

## **Consultation on Initiatives Related to the ScotRail Franchise Extension**

### **Response by Passengers' View Scotland November 2009**

The paragraph numbering, below, corresponds with the numbering of the questions in the consultation document.

1. The Priced Options listed in *Scotland's Railways* would best support delivery of its strategic outcomes. We note that the following Priced Options are not explicitly listed in *Scotland's Railways*:

- Extend 15 min frequency on Edinburgh-Glasgow line
- Sunday only local trains Glasgow – Alloa
- Sunday local trains Partick – Larkhall
- St Andrews virtual branch

We also observe that two of the initiatives in Annex A have already been booked into the December 2008 timetable i.e. additional services to connect for London e.g. 0510 Perth – Edinburgh and Far North Line recast

2. The schedule is right assuming that *Scotland's Railways* sets out a strategy that has been endorsed by passengers.
3. Future options would need to be in line with what research indicates passengers want as well as enabling better transport integration, where trains connect with each other and with other modes, particularly ferries.
4. We suggest three priorities for improving services, particularly journey times:
  - Long distance/ inter-city services – to encourage modal shift
  - In areas of population growth
  - Where economic conditions drive changes to travel needs patterns, e.g. by changes in centres of employment.
5. We suggest three priorities for making ticket buying easier:
  - More and better use of staff to sell to / assist passengers. Research by Passenger Focus has identified that passengers trust staff to sell the correct ticket and provide advice more than any other means of purchase.

- Develop existing technologies e.g. to allow ticket vending machines to sell a wider range of tickets, such as monthly season tickets.
  - Develop smart card solutions which enable flexible walk-up-and-go travel.
6. The basic needs of passengers should be catered for before space is made available for commercial use. In particular:
- The provision of toilets
  - Warm well lit waiting areas with seating
  - Wider provision of left luggage facilities across Scotland at reasonable prices; especially important to encourage movement across the network during Homecoming Scotland 2009

When designing new stations or refurbishing old ones, specialist advice available from British Transport Police on configuring buildings to design-out crime should be sought.

7. Research from Passenger Focus shows that what passengers want most to improve the station environment is visible staff presence for all of the hours trains are running. This should be augmented by extension of Scotland's excellent CCTV network where stations are not already covered.
8. Signage needs to comply with the Association of Train Operating Companies' guidelines. Areas for improvement are in the consistency, quality and completeness of signage across the network and signage relating to access.
9. Key to improving assisted travel is the competence and willingness of staff. We recommend developing a policy of continuous learning in conjunction with staff representative bodies, many of whom have robust learning partnerships with employers.
10. Rail links to hospitals, particularly Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, need to be created. The case for rail links to academic institutions needs to be examined. The operation of existing of Rail Links needs to be improved, especially where late running by ferries causes rail link trains to leave without passengers in order to meet the needs of passengers further along the line.
11. The following initiatives need to be explored to encourage modal shift:

- Significantly improve the availability of car parking at most stations on commuter networks. The National Passenger Survey shows that satisfaction with facilities for car parking in Scotland has reduced from 54% in spring 2006 to 44% in spring 2008. This a consequence of more passengers using rail, resulting in many station car parks becoming full from half way through the morning peak, which in turn dissuades intending off peak passengers from using the trains, when there are seats available, simply because they cannot park their car. In terms of integrating modes of transport and encouraging significant modal shift, sizeable increases in car parking at stations would do much to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint.
  - Fare caps, particularly during the current economic climate to avoid above inflation fare increases pricing passengers of the network.
  - Tax free season tickets through employers (salary sacrifice scheme).
  - Season ticket loans at borrowing rates which incentivise purchase, particularly to encourage new passengers to rail from car.
  - The benefits of season tickets need to be promoted much better by rail operators/Transport Scotland as research by Passenger Focus shows that a significant proportion of passengers who could use season tickets do not buy them for reasons of ignorance about the benefits offered.
12. Passengers' on-train experience would be improved by:
- Increasing seating capacity, particularly during peak times.. The sizeable passenger growth experienced over the last 10 years has not been matched by increases in seating capacity, which has resulted in crowding on key routes. Significant increases in capacity are now required.
  - The National Passenger Survey indicates that the on-train experience would be improved if greater attention were given to:
    - how the operator deals with delays (37% satisfied, spring 2008)
    - toilet facilities (40% satisfied, spring 2008)
  - Better provision for luggage and cycles, so long as the latter is not at the expense of much needed seating accommodation.
  - Consistency and quality in content and moderation in delivery of on-train announcements, rather than the unnecessarily long-winded, over-repetitive and often over-loud announcements passengers endure on First ScotRail trains.

