



## Scottish Association for Public Transport

# SCOTTISH TRANSPORT MATTERS

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*ScotRail's flagship Inter7City HSTs are more expensive to operate than expected.*

*Financial pressure to slash Abellio losses will see some Aberdeen and Inverness services to the Central Belt reverting to Turbostar operation. Section 3 gives a full analysis of ScotRail timetable proposals.*

*Left: HST leaves Glasgow Queen Street with the 16.39 to Aberdeen on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021.*

**AGM: Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (10.00)**

**Guest Speaker: Bill Reeve, Rail Director, Transport Scotland**

*We've asked Bill if he can cover the following topics:*

- **Rail Recovery Prospects**
- **Decarbonisation Strategy**
- **Implications of government ownership of ScotRail**
- **Public Transport Integration**

*The AGM is being held virtually over Zoom, due to the continuing anxiety about travel and social distancing. The agenda and joining overview are given overleaf.*

SAPT's virtual zoom AGM is fixed for Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The zoom invitation will be sent out to member email addresses a week before the AGM, with reminders before the event.

Members can join the meeting using computer, laptop or smartphone. There is also a dial-up capability for tone-dial telephones (audio only).

Anyone wishing advice on using Zoom can contact David Giles [davidanthonygiles@gmail.com](mailto:davidanthonygiles@gmail.com)

The Zoom meeting will start with all attendees, other than the speakers, muted to minimise feedback sound.

### Agenda

10.00 Introduction Stewart Stevenson President SAPT

10.15 Powering Transport David Murray-Smith Vice-Chair SAPT

10.45 Questions: These can be submitted using the Zoom Chat feature

11.00 Guest Speaker Bill Reeve, Rail Director, Transport Scotland

Questions

Please send any advance questions by email to [sapt@btinternet.com](mailto:sapt@btinternet.com)

Additional questions based on the topics covered can be submitted during the meeting using the Zoom Chat feature.

11.45 SAPT AGM Business Meeting

Annual Report

Treasurer's Report

Election of Office-bearers and committee 2021 2022

12.15 Close

The office-bearers and committee during 2020 were:

President	Stewart Stevenson
Vice Presidents:	Tom Harris, Lawrence Marshall, Dr. Malcolm Reed
Chair	Dr John McCormick
Vice Chairs	Prof. David Murray-Smith, David Giles
Membership Secretary	Scott Simpson
Minutes Secretary	Arthur Homan-Elsy
Treasurer	Robin McGregor
Strategy Officer	David Murray-Smith
Regional Representatives:	
Strathclyde	David Brown, Stewart Leighton
Lothian	Paul Tetlaw, Graham Atkins
Borders	Prof. Chris Harvie
Southwest	Tom Hart
Central & Tayside	David Giles
Fife	Laurie Naumann
Highlands & Islands	Dr John Logie, Rolf Schmidt
Shetland vacant (meantime covered by H&I)	
Nestrans	vacant
Elected Member	Dr Ann Glen MBE

There are 3 vacancies unfilled.

Covid19 and COP26 are forcing a rethink of transport. This year's record temperatures, forest fires and floods are now sharing headlines with the pandemic. In the run up to COP26 in Glasgow in November, the UK and Scottish Governments need credible climate change strategies.

Transport is responsible for 37% of Scotland's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Scottish Government has targeted a 20% reduction in car use by 2030 to cut emissions. But car travel has now returned to pre-covid levels while rail use is lagging far behind. The latest GERS (government expenditure and revenue Scotland) figures show a rise in annual overall transport revenue spending by the Scottish Government in 2020, which is likely to exert pressure to reduce bus and train subsidies. At the same time public transport needs to improve if there is to be any hope of cutting travel by car.

Three recent papers discuss how these issues are likely to affect the future of rail and bus.

***"Scotland's Railway after the pandemic"***, a paper by Professor Iain Docherty of Stirling University, reveals the crisis facing the rail industry in Scotland in the wake of Covid19. The pandemic has worsened the already bad financial performance of Abellio ScotRail. Working from home is expected to continue to affect rail commuting. Professor Docherty's report identifies the decisions that need to be made to control costs and increase rail use. Longstanding issues affecting the cost base of the rail industry will need to be tackled. Decarbonisation of the road vehicle fleet may affect the strategic case for investment in rail. But to achieve the government's 20% cut in car miles by 2030, a doubling in rail use, together with greater use of virtual communication, would be needed. To increase rail use in city regions, Professor Docherty suggests that tram and metro technology will be most successful. Joined up planning between rail, bus and light rail will be crucial to achieving decarbonisation.

