) could be avoided by running separate trains to Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- The decision to reject tilt technology on HS2 should be re-assessed. Hitachi have developed a 300 km/hour (186 mph) tilting train operating on the Japanese shinkansen network. The feasibility of developing a 350 kph tilting train for Anglo-Scottish HS2 services should be investigated.

High Speed Rail has brought the greatest economic benefits on long distance routes in Europe. In the UK, a London-Scotland HSL has high potential to attract modal shift from air. SAPT urges HS2 Ltd and TS to ensure that the full economic and environmental benefits of extending HS2 to Scotland are identified.

Public transport developments continued at a high level during 2015. The new ScotRail (Abellio), Caledonian Sleeper (Serco) and East Coast (Virgin) franchises started in April.

SAPT was involved with consultation on the redevelopment of Queen Street station and also had a meeting with ScotRail to discuss plans for the diversionary timetable during closure of the Queen Street tunnel. We suggested an improved Edinburgh-Bathgate-Glasgow timetable with a 15-minute frequency and were pleased to see that ScotRail have concurred with this in their planning. However the extra time taken for diverted Aberdeen and Inverness trains to reach Glasgow Central was longer than we expected based on previous diversions. The redevelopment of Queen St has been complicated by the Buchanan Galleries development having been suspended. Unfortunately the decision to stop work on Buchanan Galleries was taken after the traveller link from Queen Street station to Buchanan Street subway station had been dismantled by the developers. We understand it is now having to be reconstructed.

We responded to a number of regional transport consultations from TACTRAN (Tay and Central), NESTRANS (North East Scotland), and the Clydeplan consultation covering Greater Glasgow.

In responding to the NESTRANS consultation into transport development in the Aberdeen-Peterhead/Fraserburgh corridors, SAPT recommended re-opening the Ellon-Dyce railway with a half-hourly fast Ellon-Dyce-Aberdeen train service. Other respondents favour extending dual carriageway to Peterhead, which of course would generate additional road traffic and congestion, but SAPT President Stewart Stevenson (the local MSP) has been a vocal supporter of rail investment in the corridor. We are planning a meeting in Aberdeen in September to focus interest in this and other public transport developments in the north-east.

We had meetings at Glasgow Airport and with local authority interests to discuss the proposed Glasgow Airport Tramtrain link, and we provided supporting information. Although Transport Scotland appear to be lukewarm on this development, it could be a useful pilot for tramtrain technology in Scotland, leading to applications on the Edinburgh South Suburban line and possibly on the Glasgow Southside rail network.

SAPT continued to contribute to the Scottish High Speed Rail Group, attending several meetings and discussing issues. A new phase has now been reached following completion by HS2 Ltd of the Broad Options report for extending HS2 to Scotland. The next few months are likely to see a high level of activity to work towards selecting the preferred route, hopefully by the end of 2016.

The committee spent some time responding to Network Rail's draft *Scotland Route* consultation which aims to estimate and plan for rail demand up to 2043. We suggested that more priority should be given to upgrading speed and capacity on Scotland's InterCity network north of the Central Belt, in particular Perth-Inverness, Aberdeen-Inverness, and eliminating the single track bottleneck between Montrose and Usan. It was difficult to respond to Network Rail's proposals for upgrading the West Coast and East Coast main lines without knowing the outcome of HS2 Ltd plans for extending HS2 to Scotland.

SAPT attended the Scottish Transport Strategy Refresh announcement made by the Transport Minister but there were no radical changes from the previous strategy published in 2006. A more fundamental review of transport strategy is expected after the Scottish election in May 2016.

There was little progress on bus issues. Financial pressure on local authorities, and a freeze on funding for national concessionary travel led to contraction of some local bus services. There is no change to the bus regulatory framework in Scotland. SAPT hopes to focus on this in the coming year.

Administrative Matters:

The Association ended 2015 with a balance of £7210, compared with £7204 at the end of 2014. It was therefore decided to leave subscriptions unchanged for yet another year. Many thanks are due to the members who make an additional donation with their subscription.

SAPT committee meetings were held in Glasgow (three in Mercure Hotel), Edinburgh (three held in the Transform Office), and Inverness (one in Mercure Hotel).

Much work has been done by members of the committee in the last year. We are particularly indebted to Scott Simpson for maintaining the membership database and distributing membership renewals and newsletters, John Ferris as Treasurer, Arthur Homan-Elsy as Secretary, Robin McGregor for checking the final accounts, Vice-Chair David Murray-Smith for organising the AGM, and Tom Hart for collating the interesting news section in "Transport Matters". Thanks are also due to Transform Scotland for allowing their office to be used for SAPT Edinburgh meetings.

