

**TRANSPORT SCOTLAND-**

**RAIL 14 – PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**A RESPONSE BY**

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January 2012

## **RESPONSE**

### **Preamble**

In so far as it attempts to outline a strategy for Scotland's railways, this Consultation Document is an embarrassing failure. It lacks vision and ideas for the future development of passenger services in Scotland.

This Response will outline the route that Transport Scotland should have followed and the best advice to Scottish Ministers is to send the draft proposals back for reconsideration and re-articulation. At a time when decentralisation from Network Rail is taking place, Transport Scotland is operating in a self-induced fog and has yet to come to terms with Scotland's railway needs.

### **Strategy**

The strategic aim is said to be facilitation of transition to a low carbon economy, yet there is no plan to achieve it by electrification of the rail network, where three quarters of the lines employ heavy diesel fuel with corresponding emissions of fumes and carbon dioxide. Yet, if the Scottish Government is serious about green energy, it is obvious that there needs to be substantial electrification to achieve its targets. The question also is why should we have to import environmentally damaging heavy oil when we shall have a super abundance of green electricity?

### **Urgent Priority Ignored**

It is perfectly clear that the immediate priority is to prevent Department of Transport in London and its wholly owned subsidiary East Coast Rail from ending their east coast service from London to Aberdeen at Edinburgh. East Coast in a recent statement downgraded the through-route from Aberdeen to the same status as indirect connections for Inverness and Glasgow which have not enjoyed a direct service, and no doubt will be lobbying for its renewed franchise to end at Edinburgh.

This will leave Aberdeen and intermediate station passengers, laden with luggage for long distance journeys, forced to travel in Scotrail's inadequate rolling stock and having to change trains and platforms in Edinburgh. This will be a nightmare for families with young children, the elderly and disabled.

It also downgrades the status of Aberdeen and Dundee within the transport network. One would have thought that Transport Scotland would have been alive to the difficulties likely to be faced by travellers from Aberdeen, Dundee and Fife, all heavily populated areas, and would have argued the case for retention of the service.

Instead, the contrary is true. The Paper opens the gate to loss of the direct London service.

In Para. 8.6, it says

‘We are therefore considering whether services north of Edinburgh should be provided by the Scottish franchisee, with Edinburgh becoming an interchange hub for cross-border services in the east of the country. In this scenario cross-border services would terminate at Edinburgh Waverley, with onward services being provided by Scotrail.’

All very well if you enjoy the transport facilities of the central belt – and the cavalier lack of sympathy for those living away from the central belt corridor is manifest. And the reason given? ‘That the cross-border trains is (sic) frequently considerably underutilised.’ As with all trains, peak hour services are busy and mid-day ones are not. The service from Aberdeen gathers passengers at intermediate points like Montrose, Arbroath, Dundee and Fife. They are entitled to have their travelling interests considered by Scotland’s transport agency when it formulates policy.

But Transport Scotland is unaware that the major promotions and discounts apply from Edinburgh southwards and very few are advertised or made available to travellers from Aberdeen through Fife so passengers north of Edinburgh are charged more and priced out. Usage could be increased if the discounts applied to the northern section of the route.

It is arguable that East Coast’s pricing policies are directed towards dropping the service beyond Edinburgh at the next franchising round. And so far as East Coast is concerned in its marketing policy, eastern and north eastern services have already been dropped, regardless of their obligations under the current franchise..

This is an essential route. Its retention should be a priority and not offered up as a sacrificial victim by Transport Scotland.



### **Intermediate/Long Term Targets**

It is appreciated there are currently capital constraints, but the small list of developments, namely Edinburgh-Glasgow improvements, Highland mainline improvements between Perth and Inverness, and Aberdeen to Inverness are lacking in ambition. Interestingly, Perth/ Inverness and Aberdeen/Inverness have been given upgrading priority at the expense of Phases 3 and 4 ie. electrification from Dunblane/Edinburgh to Aberdeen with again no justification advanced.

By its silence – the classical political device to drop commitments - Transport Scotland has departed from the strategic investments set out in The Strategic Transport Projects Review 2009 published by the new Scottish Government. At the very least, clarification is required.

For the moment, where is the vision for the future?