***"Fit for the Future Timetable"*** is a ScotRail consultation on changes to cut costs and align services with changing demand. ScotRail revenue in 2019/20 was £397 million against operating costs of £641 million, plus Network Rail costs of over £600 million. A ScotRail analysis of passenger data from 2019 shows that average daily occupancy of seat miles was just 23%, even before the onset of the pandemic. InterCity services performed best, at between 35% and 41%. Argyle line trains were amongst the poorest performing, with only 15% of seat miles occupancy. One factor not mentioned in the ScotRail analysis is the length and capacity of trains. Operating 6-car or 8-car trains all day on some routes inevitably increases the average proportion of empty seats.

Passengers are around 50% below 2019 levels. Train frequencies were cut in the lockdown. ScotRail plans more timetable changes from May 2022. Further alterations are possible in 2023.

Timetable changes need to be compatible with attracting more people to switch from car travel if Scottish Government targets are to be met. Analysis of the ScotRail changes is given in section 3.

***"Public Transport, Private Profit"*** is a report on UK bus deregulation by the US-based Center for Human Rights and Global Justice. This has a bias against privatisation, but it contains some illuminating responses from Transport Scotland. Bus use has recovered from Covid better than rail, possibly attributable to more train users having access to cars as alternative to public transport. But bus usage in the UK has been falling for decades, in contrast to some other European countries. The main topics in the bus report of relevance to Scotland are covered in Section 4.

Transport Scotland needs a strategy to attract more people to use low carbon trains and buses which use energy much more efficiently than electric SUVs. Rail electrification is progressing, with the East Kilbride line now being converted. The financial crisis facing ScotRail can be alleviated through a more efficient timetable. But a major modal shift from car to bus and rail is essential to reduce road congestion, energy use, pollution and CO<sub>2</sub>.

**The SNP/Green Alliance is an opportunity to come up with a policy for investing in a fully integrated train, bus, tram and subway network. The important thing is to have a plan and get things done.**

**There is no point in setting admirable targets while having no sustainable plan to meet them.**

### 3.1 Overview

ScotRail's May 22 proposed timetable <https://www.scotrail.co.uk/about-scotrail/fit-future> (which includes a consultation feedback form) will cut 300 services per day from the pre-pandemic timetable of 2,400. This will cut costs by up to £40M and improve reliability and train loadings.

SAPT accepts ScotRail and Network Rail running costs will have to come down. Over the last two decades services have expanded but some of these services were shoehorned into existing timetables. The ScotRail consultation paper shows that reliability and some train loadings were low and costs had risen, justifying a redraft of schedules.

But the considerable investment that has been made in rail electrification, line and station re-openings and track capacity to support better services must not be put at risk by short-term cuts.

The May 2022 changes are the first stage of timetable alterations with further changes expected, particularly to North Clyde and Argyle line timetables around Glasgow. These latter are the largest ScotRail service groups but are relatively unaffected in the May 2022 changes.

The objective of ScotRail's current consultation (open until 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021) is to identify detailed changes to their proposals to suit particular passenger needs. It is not likely that, within the timescale available before May 2022, fundamental changes can be made to the proposals, unless political considerations intervene.

This SAPT response to the ScotRail consultation recommends that timetable changes should focus on generating passenger growth as well as cutting overall costs. Commuters are not expected to return to previous travel patterns, but more leisure and InterCity travellers can be attracted from car by quality rail services with better marketing.

An initiative to integrate with buses could improve connectivity for communities without local stations and increase overall public transport use. Transport Scotland needs to change the bus funding framework to achieve this (see Section 4).