SAPT Office-bearers at the end of 2015 are:

President: Stewart Stevenson MSP
 Vice Presidents: Dr. Malcolm Reed Lawrence Marshall
 Chairman: Dr. John McCormick
 Vice Chairmen: Professor David Murray-Smith, Bob Barnes-Watts
 Secretary: Arthur Homan-Elsy
 Membership Secretary: Scott Simpson
 Treasurer: John Ferris John has indicated that he is standing down at the end of 2016.
 Area representatives:
 General: Paul Tetlaw, Stewart Leighton
 Strathclyde: Dr. Ann Glen, David Brown, Ralph Barker
 Lothian: Alastair Reid
 Borders: Professor Chris Harvie Fife: Laurie Naumann
 Highlands: Dr. John Logie, Rolf Schmidt South-west: Tom Hart
 Central: David Giles Tayside: John Whyte
 There is a vacancy for a committee member representing North-east Scotland.

3

ScotRail News

A major new boost to ScotRail services from 2018 has been announced by Transport Scotland and Abellio ScotRail. As a result of retaining 13 additional Turbostar trains beyond the terms of the current leases, new regular interval regional train services will be introduced, allowing the HSTs to provide faster InterCity services with fewer intermediate stops, *as long advocated by SAPT*. Highlights include:

- New hourly Glasgow-Dundee regional service calling at all stations between Stirling and Dundee
 - Hourly service from Dundee to Broughty Ferry, Monifieth, Carnoustie and Arbroath
 - Hourly Inverurie-Montrose regional service (with a half-hourly Inverurie-Aberdeen frequency)
 - Hourly Inverness-Elgin service
 - Hourly Inverness-Perth express service, continuing alternately to Edinburgh and Glasgow
 - Four trains per hour from Glasgow to Cumbernauld, with 2 tph extended to Falkirk and Edinburgh
- Borders trains will become 3-car Turbostars and run through Waverley to the west of Edinburgh and Fife. Many intermediate stations across Scotland will benefit from more regular timetables.



The 12.22 Glasgow Queen Street LL-Dundee passes Charing Cross station on April 14th, diverted via Anniesland and Maryhill during closure of the Queen Street-Cowairs tunnel. Photos: JMcCormick

EGIP is now progressing quickly, with electrification masts erected along a substantial length of the Edinburgh-Glasgow main line, and Queen Street High Level station closed until 8th August. A partial electric train service, initially using Siemens Class 380 units, is expected to start in December 2017.

Electrification masts have reached Croy (right) in this photo of the 13.41 Alloa – Glasgow Queen St LL on April 14th.



4

Young Scot Bus Scheme

SAPT member Giles Baker describes confusion arising with the Young Scot discount card:

“The Young Scot card scheme for 16-18 year olds is operated by Transport Scotland and works for passengers very similarly to the Senior/Disabled scheme except that it extends to Rail. Identical discounts are available to full time volunteers 19-25, and it would be interesting to hear if such people are having even more issues than the 16-18 year old. The card is valid for some non-travel discounts for 16-25 year olds (for example at the Co-op) and therefore is retained after it ceases to be useful on buses.

Bus operators have to use correctly pre-set validating machines, or carefully look at the holders age, if the correct discount is to be given. This is because the difference to the Senior scheme is that Young Scots under 18 have to pay two thirds of the fare. Transport Scotland pays the rest. Bizarrely it is not valid on trams even if you are a City of Edinburgh resident.

Rail ticket office staff have to look carefully at it to establish that the traveller is under 19 or a full time volunteer, and different Rail Company websites call it by different names which is confusing. There is no swiping of the card by Rail Operators so the subsidy paid to them is not exactly related to journeys made. Discounted tickets are valid on other operators’ trains within Scotland.

