

Stephen Tornow

Glasgow has one of the best local rail systems in the UK - it also has one of the lowest levels of car ownership. It seems incredible that there are serious proposals to reduce this provision by closing stations with on the face of it little justification, especially as the majority of these are unmanned (and any cost savings can only be marginal), and when set against the impression that this creates to those elsewhere in the UK and beyond. At a time when so much effort is being made nationally to reduce the use of the car and to encourage the use of public transport this seems to be both counterproductive and a clear case of sending out the wrong signals at a time when Glasgow is placing itself on the world map with the upcoming Commonwealth Games. What is more there is little doubt that those who are already disadvantaged will be those who will suffer the most by being forced to use buses which may not be so convenient, taxis which they may not be able to afford or a car if they have one with the costs associated with this.

More specifically to close a station merely because there is another one within a mile of it takes no account of other issues such as ease of access and the numbers who actually use them. In the instance of the Maryhill line the only inference to be drawn from this is a proposal to close the line entirely which given that the extension to Anniesland has only recently been carried out can only be described as a very shortsighted undertaking by Transport Scotland in the first place. If the link into Queen Street alone is abandoned there is little doubt that this in itself will lead to a drastic reduction in the numbers using this service as to extend the journey time by going via Anniesland will be enough to put the vast majority off from using it.

The proposal to extend journey times generally to ensure greater punctuality is a clear case of the tail wagging the dog and should not be entertained. The problem lies with not taking a stronger line with Scotrail and Network Rail in the first place and greater efforts should be made to compel them to improve their performance rather than caving in and forcing the user to put up with longer travel times instead.