Longer term planning for **May 2023** and subsequent timetables and infrastructure upgrades should aim to generate growth in rail travel while reducing costs on commuter routes, mainly in the Central Belt. Changes should be underpinned by the following guidelines:

#### InterCity

- Rail journey times between cities should be competitive with or faster than by car
- InterCity services should operate hourly, with higher frequency in the Central Belt.
- Regional, rural and intercity services should be timetabled to connect at main interchanges
- InterCity trains should provide consistent high-quality seating and catering standards

#### Regional and Suburban

- Service frequency is more important than journey times for suburban trains. Re-organising stopping patterns and consolidating services to increase train loadings and reduce costs, as suggested in the ScotRail consultation, are acceptable as long as any increase in journey time is less than about 10% of the current time
- On routes taking less than an hour from end to end, frequency should be half-hourly or better

#### Rural Rail Routes

- The aim should be regular interval timetables enabling development of bus/rail connections
- In more remote areas, the minimum service should be four services per day.
- Timetables should aim to attract more leisure travel including linked ferry and bus excursions
- Future zero carbon trains should provide comfortable seats giving good visibility of scenery

SAPT's detailed response to ScotRail's 2022 proposed timetables follow. Recommendations for future developments from 2023 onwards are based on the guidelines above.

But in addition to detailed timetable alterations to raise efficiency, ScotRail also need to focus on other vital areas to boost rail usage and revenue on all routes:

- Development of a regular-interval *Taktfahrplan* integrating timetables across the network
- better marketing of all services, including EGIP electrics, Inter7City, and rural routes
- higher quality Inter7City on-board service modelled on Anglo-Scottish standards
- more imaginative fares and offers including round-trips and combined rail/bus and rail/ferry trips
- combined marketing of travel+attractions with Visit Scotland, Scottish National Trust, Historic Environment Scotland and other organisations

**3.2 Edinburgh-Falkirk-Glasgow** route was the only ScotRail line operating profitability in 2019/20. Service frequency has now been reduced to half-hourly at off-peak times, with 15-minutes service at peak times. ScotRail propose to continue this in 2022. Some peak services will call at Bishopbriggs and Lenzie. This is a useful initiative and will save the cost of running some peak-hour trains to Stirling.

*SAPT 2023 recommendation:* Re-instating the 15-minute daytime frequency should be the aim as passenger numbers recover. One of the additional trains per hour should call at Bishopbriggs, Lenzie, Croy and Falkirk High allowing Glasgow-Stirling trains to be re-organised (see 3.9).

**3.3 Aberdeen-Edinburgh/Glasgow:**

Hourly limited stop services will continue on these routes. But ScotRail propose to operate some of these services using Turbostars as the HST 125 trains are more expensive to operate. The HSTs were a notable feature of Abellio's bid for the ScotRail franchise, offering InterCity quality on these routes. Running costs of the HST trains have however turned out higher than expected.

*SAPT 2023 recommendation:* Mixing HSTs and Turbostars is likely to undermine the overall quality image of ScotRail's flagship Inter7City routes. Instead of substituting Turbostars for HSTs to save running costs on some services, ScotRail should mount a marketing campaign to generate more usage and revenue. The superior first-class accommodation of HSTs could be marketed with premium quality service attractive to leisure as well as business travellers. This has been successful on Anglo-Scottish routes.

One zero-cost possibility worth investigating to boost rail usage from intermediate towns is the feasibility of redesigning InterCity timetable to offer a clockface 30-minute interval Aberdeen-Stonehaven-Montrose-Arbroath-Dundee service by co-ordinating Aberdeen to Glasgow and Edinburgh trains.

**3.4 Inverness to Glasgow and Edinburgh:** The 2022 timetable will give eleven trains from Inverness to the Central Belt (as now), seven of which will go to Glasgow. Inverness-Edinburgh trains will be routed via Stirling instead of Fife. Journey times for the four Inverness-Edinburgh trains will average a disappointing 3 hours 37 minutes.

*SAPT recommendation for 2023:* An hourly Inverness-Perth-Glasgow/Edinburgh timetable should be introduced, co-ordinated with buses at Inverness, Aviemore and Pitlochry to attract modal shift from car to public transport and generate additional revenue. This would deliver some objectives of Transport Scotland's Highland Main Line investment. This route has considerable marketing potential targeted at leisure travel.

**3.5 Aberdeen to Inverness:** ScotRail proposes no changes to the timetable on this route.

*SAPT recommendation:* This is an important route in the national inter7City network. The next upgrade phase to provide additional passing loops to enable an hourly service should be given high priority in the Strategic Projects Review. Work should start soon.