I am currently arguing with Transport Scotland that it is important for them to encourage advanced booking where this is available from transport operators. Their website positively discourages it by saying that it can only be done in person for coaches, which is not the case. Low and discounted fares are available on the websites of Rail Operators and Citylink, and Citylink say that very soon they will be ensuring that the discount given to Young Scot cardholders on full fares is increased to the correct level. Because of Transport Scotland’s discouragement of advanced booking, young people may never look at the operators’ websites to find out what is available. There are some very good commercially available fares which save the young person money on Scotrail, Citylink and National Express services and these are a lot cheaper than 67% of the regular fare available on the day of travel. So the Transport Scotland website, designed to save young people money, may be causing them to spend extra. These fares also save the taxpayer money, as he/she makes no contribution in the case of Citylink bargain fares, and in the case of NX and Scotrail will pay a proportion of a smaller fare if the Young Person books in advance (I am assuming TS relate support to ticket sales by regular review in the case of Scotrail, and hence don’t pay a subsidy in excess of 100% when low advance fares are sold to cardholders).

I hope that Citylink and NX will not be cynical and take the view that the fewer under 19s that know about low advance purchase fares, the more revenue they are going to get, taking into account the TS subsidy!

In addition I have been tackling Citylink who also have a scheme where 19-25 year olds get a smaller discount which is not reimbursed by Transport Scotland. Until now it has been pot luck whether a ticket issued by a driver to a 16-18 year old has the correct discount or not, they have not used validators. Some drivers gave the lower discount appropriate to 19 year olds.

Above all the Citylink website has not given the correct discount and NX have not given the correct discount on the website or through their call centre. The result is that, if you do not manage to get one of the few very low priced tickets, the best way has been to pay on the day, armed with evidence of the correct level of discount. As a result my sons and I only managed to board one infrequent Glasgow to Lochgilphead coach because of ‘no shows’, as it turned out to have been fully pre-booked.

Lastly, I have noticed that when travelling on buses, very few Young Scots who look a similar age to my 16 and 18 year old sons have claimed the discount. They are often asking for a child fare. That should soon change on Citylink as the child fare is at 30% discount, more than the fare for a 16 year old Young Scot! “

Giles Baker, April 2016

Aviation

London Mayor Boris Johnson is seeking to revive plans for a four-runway airport in the Thames Estuary or an expansion of Stansted rather than Gatwick as the only way of aiding the economy by expanding daily long-haul routes from 75 in 2015 to 114 by 2050. Gordon Dewar, CE of Edinburgh Airport says optimum expansion will depend on remaining in the EU. Amanda McMillan sees huge future opportunities at Glasgow Airport, including tramtrain access. Both agree on remaining in the EU and on a reduction and eventual abolition of APD, allegedly further boosting tourism, business access, total tax receipts and the Scottish economy

The Scottish Government is consulting on possible changes in APD with business generally supportive but other groups critical of adverse impacts on a low carbon economy and the loss of tax revenues.

Edinburgh Airport was 100 years old on 2 March. It started as a Royal Flying Corps base and became a commercial airport in 1973 followed by completion of a new runway and terminal building. The new Glasgow Airport, relocated from Renfrew, is now 50 years old.

Passenger numbers at Inverness rose 8% in 2015 and work has started on a £900,000 expansion of terminal facilities. International passengers have grown from under 5,000 in 2010 to 37,540 in 2015 with further growth expected. New routes to Amsterdam and to London will start later this year.

Dundee Airport's first international flight – to Amsterdam – starts in May

The National Museum of Flight at East Fortune in East Lothian has welcomed its first visitors after a £3.6m redevelopment.

Shipping

Grangemouth, Scotland's busiest container port, has been affected by an industrial dispute with Unite.

Serco and CalMac have submitted bids for the next West Coast ferry franchise. An RMT commissioned report from Jeanette Findlay, economics lecturer at Glasgow University, unsurprisingly favours the franchise remaining with publicly-owned CalMac. A feature by A Dalton in S 11 March makes a case for better island services to give better overall value from the expected £1bn cost of the next franchise.

CalMac are offering 1,000 free tickets as part of National Ferry Fortnight. Transfer of Coruisk from the Mallaig-Armadale crossing has allowed the introduction of 50 extra sailings per week on the Oban-Craignure route. For the first time, it is possible to commute from Mull to Oban. Having two vessels will also ease capacity problems after the introduction of road equivalent tariff fares. However, Skye residents are complaining about the loss of *Coruisk* from the Armadale-Mallaig crossing, now served by the superior *Lord of the Isles* assisted by the much more basic *Lochinvar* and *Loch Bhrusda*.

