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3. Permissions - I am responding as...

Individual



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Group/Organisation



Please tick as

- (a) Do you agree to your response being made available to the public (in Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site)?

- Please tick as appropriate* ☒ Yes ☐ No
(b) Where confidentiality is not requested, we will make your responses available to the public on the following basis

Please tick ONE of the following boxes

Yes, make my response, name and address all available



- (c) The name and address of your organisation **will be** made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Scottish Government web site).

Are you content for your **response** to be made available?

Please tick as appropriate ☐ Yes ☐ No

Yes, make my response available,
but not my name and address

or
☐

Yes, make my response and name
available, but not my address

or
☐

(d) We will share your response internally with other Scottish Government policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for Scottish Government to contact you again in relation to this consultation exercise?

Please tick as appropriate

☒ Yes

☐ No

Rail2014 Consultation Response

Bob Doris MSP

I welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Rail2014 consultation, both as a Glasgow MSP and as a frequent rail user. I am encouraged that Transport Scotland seeks to:

“...give Scotland’s railway users the opportunity to have their say on the future of the service.”

I note that public concern has been raised regarding Section 7 of the consultation document and a related factsheet. However, I note and welcome the statement from Transport Scotland emphasising that:

“...the consultation does not contain plans or proposals to close stations.”

I have also met with the Transport Minister who has confirmed there are no plans to close any stations.

However, given the public interest in this matter, I want to use this consultation response to clearly state my firm belief that rail travel in an urban setting such as Glasgow should be enhanced. As you will be aware, high population density and the draw of workers and visitors to Glasgow leads to related high car usage and can cause significant social and environmental damage if a suitable public transport network is not supported. Our rail network and stations are an essential part of Glasgow’s public transport provision. I want to give particular mention to north Glasgow. The Maryhill line and the Springburn to Queen Street service are both vital parts of the public transport network. All existing stations should continue to be maintained and service improvements given serious consideration.

I want to link this submission with the on-going EGIP considerations. I appreciate the desire to ensure an improved Edinburgh –Glasgow rail service. However this must not be at the expense of essential urban Glasgow rail services. Such essential services include the twice hourly service on the Maryhill line. I note that the new Airdrie/ Bathgate line ensures that there is now eight Glasgow Queen Street to

Edinburgh rail services an hour. Consequently, I think a better use of timetabling, in order to encourage rail passengers to use both high level and low level services to Edinburgh, should be promoted in order to ease any issues in relation to managing passenger numbers. I understand that it is the Network Rail consultation that is looking at EGIP. I thought it would still be beneficial to state my clear view that a Maryhill line service to Glasgow Queen Street should be enhanced.

I will use the rest of my consultation response to propose a number of service improvements.

I live in Maryhill and represent Glasgow in the Scottish Parliament. I have had many representations made to myself by constituents in relation to the current Rail2014 consultation. Initial representations were in relation to ensuring the current level of service was sustained and that the station network was preserved. I am confident this will happen.

SUNDAY SERVICE

This constituency contains a wide and varied range of communities labouring under multiple deprivations. For example, of the 74,264 who live in the constituency, 30% are classed as being 'income deprived' – this amounts to 22,279 individuals who currently exist in poverty. This figure is higher than the city of Glasgow average. Significantly, nearly 33% of individuals in the 25-49 age brackets are currently in receipt of 'key benefits'. Consequently, these figures play out in the educational, social, employment and health profile of the constituency.

Regarding the stations within my local area, for example, Ashfield, Maryhill, Gilshochill and Kelvindale, the passenger usage figures are illuminating. In the period 2005-06, the passenger usage figures for these four stations stood at 121,187. By 2009-10 this figure had increased to 332,894 – an increase of nearly 275%. In particular, usage of Gilshochill has almost trebled over the period, from 33,130 to 95,988.

Kelvindale, with a 2009-10 passenger usage figure of 109,726, currently sees over 50% of tickets sold on a 'season' basis, that is multi-journey tickets. These ticket types are indicative of frequent users invariably accessing the service for work-related journeys. Without access to a station on a Sunday, many of these 'commuters' would, in all likelihood, transfer to the roads, therefore increasing congestion at peak times on Great Western Road and Maryhill Road, leading to an increased carbon footprint for the city. Kelvindale is an area with above average car ownership, which means that commuters may take their car to the city centre or perhaps to out-of-town shopping centres on Sundays. A Sunday service would therefore promote both economic opportunities for the city centre, encourage green travel and stimulate increased vibrancy on Sundays in the city centre.