**3.6 Edinburgh – North Berwick/ Dunbar:** ScotRail propose to maintain the hourly Edinburgh-North Berwick service: a half-hourly service would not be possible due to lack of capacity.

TransPennine Express have announced plans for Edinburgh-Newcastle trains from December 2021 calling at Dunbar and the new stations at Reston and East Linton once opened (see News section 5). Hopefully a regular-interval timetable every 2 hours can be adopted once the East Coast timetable is revised.

**3.7 Edinburgh-Tweedbank:** In 2022 this will remain hourly off-peak, half-hourly peak. *SAPT recommendation for 2023:* Buses should be co-ordinated with trains, and trips to tourist attractions better marketed to attract more travel to and from Borders towns via Galashiels, justifying the restoration of a daytime half-hourly train frequency.

**3.8 Edinburgh to Fife and Perth:** Services through Fife are to be cut from 7 to 5 per hour due to low off-peak demand. The Edinburgh-Dundee hourly limited stop train will from 2022 call at most stations via Kirkcaldy. ScotRail propose to route Edinburgh-Perth hourly trains via the slower Dunfermline route taking 1 hour 40 minutes instead of 1 hour 15 minutes now. There will also be hourly trains to Glenrothes (via Dunfermline) and to Kirkcaldy, both to be extended to Leven when the branch opens. Fife Circle trains will be withdrawn.

Edinburgh-Perth will also have six InterCity trains (including one LNER) via Stirling taking 78 minutes which is similar to current journey times. But the 100 minutes journey time by local trains via Dunfermline is sub-standard as a link between two of Scotland's cities

*SAPT recommendation for 2023:* A limited stop train from Edinburgh via Kirkcaldy to Perth should be provided every two hours, scheduled to dovetail with the proposed two-hourly Edinburgh-Stirling-Perth-Inverness trains (see 3.4) to give Perth an hourly service to Edinburgh taking around 1 hour 15 minutes (as now). The slow hourly stopping trains from Edinburgh via Dunfermline to Perth proposed by ScotRail would terminate at Markinch. This SAPT counter-proposal would not increase overall train mileage through Fife significantly but would provide Perth with a more acceptable journey time to Edinburgh.

**3.9 Edinburgh-Stirling-Dunblane:** ScotRail propose to retain the half-hourly daytime service but add stops at Linlithgow and Polmont (trains currently run non-stop from Edinburgh Park to Falkirk). A possible development involving Alloa is outlined in the next section.

**3.10 Glasgow-Stirling-Perth-Dundee/ Alloa:** ScotRail propose a new hourly Glasgow-Dundee service calling at all stations between Stirling and Dundee. The Glasgow-Stirling-Alloa local electric service would continue every half hour calling at local stations.

*SAPT recommendation for 2023:* The off-peak timetables proposed by ScotRail would give four trains per hour to Stirling but only two to Edinburgh via Falkirk. SAPT suggest re-instating the 15-minute Glasgow-Edinburgh service, with one of the additional hourly trains calling at Bishopbriggs, Lenzie, Croy and Falkirk High. The Glasgow-Stirling-Alloa service could then be reduced to hourly to minimise additional train mileage. This would still leave Stirling with two express and one local train each hour from Glasgow. As part of these changes, introduction of an Alloa-Stirling-Edinburgh service could be considered, replacing one of the two Dunblane-Stirling-Edinburgh services per hour. Dunblane and Alloa could still have two departures per hour for both Glasgow and Edinburgh, one of these in each case involving changing at Stirling.

## West of Scotland

**3.11 Glasgow-Ayrshire:** The pre-covid timetable of two fast trains and two stopping trains to Ayr, and two semi-fast trains to Ardrossan/Largs, has been cut back. For May 2022 ScotRail propose four trains to Ayr at peak times, with three at some off-peak hours, two at others, and only one per hour in the evenings.

SAPT suggest for May 2023 regular half-hourly Glasgow-Ayr limited stop trains should be provided, continuing in the evening. Largs and Ardrossan would continue half-hourly with one or two additional peak hour trains as required to Ayr and Largs.

**Glasgow-Inverclyde:** Gourock was served by four trains per hour pre-covid, with the ScotRail proposal for 2022 similar to Ayr with a mixture of four trains per hour in the peak, either three or two trains in off-peak hours, and one in the evening.

For May 2023 SAPT suggest a simplified timetable of two trains per hour to Gourock and one to Wemyss Bay, and extra peak hour trains as required to both destinations.

**3.12 Glasgow-Barrhead-Kilmarnock-Dumfries-Carlisle:** ScotRail propose regular two-hourly Glasgow-Kilmarnock-Dumfries-Carlisle trains, with Dumfries-Carlisle hourly, which is OK.

Proposed Glasgow-Barrhead-Kilmarnock timings need adjustment. There are two trains per hour between Glasgow and Kilmarnock but proposed departure times from Glasgow at 13 and 27 minutes past the hour are unevenly spaced. The 27 minutes past the hour stopping train waits at Barrhead station for 6 minutes. Retiming this train to depart Glasgow at 33 minutes past the hour, giving a better spread of departure times for Kilmarnock, would cut the journey time from 53 minutes to 47 minutes and also give Barrhead better departures from Glasgow at 13, 33 and 57 minutes past the hour.

**3.13 Glasgow to East Kilbride:** Proposed half-hourly trains with peak extras is acceptable.

**3.14 Glasgow South Electrics: Glasgow-Cathcart-Neilston/Newton:** ScotRail propose to retain half-hourly trains to Neilston and Newton. Off-peak Cathcart Circle trains remain withdrawn giving inner suburban stations between Langside and Pollokshields West an hourly service which is unacceptable.

**3.15 Glasgow North Electrics, Argyle Line and Glasgow-Shotts-Edinburgh:** This is the largest group of ScotRail services. Proposals for 2022 retain the current timetable which was scaled back during the pandemic. Lanark trains are to return to half-hourly during the day, but Shotts trains will remain hourly. Further revisions are expected for May 2023.

*SAPT recommendation for 2023:* SAPT is finalising a suggestion for a new Regional Rail pattern of half-hourly services giving an aggregate metro frequency through Glasgow every 10 minutes on both Argyle and Queen Street Low Level lines. All stations (including the Shotts line) would have at least two trains per hour. Overall train miles would be around 20% less than now. The plan will be sent to ScotRail and Transport Scotland

**3.16 Glasgow to Cumbernauld, Falkirk and Edinburgh:** There was no publicity when the new service extending to Edinburgh was introduced in 2018. Driver shortage caused frequent train cancellations. It is not surprising that this service failed to attract many users.

ScotRail propose to revert to the pre-electrification pattern of half-hourly Glasgow-Cumbernauld trains with every second service extended to Falkirk Grahamston. Good connections need to be made at Falkirk for Edinburgh and Stirling. SAPT suggest that bargain fares should be offered from Cumbernauld line stations to Edinburgh to mitigate the disappointing lack of progress on developing the through trains now to be discontinued

**3.17 Rural Routes: West Highland, Kyle, Far North, Stranraer:** ScotRail propose to reduce Stranraer services to five per day. Other timetables would remain unchanged. The Glasgow-Fort William service (three trains per day) is below the accepted minimum of four per day. An extra daily service operated by an HST would be welcome. Better marketing and co-ordination with local buses are essential to boost usage of these scenic lines.

Buses provide the majority of public transport journeys. But passenger numbers are falling as car use continues to climb. The Scottish Government has set a 2030 target to cut car journeys by 20%. To reach this target, a new approach to active travel and public transport is needed.

Failings in the current transport framework should be analysed to devise a better strategy. A July 2021 report, "*Public Transport, Private Profit*", looks at the decline of the UK bus industry since deregulation in 1985. Promises of more passengers attracted by competitive services have proved illusory. Scottish bus journeys plummeted from 644 million in 1986 to 366 million in 2019 (a fall of 43% in 33 years), continuing the downward trend of previous years.

The 1985 UK Transport Act did succeed in cutting taxpayer subsidy for buses. But in 2019/20 the Scottish bus industry received £326M taxpayer payments through Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) (£53M), concessionary scheme (£215M), and local authority support (£57M).