2016 will be a bonanza year for cruising to and from Scottish ports. A new round Britain cruise will include calls at Greenock, Kirkwall and Invergordon. Cruise calls now generate £54.6m for the Scottish economy through passenger spend alone. Greenock topped cruise passengers with 108,866 in 2015 followed by Kirkwall with 81,401. A total of 525,000 Scottish cruise passengers is expected in 2016 with the target of 1.1m by 2029

The first contract in the £5.5m restoration of the Maid of the Loch on Loch Lomond has been signed. This will return the vessel, taken into charity ownership 20 years ago, to a passenger carrying condition

Bus, Tram and Taxi

SPT has awarded Stadler Bussnang/Ansaldo the contract for new driverless trains for the Glasgow Subway and related work on signalling and station platforms. Work should be completed by 2020/21 (H 5Mar). The new trains have a more open design, facilitating standing. Wheelchairs can also be accommodated but, due to the high costs of adapting stations for wheelchair access, only two stations will offer this facility.

Speaking to MSPs ScotRail boss Phil Verster sees tramtrains on the Edinburgh South Suburban line (due to be electrified for freight) as a 'real practical solution' to easing transport problems in Edinburgh and the rail bottleneck between Haymarket and Waverley. Tensions continue over the allocation of resources between the jointly managed and publicly owned Edinburgh Trams and Lothian Buses. An A Dalton feature (S 19 Feb) highlights the quality of bus services in Edinburgh and the need for politicians to give more attention to improving local bus networks compared to a tendency to concentrate attention and funds on a rail network which, though attracting more usage, still had many fewer passengers than those using buses. In a letter (S 27 Feb) Fiona Kerr, MD First Bus Scotland, calls for much stronger measures to ensure that buses were not delayed by city congestion and better able to attract car users.

Lothian Buses are recruiting 40 new drivers and 10 apprentice engineers as part of service expansion. Minimum tram and bus fares for adults are rising from £1.50 to £1.60 and from 70 to 80p for children

A new Buses Bill is about to be introduced for England but there are no equivalent Scottish proposals and strong disagreement on the amount of regulation which can be justified.

One passenger was killed when a Stagecoach bus was involved in a crash near Ardrossan. A fatality on scheduled bus routes is rare but there are incidents of deaths or injuries in bus/pedestrian collisions in cities.

Glasgow hospitals are now linked by regular public transport services at peaks and high-quality public transport to major hospitals at other times (Health News insert in H 15 Mar)

The Competition and Markets Authority has removed controls inhibiting First bus service changes in the Scottish Central Belt. First Bus may now proceed more quickly with service reductions in parts of east and south-east Scotland while improving services on routes with commercial potential. West Lothian and Dumfries and Galloway Councils are cutting supported bus services as part of strategies for spending cuts. SPT has reached agreement with local councils on maintaining the present level of bus support in 2016/17 but cuts are expected in the years to follow.

City Cabs in Edinburgh are threatening legal action after Central Radio Taxis won the £600,000 a year contract for the Edinburgh City Council contract to provide a discounted taxi service for severely disabled residents. Complaints have been made about increased congestion arising from an unofficial taxi stance outside the Balmoral Hotel in Princes St.

Walking and Cycling

Joint campaigning for more political attention to increasing the share of walking and cycling has featured in the media in advance of the May election and during the fixing of local authority budgets. Stress is put on benefits for health and local air quality by Pedestrian Law Scotland, Road Share, Friends of the Earth Scotland and Stop Climate Chaos Scotland. FoES seeks a rise in Scottish Government investment in walking and cycling from 1.9% to 10% of the transport budget. Prospects for rises in cycling are seen as better than for walking though the latter is the most important means of access to and from public transport.

A £39,000 grant from the Central Scotland Green Network will improve a walk/cycle green route on a former railway through Stevenston, Saltcoats and Ardrossan. A footbridge may be provided at the present rail level crossing in Stevenston. Revised plans to overhaul George St in Edinburgh will give pedestrians and cyclists much greater priority with only one lane in each direction retained for motorised vehicles.

Prof Tom Rye wants more space for pedestrians in Princes St rather than cycleways encroaching on existing space. Ramblers Scotland are calling on the next Scottish Government to establish a Scottish Paths Fund. More physical exercise is vital for health - chronic illnesses linked to inactivity costing the NHS £94m a year.

Abellio ScotRail has been attacked for ordering new trains with a worsening of the already poor ratio between seated space and cycling space (H 29&30Mar). Abellio and other train users argue that more space for peak passengers is the top priority and point to plans to increase cycle parking at stations plus growth in cycle hire at stations. But the rise in cycle tourism is also raising demand for space on trains.