Conversely, at Ashfield, slightly less than 50% of all tickets sold were on a 'reduced' basis, that is, commanding a discount on the full, standard fare. These ticket types are indicative of passenger usage by excluded and marginalised groups, such as pensioners, the disabled, the unemployed and students.

At present the Anniesland-Queen Street line operates during the week and on Saturdays, with a service every 30 minutes. There is a late train on Fridays, which departs Queen Street at 2345. There is no Sunday service. Before the Christmas period, ScotRail have in the past run a Sunday service, although this has been withdrawn after the New Year. As can be seen from the passenger usage figures, footfall at the stations on the line has not plateaued – it continues to rise.

The provision of a Sunday service would impact on the line in two ways. Firstly, gross passenger numbers would obviously increase. Secondly, security of service would encourage more potential passengers onto the line, subsequently obviating the same consequences mentioned above. I have been able to access the service cancellation figures for the line from Scotrail. In the last 5 years, 1,726 trains have been cancelled on the line. This works out at roughly one every day. Given that the line operates half-hourly, this may be impacting detrimentally on passenger figures. If these figures show a significant deviation from the norm for like lines, this would impact upon the present and historical passenger usage figures and undermine any marketing of the service going forward. If passengers are unsure whether the train will actually be running, then it would be no surprise if many chose to undertake their journeys by a competing method.

In conclusion, I am recommending a Sunday service for the Maryhill line to be a condition of the re-tendering process after 2014, if the service has not been expanded before then. I have been informing local constituents in these areas of the possibility of a seven day a week service and I have had strong support.

OTHER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT SUGGESTIONS

Regarding service improvements across the Glasgow area, I would firstly suggest that Robroyston would be a likely candidate for any new station. This area is currently underserved in terms of rail connectivity and has seen a growth, and has further growth potential, in population. I understand that there have been on-going discussions between the local authority, developers and Transport Scotland and I would hope that Rail2014 would provide the needed impetus for progress to be made. I also understand that a detailed study to assess the merits of a new station or provide an alternative means of accessing the city centre by public transport has begun, in consultation with the Glasgow City Council, Network Rail, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and government agency Transport Scotland. This is to be commended.

Secondly, the current Anniesland-Queen St line links north and north west Glasgow to the city centre via the 'high level' at Queen St. I am proposing that Transport Scotland undertake a feasibility study, in order to ascertain, whether linking the

Anniesland-Queen St line with Springburn, Barrhill, Alexandra Parade, Duke St and Bellgrove with Queen St, thus creating a 'north Glasgow circular', which will have the benefit of connecting many of the communities of north Glasgow for the first time. This would allow passengers from across north Glasgow access to current and on-going developments in the East End, such as the Commonwealth Games, Celtic Park, etc. I have enquired of Transport Scotland as to the technical feasibility of such a scheme, and was informed that a grade separated junction would be required. An early consideration of feasibility estimated costs for a grade separated junction at Cowlares West at between £40 million and £70 million. I acknowledge such costs appear prohibitive but would ask that Transport Scotland looks to see what options may be available. The related report is available at:

<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/strategy-and-research/publications-and-consultations/edinburgh-glasgow-rail-improvements-study>

NEWTON LINE

I have recently been contacted by a number of constituents regarding the upgrading of stations and trains on the Newton line.

It appears that most of the stations on the route have now been repainted and that new signage has been installed. My constituents also inform me that some of the class 314 trains on the line have been refurbished and upgraded. Hopefully, these upgrades on the Newton line will be complete within the lifetime of the current contract.

Lastly, a number of constituents have constructively suggested a 'light rail' option for the Newton line, specifically in order to ease congestion within and around Glasgow Central station at peak times. This option would perhaps merit a feasibility study undertaken by Transport Scotland.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT OPERATORS

Also, in terms of awarding the future franchise contract, a number of constituents have expressed a preference for a not-for-profit operator to be the preferred bidder. I agree. I would ask that Transport Scotland forward to me any information which they may have which would allow constituents to investigate this possibility and also to provide information as to the scope of Scottish Government encouragement that can be given to such a not for profit bidder, given that I understand there are restrictions as to what the Scottish Government are able to do.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, my response to the consultation is to support:

- A Sunday service on the Maryhill line
- Consideration of a new station in Robroyston

- The undertaking of a feasibility study regarding a 'north Glasgow circular'
- The dissemination of information regarding the possibility of a not-for-profit franchise bidder
- The undertaking of a feasibility study regarding a 'light rail' option for the Newton line