What has happened to the proposed electrification programme serving eastern and north eastern Scotland? Much of the diesel rolling stock is drawing towards retirement. It is the ideal time to invest in the economy by linking the country through electrification of the main routes. Electrification can produce 15% cost savings for on urban routes.

Within 5 to 10 years, the recession will have been replaced by global economic growth and the debt crisis stabilised. Freed from the borrowing shackles of the Treasury in London through independence, a Scottish Government will be able to access finance for infrastructural and environmental projects to modernise the country.

These are the projects that would make the Scottish network fit for purpose and would offer a medium term programme. They are not new. They appeared in the National Transport Strategy (2006) and set out a vision for the rail network over 20 years to 2026. (see above) but appeared to have slipped. The HST2 project should not tie up funds until the more immediate priorities are met.

### **Intermediate Projects**

1. Edinburgh to Aberdeen electrification to complete the direct Aberdeen-London route, already electrified from Edinburgh southwards.
2. Dunblane to Dundee electrification to link the electrified line from Dundee to Aberdeen.

3. Glasgow Cross-rail designed to link Renfrewshire (with a continuous bus transit service from Paisley to Glasgow International Airport), Ayrshire (serving Prestwick International Airport) and south west of Scotland to Stirling, Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen with minimum disturbance to exchange passengers. While there may be some limited direct services, dictated by the market, the main benefit to passengers would be a change of platform rather than a change of station.

### **Pie in the Sky?**

The Transport Scotland Report is silent regarding HST2 although there is a subsequent favourable partnership report

The Government should be cautious. Leaving aside the reasoned arguments that capacity on the West coast line could be increased more effectively, quickly and cheaply through longer platforms serving longer trains, there is no prospect that a Westminster Government would pay for an expensive extension from Manchester or Leeds to the Scottish Border without evident economic advantage to England. HST1 was intended to run from Scotland as part of the cross-channel Eurorail service to the Continent. It never came further north than London - in spite of being paid for by Scotland's Oil!

Hard political experience has made me cynical. If the London Government will not upgrade the stretch of the strategic A1 to dual carriageway from Berwick to Morpeth, near Newcastle, at modest cost, an HST2 extension to Scotland is dubious. Any available Scottish capital is better deployed towards the improvement of the existing internal rail network in Scotland.

Ministers are, of course, obliged to look at all possible schemes in the national interest. In this instance, they would be wise not to tie up future investment to the disadvantage of more immediate requirements whose execution will benefit passengers reasonably soon. After all, the Birmingham link is not for completion until 2026 and Manchester/Leeds in 2033. How long would Scotland wait?

Gordon Wilson

30 January 2012



## Respondent Information Form and Questions

Please Note this form **must** be returned with your response to ensure that we handle your response appropriately

### 1. Name/~~Organisation~~

Organisation Name

Title Mr ☐ Ms ☐ Mrs ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☒ Please tick as appropriate

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### 3. Permissions - I am responding as...

☒ Individual

/ ☐ Group/Organisation

Please tick as appropriate

- (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 ☒

or

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

or

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

- (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

- (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

## Consultation Questions

The answer boxes will expand as you type.

### Procuring rail passenger services

1. What are the merits of offering the ScotRail franchise as a dual focus franchise and what services should be covered by the economic rail element, and what by the social rail element?

Q1 comments:

2. What should be the length of the contract for future franchises, and what factors lead you to this view?

Q2 comments:

3. What risk support mechanism should be reflected within the franchise?

Q3 comments:

4. What, if any, profit share mechanism should apply within the franchise?

Q4 comments:

5. Under what terms should third parties be involved in the operation of passenger rail services?

Q5 comments:

6. What is the best way to structure and incentivise the achievement of outcome measures whilst ensuring value for money?

Q6 comments:

7. What level of performance bond and/or parent company guarantees are appropriate?

Q7 comments:

8. What sanctions should be used to ensure the franchisee fulfils its franchise commitments?

Q8 comments:

### **Achieving reliability, performance and service quality**

9. Under the franchise, should we incentivise good performance or only penalise poor performance?

Q9 comments:

10. Should the performance regime be aligned with actual routes or service groups, or should there be one system for the whole of Scotland?

Q10 comments:

11. How can we make the performance regime more aligned with passenger issues?

Q11 comments:

12. What should the balance be between journey times and performance?

Q12 comments:

13. Is a Service Quality Incentive Regime required? And if so should it cover all aspects of stations and service delivery, or just those being managed through the franchise?