The report observes that there is no minimum level of service that residents are entitled to. Most bus services in Scotland are operated on a commercial basis. BSOG funding from Transport Scotland is paid per bus mile so is mostly paid to profitable Central Belt routes including Citylink routes, most of which are well-served by ScotRail. Loss making buses depend for survival on subsidy from cash-strapped local authorities. As a result, rural bus routes continue to decline.

This contrasts with, for example, Switzerland where the constitution guarantees a reasonable level of road or rail transport for all communities. Public transport usage (bus+tram) in Switzerland rose by 38% between 2000 and 2019. Rail use rose by 72%. Most urban transport is provided by *Verkehrverbunde* where bus, train and tram operators co-operate to provide an integrated public transport network of connecting services with a unified fares system. Rural communities are linked to the integrated national rail and bus system which attracts a much higher level of use by residents and tourists than Scotland's disparate bus operators. Swiss bus and train operators are a mix of franchised private and local authority organisations and the state-owned Swiss Railways. ***The important thing is that they all work together to provide a successful nationwide bus and rail network.***

From April 2022 ScotRail will become a state-controlled company. This is an opportunity to integrate public transport based on the successful Swiss system. To achieve this bus service organisation and funding also need to be revised. Our recommendations are:

**Urban:** Bus, rail, tram and subway services to be co-ordinated in each travel-to-work area to improve connectivity. A unified fares system to be introduced. City transport authorities to oversee these urban networks, though municipal ownership would not be necessary.

**Rural:** Settlements of over 1000 inhabitants to get at least 4 bus or train services per day. Demand responsive transport (DRT) to link smaller communities into the network

**Funds:** Bus service operators grant to be replaced by a **Bus Integration Grant** to support integrated bus services specified by local transport authorities. ScotRail train service reorganisation (see Section 3) and rail efficiency improvements should make an integrated rail and bus network more affordable.

***The Scottish Government needs a new integrated transport strategy to grow bus and rail use.***

#### ***Rural Transport Integration***

*All rural towns should have guaranteed integrated bus or train services, as illustrated on the right where Borders Bus Route 68 from Jedburgh calls at St. Boswells (pictured) on the way to Galashiels Transport Interchange where trains link to Edinburgh. Better co-ordinated transport is critical to achieving government targets for reducing car use. Smaller communities can be served by Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)*





Collated by John McCormick with contributions from John Yellowlees and John Wilson

**Obituary:** It was with sadness that we learned of the death of rail campaigner Ken Sutherland on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021. Ken was an early member of the Scottish Railway Development Association (SRDA) which was founded in 1962. SRDA was the forerunner of the Scottish Association for Public Transport. Ken subsequently moved to Railfuture (Scotland) and was most recently Research Office campaigning for Glasgow Crossrail and the Dornoch rail bridge amongst other projects.

**Edinburgh Tram** track has now reached Ocean Drive on Leith Waterfront (see right). Fingal, once a lighthouse supply ship, now a hotel, is in the background. New housing, part of the justification for the tram project, has transformed the docks area. The extension to Newhaven is still on target to open in spring 2023.

Alstom have called for at least 20 tram networks in UK cities to help clear cities choked in traffic.



**Buses:** Drivers suggest Lothian Buses is “not doing enough to prevent overcrowding on buses” making passengers feel “extremely uncomfortable”. But stopping passengers from coming onto a full bus is not always straightforward because people can be abusive towards the drivers.

At a Transport Research and Innovation event organised by Edinburgh Napier University, it was reported that the Fife-Edinburgh CAVForth - Connected and Autonomous Vehicles pilot project – will now start next year. People don't trust the technology just now. Most don't want to be the first to try it out, and they want to see it in practice. Having proof that it's safe would make them more open to using it. Some people also thought the innovation was simply to get rid of drivers to save money, but the objective is to boost road safety, connectivity and efficiency.

### Roads and Cars

OVO, one of Britain's largest energy suppliers, is launching a low-cost tariff of only 5p per unit for off-peak charging. This equates to only 1p per mile for an average-sized electric vehicle. Cost of driving 100 miles would be around £1, compared with £12.44 for an average petrol car. The energy regulator Ofgem is investing £300M to expand electric charging points. However, a report by the Institute for Public Policy Research predicts 25% more cars on the road by 2050, causing increased congestion.

