

North Queensferry Station Trust

17, Carlingnose Point,
North Queensferry KY11 1ER
25th November, 2008

Consultation
Rail Performance Team
Transport Scotland
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow G4 0HF

Dear Sirs,

Initiatives Related to the Scotrail Franchise Extension

We refer to your letter and the related consultation paper and would now reply to some of the specific questions.

Q6 To make the best use of available space at stations

Community-based initiatives supported by the Stations Community Regeneration Fund.

The North Queensferry Station Trust was formed to find an alternative use for the disused station building at North Queensferry, in particular to bring the building back into use so as to act as a focal point for community based initiatives. We have identified a practical and sustainable long term use for the building with its conversion into a Railway Heritage Centre. The building's location and its own heritage play key parts in our plan to have an easily accessible centre demonstrating the development and importance of railways in Scottish history. The building itself was built in 1890, is Grade B listed and located at one end of the Forth Bridge, all of which factors make it an ideal destination for visitors, both in its own right and as a gateway to the other attractions in North Queensferry including Deep Sea World and John Rennie's lighthouse of 1813.

The building will also be adapted to include a shop and cafe, an education room and community space. We have obtained a fully costed feasibility study and intend to start work once funding can be put in place.

Q11 Which pilot scheme changes to fares should we make to encourage modal shift?

Geographical tickets – We consider this proposal to be of fundamental importance to

the future of rail travel. The availability of this ticket should enable the short stay traveller to identify an area in the country which is of particular interest. If the ticket permits the traveller to break the journey at no extra cost then there would exist a basis for a visitor trail by train. The Fife Circle line might provide a suitable candidate for any pilot scheme, and would reinforce North Queensferry's gateway status.

Q21 What should we consider in station and community generation?

The size of station and facilities available must reflect the needs of the local community. When first built, most stations would have reflected the size and needs of its community as it existed at that time. Of course, communities may have grown, or possibly shrunk since then, and a community's perception of its needs will likely also have changed. Therefore, in planning station regeneration, it is vital to ensure that any use is both sustainable in terms of the resources and requirements of the community, but also that such station regeneration itself might effectively be used as an engine for community regeneration.

In this regard, the solutions might be as varied across Scotland as are the communities themselves, though the number of stations which could provide an opportunity for appropriate community regeneration may be limited. In the case of North Queensferry, however, the architectural plans in the feasibility study, financed by The Railway Heritage Trust and Fife Council, show that the station could accommodate a reception and bookshop display area, a small café, exhibition area, community classroom, and toilet facilities with disabled access. Visually enhancing the station as the 'Gateway to Fife' with landscaping improvements would be in keeping with its listed building status. All these facilities would be of great benefit to the traveller and the local community, and, in these circumstances, the proposed regeneration of North Queensferry station might be able to provide a model of the principles of station reuse as an engine of community regeneration.

Q22 Where should we concentrate our efforts on the Station Community Regeneration Fund ?

In the first place, we should suggest that there has to be some existing, even if presently disused, station facility which can be utilised as a starting point. Many older station buildings are well built and provide a good example of local construction quality which stands as a legacy for the future, even although many may require some renovation as a result of past neglect.

A further positive factor is the strategic location of the station in an area where the projected use would be viable bearing in mind the needs of the community. There needs to be a reasonable, existing base of users (for example, commuters) who might use the facilities, as well as additional travellers who might be encouraged (especially out of peak hours) to make use of the station, for example as a result of its becoming a destination for leisure travellers and tourists. This will also assist in providing a revenue stream to the train operating companies and may, in some instances, help keep off-peak

services viable. Further, there should be some wider community use which will create a symbiosis between improvement of the facilities in the station and regeneration of the community itself. This kind of partnership between the railway providers and the local community is likely to be for the long term benefit of all those involved. In our view, these conditions all exist at North Queensferry.

If such conditions exist, then there should be a clear case for investment in station regeneration. Such regeneration is likely to bring also a number of collateral benefits. Bringing a disused station to life through community involvement is likely to make available personnel (at no cost to the train operating companies) who might deal with:

- safety and comfort for users within the premises;
- requests for local information as well as transport enquiries (for example relating to train or bus timetables);
- maintenance and enhancement of the appearance and landscaping of the station;
- liaison with the station manager on all relevant matters.

Apart from the question of the station restoration project, we should also record that there is strong local feeling that, whatever else may happen, it would be of considerably assistance to the community that there should be a better service on Sundays and a later last train each weekday night from Waverley.

We trust that these observations might be of assistance as a contribution to the wider consultation process. We should be pleased to give any further information which might be required.

Your Respondent Information Form will be forwarded separately together with a copy of this letter. we have no objection to our contribution to the Consultation being published.

Yours faithfully,

Iain G. Mitchell QC
Chairman,
North Queensferry Station Trust.