Q13 comments:

14. What other mechanisms could be used for assessing train and station quality?

Q14 comments:

### **Scottish train services**

15. Can better use be made of existing train capacity, such as increasing the permitted standing time beyond the limit of 10 minutes or increasing the capacity limit? What is an acceptable limit for standing times on rail services?

Q15 comments:

16. Should the number of services making use of interchange stations (both rail to rail and rail to other modes) be increased to reduce the number of direct services? What would be the opportunities and challenges of this?

Q16 comments:



17. Should Government direct aspects of service provision such as frequency and journey time, or would these be better determined by the franchisee based on customer demand?

Q17 comments:

18. What level of contract specification should we use the for the next ScotRail franchise?

Q18 comments:

19. How should the contract incentivise the franchisee to be innovative in the provision of services?

Q19 comments:

### **Scottish rail fares**

20. What should be the rationale for, and purpose of, our fares policy?

Q20 comments:

21. What fares should be regulated by government and what should be set on a commercial basis? Do your recommendations change by geographic area (the Strathclyde area example), or by type of journey (for example suburban or intercity)?

Q21 comments:

22. How should we achieve a balance between the taxpayer subsidy and passenger revenue contributions in funding the Scottish rail network? At what rate should fares be increased, and how feasible would it be to apply higher increases to Sections of the network which have recently been enhanced?

Q22 comments:

23. What should the difference be between peak and off-peak fares? Will this help encourage people to switch to travelling in the off-peak?

Q23 comments:

### Scottish stations

24. How should we determine what rail stations are required and where, including whether a station should be closed?

Q24 comments:

25. What are the merits or issues that arise from a third party (such as a local authority or local business) being able to propose, promote and fund a station or service?

Q25 comments:

26. Should only one organisation be responsible for the management and maintenance of stations? If this was the franchisee how should that responsibility be structured in terms of leasing, investment, and issues relating to residual capital value?

Q26 comments:

27. How can local communities be encouraged to support their local station?

Q27 comments:

28. What categories of station should be designated and what facilities should be available at each category of station?

Q28 comments:

### Cross-border services

29. Should cross-border services continue to go north of Edinburgh? In operating alongside ScotRail services, how do cross-border services benefit passengers and taxpayers? And who should specify these services, the Department of Transport or the Scottish Ministers?

Q29 comments: *Yes. See Paper*

30. Or should the cross-border services terminate at Edinburgh Waverley, allowing opportunities for Scottish connections? And if so, what additional benefits would accrue from having an Edinburgh Hub?

Q30 comments: *No. See paper*

### **Rolling stock**

31. What alternative strategies or mechanisms could be used to reduce the cost of the provision of rolling stock?

Q31 comments:

32. What facilities should be present on a train and to what extent should these facilities vary according to the route served?

Q32 comments:

### **Passengers – information, security and services**

33. How should we prioritise investment for mobile phone provision and / or Wi-Fi type high-bandwidth services?

Q33 comments:

34. How should we balance the need for additional seating capacity and retain the flexibility of a franchisee to offer first-class services if commercially viable?

Q34 comments:

35. What issues and evidence should be considered prior to determining whether or not to ban the consumption of alcohol on trains?

Q35 comments:

36. How can the provision of travel information for passengers be further improved?

Q36 comments:

### **Caledonian Sleeper**

37. Should we continue to specify sleeper services, or should this be a purely commercial matter for a train operating company?

Q37 comments:

38. Should the Caledonian Sleeper services be contracted for separately from the main ScotRail franchise? Or should it be an option for within the main ScotRail franchise?



Q38 comments:

39. We would be interested in your views in the level and type of service that the Caledonian Sleeper Services should provide. Including:

- What is the appeal of the Caledonian Sleeper Service, and if there were more early and late trains would the appeal of the sleeper services change?
- What is the value of sleeper services to Fort William, Inverness and Aberdeen and are these the correct destinations, for example would Oban provide better connectivity?
- What facilities should the sleeper services provide and would you pay more for better facilities?

Q39 comments:

#### **Environmental issues**

40. What environmental key performance indicators should we consider for inclusion in the franchise agreement or the High Level Output Specification?

Q40 comments: