

## CONSULTATION ON INITIATIVES RELATED TO THE SCOTRAIL FRANCHISE EXTENSION

### RESPONSE BY RAGES (RAIL ACTION GROUP, EAST OF SCOTLAND)

#### **Q1 Which of the Priced Options do you think best support the delivery of Scotland's Railways?**

Additional services between Dunbar and Edinburgh

#### **Q2 Is our schedule for new service introduction right?**

Section 8.9 of Scotland's Railways requires updating with regard to services to Dunbar with the addition of: - a local service to be provided by First ScotRail to enable students access to Queen Margaret University via Musselburgh Station, a late night seven days per week service to enable this much enlarged town an opportunity to enable the public proper access to/from Edinburgh and attract opportunities for hoteliers to engage with Edinburgh Festival, etc.

The schedule is very wide ranging and quite correctly enthusiastic towards Rail.

#### **Q3 Which future Priced Options would you wish to see Transport Scotland develop?**

Undoubtedly the local service described in Q2 answer, to bolster NXEC and Cross Country services at Dunbar would/should be developed – this would be an excellent value for money win-win investment.

#### **Q4 Where should we concentrate our efforts on improving services, in particular journey times?**

Journey times by their nature on short/suburban journeys are not as big an issue as with the longer journey e.g. Edinburgh to Perth / Dundee / Aberdeen / Inverness. Given the importance of Aberdeen as European Capital of Oil and its Universities, the line south of this city requires investment such that line speed and hence journey time improvement can be improved or introduction of diesel-electric tilting trains such as Super Voyagers for express services (Railtrack suggested introducing tilting HSTs some ten years ago).

#### **Q5 How can buying a ticket be made easier?**

More 'over-the-counter' services at staffed stations to ease queues and deal with enquiries. In the case of the unstaffed stations, additional ticket machines should be provided as and when passenger numbers show the need for such. In addition, more 'on train' staff are required to provide tickets to those passengers who board a train without a ticket such that they are not delayed by being held in queues at the ticket barriers at their destination. This can arise through no fault of their own, due to high numbers at ticket machines, and the delay can also cause a planned connection to be missed.

We must appreciate that a wide cross section of passengers are not comfortable with ticket machines.

#### **Q6 To make best use of available space at stations, how should we balance the use between commercial outlets and other facilities that offer further passenger benefits?**

Retail outlets at stations are to be encouraged. Not only do they (if properly managed/marketed) provide a benefit to the passenger through their ability to make a purchase, but these outlets can also provide a real sense of community and security to the passenger. Furthermore retail outlets could enter into a contract with the TOC or Network Rail to provide toilet facilities (where no such facility exists on a particular station). This arrangement is becoming more common with councils who wish to have good quality public toilets available where none/few were before.

**Q7      How could the station environment be improved.**

The environment of stations should always be of a well-maintained, litter-free and safety-conscious status. Those responsible for the stations must ensure that lighting and paintwork are well maintained in addition to providing CCTV/help points to ensure the safety of the passenger. Additional robust waiting rooms should be provided. Staffed stations require their staff to be fully aware of situations within their station.

**Q8      How could signage be improved at stations?**

Signage is very important, more so in the larger stations where recent platform alterations have taken place to enable the continuing passenger ease of changing train. Stations should have good quality signage to local attractions and facilities provided in conjunction with the local council.

Conversely, councils are to be encouraged to put up signage directing motorists and the public to the station.

**Q9      How can we improve assisted travel at stations?**

The larger stations should have increased training for all staff to assist passengers with special requirements, not just a select or dedicated staff member/team. This avoids the risk of having no available staff in the light of holidays or sick leave. Unstaffed stations in turn require on train staff serving these stations to be trained to the same level as above. In time, all stations must be made wheelchair friendly.

**Q10     Do you have any ideas for further 'RailLinks'?**

Bus interchanges at railway stations must be introduced/developed to enable those who do not have access to a motor car to travel by train, then continue by bus or vice versa to their final destination. Examples in our Group's geographical area would be bus/es running from large new and existing housing developments timed to connect with trains. This would have a two-fold benefit in that it would free up spaces in already congested station car parks and also ensure those passengers that were travelling into the station from the more rural areas could get a parking space. A bus link from Musselburgh Station to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary would be a very worthwhile service. We must look to our continental countries, including Switzerland, to try to bring our disconnected public transport services up to their very high standard of integration.

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

Students travelling to/from their centre of education should not be disadvantaged by being excluded from travelling during peak times whilst using their student railcards. These young persons, if disadvantaged when they most require good quality cheaper travel, may not return to rail when they complete their education and start earning. Again we require to reduce fares on our rail network in line with our European partners to truly encourage a modal shift from road to rail.

**Q12     When travelling on the train, how could passengers' experience be improved?**

Long distance trains require to have plenty of luggage space. Lack of luggage space not only causes much congestion and anxiety within the train, but also causes delays at stations due to passengers not being able to board their train. On-board train staff require to be fully connected with the passengers needs i.e. when faults occur with air conditioning or late running trains causes delays/missed connections, staff need to make arrangements for the passengers comfort or information on new connections.

**Q13 Where should we concentrate our efforts in improving the Anglo-Scottish sleeper services?**

Having personally used sleeper services, I cannot recommend any further enhancements to this well-run/managed service other than the web site for it could be redesigned to allow ease of booking seated tickets – no problem with berths.

**Q14 How could we improve the travel interchange at stations?**

It is important for the less frequent traveller who has to change trains in multi-platform stations that: new technology is developed/provided for on train staff to enable them to inform the passenger which platform their connecting train is leaving from; trains arrive/depart from dedicated platforms on a long term basis. Again we need to take something from Zurich station which has in excess of 50 platforms and has a booklet showing which train services leave from their dedicated platforms (this needs to be adopted to allow the previous enhancement to work most effectively); good clear signage is paramount in stations to ensure free flow of passengers to their connecting train/platform. TOCs should look at alternative interchange stations where possible, such that the passenger can change at a smaller station whereby the connecting train is coming into the same platform.

**Q15 What should our communications connectivity priorities be?**

Introduction of WiFi on the Scottish Network requires a balanced phased in approach such that Edinburgh to Glasgow, Edinburgh/Glasgow to Aberdeen trains has this service initially.

**Q16 Would wireless internet technology significantly benefit passengers?**

This facility would attract the business long distance passengers most inasmuch that they can make best use of their travelling time whilst carrying out useful work.

**Q17 Who would pay for this service?**

Given that East and West Coast Mainline TOCs provide this facility free, the ScotRail TOC or Transport Scotland would/should pay for this.

**Q18 Where should the Edinburgh-Glasgow SmartCard pilot project take us?**

No response.

**Q19 How best can we focus the franchisee on the options for delivering better sustainability?**

Trains should be timetabled to suit the passengers work/social requirements i.e. it makes better sense to run trains as near to capacity as possible such that revenue is maximised. In addition the TOC requires to review large sports and show events such that adequate train length/capacity is provided to avoid overcrowding which ultimately is a major turn off for the passenger possibly resulting in them using a less efficient mode of transport.

**Q20 How should the Environmental Improvement Works budget be used to further improve our carbon footprint on the railways?**

Driver training could/should deliver significant savings on our carbon footprint in that efficient driving techniques can save fuel and brake to wheel to rail wear. This 'eco' driving is even more effective on electric trains which have the ability for regenerative braking whereby the train's traction motor is used as a generator to provide the braking and to put power back into the grid. Diesel powered trains should be switched off in stations/depots if their idle time is greater than five minutes. Recycling must

be encouraged by the TOC and also by the passenger who in the first instance caused the waste. Level crossings that necessitate the train to slow down to 20 mph should be upgraded to alleviate this resource and time wasting problem.

**Q21 What should we consider in station and community regeneration?**

No response.

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

No response.

**Q23 What additional services or projects in the furtherance of the Commonwealth Games Bid commitments do you feel would most benefit the city during the games period?**

A proper and efficient transport system will have to be in place to be fully effective for the visitors and service personnel to take full advantage of this great event. The monies raised by this event being hosted by Glasgow should go some way to regeneration and continuation of extra services provided during the games.

**Q24 What aspects of the Project Manager's role are priorities to ensure the successful delivery of the projects?**

The Project Manager must ensure that his/her team executes the work in a timely fashion in conjunction with the Transport Minister/Transport Scotland to obtain maximum benefit from the £70m reinvestment fund. To that end the Project Manager should be in close consultation with East Lothian Council and ourselves at RAGES to ensure that Dunbar secures a local service to bolster the inadequately sparse service provided by NXEC and Cross Country at this much expanded/expanding town.

**Q25 Do you think that any of the improvements and enhancements proposed above will have either a positive or adverse impact on equality groups in terms of: age; disability; gender; LGBT; Race; Religion and Belief?**

None of the proposed improvements and enhancements has the ability to have an adverse impact on equality groups as they are for the wider benefit of the travelling public and community as a whole.

**Further comments**

RAGES would see "Additional services between Dunbar and Edinburgh" being extended to provide an hourly service between these two locations whilst still having the current NXEC and CrossCountry service stops at Dunbar.

A further extension to this "local service" would be to continue it to Berwick-upon-Tweed with the re-opening of East Linton and Reston stations. RAGES sees these two locations as being prime sources of passenger traffic particularly in light of future housing developments being planned.