A study by Greener Transport Solutions calls for road charging by the mile to replace fuel duty revenue which will dry up as motorists shift to electric cars. The Treasury collects £40 billion from fuel duty, VAT on fuel, and road tax. Electric vehicles pay none of these.

Only a third of 17 to 20-year olds have a driving licence, compared with a half in the early 1990s. This is partly due to the £1500 cost of passing the driving test compounded by high insurance costs.

A study by the RAC Foundation has found that cars have increased in size by a third over half a century due to the popularity of SUVs. Domestic garages are too small, with residential roads blocked by cars. Cars are in use for only 4.4% of the day, and parked at home for 72.6% of the time.

**Aviation:** Glasgow Airport has racked up a £48M pre-tax loss in 2020 as revenue fell 73% to £34M. Passenger numbers fell 78% to 1.9M. Aberdeen made a £15.5M loss with turnover halving to £28M. Heathrow forecasts between 13M and 36M passengers for 2021 compared with 81M in 2019. Total losses at Heathrow since the onset of the pandemic has reached £2.4 billion. Easyjet has lost £1.6 billion in 2020, with Ryanair expected to lose £850 million.

## Rail

Network Rail is planning to take between 7000 and 9000 jobs out of the rail network across the UK. Scrapping “institutionalised working practices” to embrace the digital revolution is likely to lead to strikes.

ScotRail continued to be without Sunday trains (except during the day round Glasgow) as RMT conductors and ticket examiners sustained their strike action over rest-day pay. RMT's executive agreed to launch a national “bust the wage freeze” campaign by staff who had been “given a kick in the teeth” after working through the pandemic. At Caledonian Sleeper, RMT confirmed that a strike would take place from 11.59am on Tuesday June 15 to 11.59am on Saturday June 26. ScotRail train maintenance workers have also called a strike though the new Class 395 electric trains maintained by Hitachi should be unaffected.

HITRANS has released a new journey-planning app. GO-HI combines journey planning with real time travel information covering the Highland area.

**East Coast Main Line:** The proposed East Coast Main Line timetable change due for May 2022 has been postponed. Reasons for this latest timetable postponement until at least 2023 include:

- Electric power supply problems from the national grid
- Further timetable development needed, including to support freight paths
- Response from consultees suggesting changes

TransPennine Express have announced that, from December 2021, they will operate five 5-car Nova 1 trains per day in both directions serving (in most cases):

- Edinburgh Waverley, Dunbar, Reston (once opened), Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnmouth, Widdrington, Morpeth, Cramlington and Newcastle

In addition, at the May 2022 timetable change TransPennine Express will introduce two additional services per day operating between Edinburgh Waverley, Dunbar, Reston and Berwick-upon-Tweed. All seven of these services will call at Reston in both directions once that station has opened, and also at East Linton once that station has opened.

Research by *Which?* confirms that rail travel is much greener than flying (33Kg CO<sub>2</sub> compared with 203Kg by plane for a Bristol-Newcastle journey), but train fares are typically 49% higher.

China has unveiled a prototype 370 mph train based on maglev technology.

A roof garden, shops and restaurants are the next stage in rebuilding Glasgow Queen St station.

## Ferries

CalMac ferries have been plagued by breakdowns which have exacerbated capacity problems caused by Covid social distancing rules.

Tim Hair, a consultant with no shipbuilding experience, is being paid £2565 per day to “turn round” Fergusons shipbuilding yard which is struggling to complete two ferries for CalMac. These are now 3 years late and will cost twice the original contract price.

Motorhomes and caravans are to be banned from standby lanes at ferry terminals to free up space for islanders needing to travel at short notice: the ban will not apply to motorhomes belonging to islanders

Mull and Iona Ferry Committee is frustrated by Caledonian Maritime Assets Ltd rejecting the proposal to buy a catamaran-style vessel built in Indonesia and now available on the market. CMAL claim the ship may not be able to secure a passenger certificate to operate in Scottish waters.

Maid (out) of the Loch: The 1953-built paddle steamer was winched out of Loch Lomond for a hull survey for the first time in 40 years. The steamer should re-open as a floating café at Balloch in 2022.