- The provision of free WiFi as standard on all long distance (>40 miles) routes to improve the options for working on-train.
13. The Scottish Sleeper service can be improved by:
- Providing connections with Eurostar, e.g. bus link from Euston to St Pancras
  - Ending the practice of sharing cabins with strangers
  - Providing quality station lounges where there is a need for same
  - Offering a healthy breakfast on train
  - Improving the quality of customer service delivery by train crews
  - Providing good quality showers at destinations for all passengers
14. Travel interchange at stations could be improved by:
- As already noted in the answer to Q11, by providing adequate car parking to allow sufficient spaces to be left for off peak passengers and to meet some growth in demand.
  - Promoting integrated ticketing
  - Improving connections, particularly with ferries
  - Reassessing the minimum interchange time at Edinburgh Waverley, where 10 minutes is wholly inadequate, especially since the station has been enlarged. We recommend that the connection time at Waverley be increased to 15 minutes and timetables be changed to accommodate this. (By comparison Euston, Kings Cross and Paddington, amongst others, all of which are simpler to navigate than Waverley have 15 minute connection intervals.)
  - Improved signage
  - Improved customer information screens/monitors. Where such screens display "page 1", "page 2" and "security information", there should always be a screen live showing immediate departures, otherwise passengers can waste valuable connection time waiting for the screen showing "their" train to come round.
  - At Glasgow Central, where platform allocation is often only announced a very few minutes prior to departure, advise passengers well in advance what platform their train will be leaving from so that they can at least get to the barrier. Passengers standing on the main concourse can sometimes have very little time to run to a distant platform, then find their train is the front unit, before the train departs.

15. WiFi technology should be provided free of charge on long distance inter-city and medium distance commuter routes as a priority as well as all large stations. However, train diagramming may mean that the majority of services would end up having WiFi available.
16. WiFi would benefit the majority of passengers, except perhaps those on shorter journeys.
17. We believe the precedent for free WiFi has been set by NXEC, many of whose passengers transfer to/from ScotRail services. Therefore any charge for its use on ScotRail services would generate ill will amongst passengers and reduce uptake.
18. The pilot should take us to a point where a decision can be made on whether and how the technology will be rolled out across Scotland.
19. The franchisee should be given incentives to deliver better sustainability.
20. The Environment Works Budget should be applied to all of the options suggested. However, we consider time switch lighting may present passenger security concerns if the lights go out when passengers are using the station. We suspect that eco driving is a skill that is in ScotRail's own interests to promote (e.g. to cut fuel costs). If the Environmental Works Budget can be used for electrification then we would welcome any extension of the routes under the wires, in order to improve journey times, increase capacity, improve through journey opportunities and reduce rail's carbon footprint.
21. First ScotRail should be encouraged to engage with the communities it serves in order to establish priorities for station regeneration at a local level.
22. The Regeneration Fund should be prioritised towards those stations with large volumes and minimal/inferior facilities.
23. Transport Scotland and First ScotRail should work together in promoting the use of rail to get to the Games.
24. Of the core attributes and responsibilities of a project manager, communication with sponsors and customers will be one of the most important aspects of this particular role.

25. There will be a positive impact on all passengers through enhancements, improved access and information. Improved staff presence on stations will have a particular benefit in reducing fear of crime amongst women travelling late at night. (Research by a range of bodies shows that women are particularly fearful using rail late at night.)

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