



## Transport Scotland

### Rail 2014- Formal Consultation

Formal written comments by  
Dumfries and Galloway Chamber of Commerce

#### **Introduction**

Dumfries and Galloway Chamber of Commerce is the largest locally based organisation representing the business community in Dumfries and Galloway. The Chamber is affiliated to the Scottish Chambers of Commerce and forms part of Scotland's largest business representation organisation.

The Chamber has worked closely with SCC and would fully endorse their submission. This submission deals solely with issues that are specific to Dumfries and Galloway and should be taken as being in addition to the points raised in the SCC submission.

Rail services in this region are provided by ScotRail on two lines – Stranraer to Ayr and the Glasgow and Southwestern Line. The remaining services are provided as part of the Cross border services provided by the franchises let by the Department for Transport in London.

There are a number of shortcomings in the current services that have been highlighted by Swestrans including

- The lack of services to Edinburgh and Glasgow for a 9.00 start – it is possible to get a train from Dumfries to London for 9.00 but the earliest train to Edinburgh arrives at 9.20 (from Lockerbie).
- Timetable changes which have made it difficult to get to Ayr, Kilmarnock or Glasgow from Stranraer – particularly for students
- The need to re open stations such as Thornhill and Eastriggs to encourage modal change from car to rail of commuters to both Dumfries and Carlisle.
- Poor quality of the junction at Carstairs forcing a 20mph limit extending the journey time.
- The lack of investment in the Nith valley line leaving large sections still single track.
- Overcrowding at peak periods

#### **Cross Border Services (Section 8)**

While it is noted that the cross border services are provided under separate arrangements it is important to stress that for this region these services

through Lockerbie are in effect the local service. There is clearly pressure on operators to reduce the number of trains stopping at Lockerbie in order to improve overall end to end journey times.

There needs to be a mechanism that recognises the significance of these services as local Scottish routes in the letting of the franchises of both ScotRail and the two cross country operators. While at this stage the Chamber would not recommend that this service be included within the ScotRail franchise unless it can be clearly shown that this would provide a better service.

The importance of Carlisle also needs to be stressed, as this is an important hub for five railway lines providing links to Newcastle, Manchester, Birmingham and London. There is a need to ensure that timetables are properly integrated particularly those on the Glasgow and Southwestern line.

### **Scottish Stations (Section 7)**

There is now a convincing case for the reopening of two stations in this region (Thornhill and Eastriggs) and this needs to be considered in terms of the new franchise. There is a need to encourage more people to use the train instead of the car and both stations would assist in this.

Some thought needs to be given to the maintenance and management of the Lockerbie station (unlike Dunbar) as it is currently the responsibility of ScotRail despite the fact that they do not have any trains running through it.

The passenger experience includes the services that should be provided at the station including ticket machines, all ability access and good quality shelter. The current arrangement which splits this responsibility between several organisations discourages a clear focus on the customer. There needs to be a clearer link between the customer, the operator and the manager of the station facilities to encourage operators to consider the entire passenger experience.

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