

Michael Tornow

A general comment is that all of the proposals concerning the revision in the future of current service provision will result in having a deleterious impact on the rail service, particularly in Glasgow which appears to be disproportionately disadvantaged by the proposals compared to other regions or cities.

Closure of stations:

I am extremely anxious about the proposal to close stations cited in section 7 of the document which proposes that stations should be closed purely because they are within a mile of each other. This criteria does not take into account passenger numbers using these stations or issues such as accessibility or inclusion of disabled people. For instance one station may be accessible where as the other a mile down the road may not.

I would like to know why all of the proposed stations to be closed are located in socially deprived areas in Glasgow? There are many stations within a mile of each other in more affluent areas of Glasgow and the surrounding areas yet these are not threatened.

Closing stations in Glasgow will further disadvantage the city and the proposal should be abandoned for the following reasons:

Dependence on rail in Glasgow is very high as other forms of public transport are generally poor in Glasgow with commercial bus operators frequently removing routes from the bus network;

It will further marginalise and disadvantage people on low incomes who depend upon the rail services;

It will not provide visitors to Glasgow for the 2014 Commonwealth Games with a good impression of Glasgow if they see derelict train stations throughout the city, one of the threatened stations Duke Street is on the door step of the Games site in East Glasgow;

It will represent poor value for money to the tax payer closing stations on the Maryhill line as this was only recently extended to Anniesland at huge expense;

Closed stations will become derelict and inevitably will be vandalised and this will further reduce the quality of life for affected communities.

As a public body spending public funds Transport Scotland are obliged to undertake an equality impact assessment of their decisions and to publish action plans on how the organisation is promoting equality. I would like to know whether Transport Scotland have conducted an equality impact assessment on the proposals in the consultation document and if so what the conclusions of this are?

I would additionally like to know why if stations are to be closed to save money, it is proposed that money should be spent on unnecessarily rebranding trains with new Transport Scotland insignia? Money should be spent on stations rather than painting Saltires.

Extending journeys:

The proposal to extend journey times to ensure greater punctuality is not welcome. It is likely that the current journey times factor this element in and as the current performance rate is near 90% reliability, it seems foolish to extend the journey times as this would make rail even less attractive compared to travelling by car. This proposal like many of the others in the document are weighted in favour of the train companies rather than the passenger. If this was not the case then the document would suggest that train companies should improve their performance and efficiency rather than the passenger being forced to suffer even slower journey times than which exist already.

Punctuality:

Train punctuality should be measured against the published timetable rather than the time services reach their final destination. The only reason Scotrail's punctuality rates aren't worse is that the Glasgow Queen St to Edinburgh and other services frequently miss out the intermediate stations in order for the train to arrive at the final destination on time.

Direct train services should not be reduced in favour of those terminating at interchange stations. There should be additional trains that call at interchange stations so that the long distance trains only call at larger stations along the route reducing the journey times on these direct services.

Fares:

Fares should remain regulated and increases on peak time fares should not be introduced as peak services are extremely expensive already and any further increases will either disinsensitise people from taking trains or further impoverish people who have no alternative.

The proposal to require passengers to pay higher fares on routes which have recently received investment is counter productive as it would result in money being spent on the improved line whilst there would be less revenue with fewer people travelling due to the fare being increased.

Infrastructure:

I note in section 7.14 that the franchisee may make discrete payments to fund access improvements' to stations for people with sensory impairments. As somebody who is blind and who fell off Belgrove station platform because of there being no tactile surfacing, I urge the government to introduce standards for making these improvements into the franchise. To date there is still not tactile surfacing at Belgrove and some other stations within the SPT network, including large stations like Glasgow Central high and low level, and Queen Street low level. This is because Network Rail only make these improvements when more than 20% of a station is being upgraded and Scotrail were not prepared to make these potentially life saving improvements.

Services:

Cross border services via Edinburgh should continue to extend to Glasgow Central and to the North to provide convenience. Changing trains at Edinburgh will make rail travel less attractive as journey times will increase.

First class sections should remain on the long distance trains to Aberdeen for example. Wi fi should be available for a fee to the passenger on at least the Glasgow to Edinburgh trains. Alcohol consumption should not be banned on all trains. It may be appropriate to curtail alcohol consumption at certain times such as following football matches or to ban it on some routes though.

Finally the Caladonian Sleeper service should continue to be available from Glasgow Central as well as Edinburgh Waverly. Removing the Sleeper service from Glasgow will have a deleterious impact on the city as connectivity will be reduced and this will result in fewer tourists and business trips being made with a loss in revenue to both the train operator and the city alike.