

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

In respect of the Stranraer to Ayr line and the people it serves the re-cast of the Kilmarnock and Stranraer line services are the issue of most importance to our organisation. This is because by nature of the rolling stock used it is inexorably linked to the Kilmarnock line service group

We are disappointed that despite requests to First ScotRail the Partnership has not seen sight of these proposals only rumours from well placed sources that two options have been produced for the Stranraer line. One containing links to the ferry for Belfast and one that does not.

Our current understanding is that the timetable will change in 12 months time i.e. December 2009 but no decision has yet been taken as to whether the service will run to connect with ferry services or be altered on the assumption that the ferry services to/from Stranraer is to be withdrawn. Our preference is that services should still serve the ferry connection until such time as it is withdrawn and then be re-cast.

We are concerned at rumours that services from Girvan/Stranraer to Glasgow are to be "shredded" and cut from the current 5/6 trains a day Monday to Saturdays to 2. This is unacceptable. What SAYLSA is seeking is an hourly service between Girvan and Glasgow with one train in each direction being routed via Kilwinning and the others via Kilmarnock. In addition we are seeking a more regular interval service between Stranraer and Glasgow with one train a day running via Kilwinning in addition to the services to/from Girvan.

Q2 Is our schedule for new service introduction right?

In Scotland's Railways we note there are no plans to introduce service enhancements to the Stranraer – Ayr line. We believe this is a major oversight particularly in respect of Girvan.

Girvan enjoys a time and fare advantage over the bus and is the largest settlement in Strathclyde without an hourly train service. The current average train service is one train every 90 minutes. We believe this is unacceptable and when we hear rumours that places such as Kirconnel and Sanquhar are to receive hourly services to Glasgow from their current two hourly frequency feel that once again this part of Scotland is conveniently overlooked.

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

Our key priority is to see enhanced services to the Stranraer to Ayr line and to ensure that service quality and connections are not destroyed. What little we hear at the moment that is indeed on the agenda. We do not feel forcing people to change trains at Ayr and Kilmarnock is the way ahead and will lead invariably to less use, more traffic congestion and a decline in the prosperity of Girvan and Maybole as places to live.

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

SAYLSA is not convinced that reducing journey times is a key objective for our 225,000 passengers who use the Stranraer line. The main concerns are:

Increased frequency, particularly from Girvan and Maybole
Availability of seats. The 10:00 service from Stranraer is frequently overloaded meaning passengers from Girvan and Maybole have to stand. Fortunately the Partnership has access to a rail replacement bus operator who frequently is requested to provide a vehicle to ease these crises.
More equitable fares particularly from Stranraer. Stranraer is penalised in being the only station on the route not in the SPT area so people are unable to take advantage of the Daytripper ticket meaning that tickets are perceived as very expensive. The SPT Daytripper ticket is also not available to people arriving in Glasgow before 12:30 yet the second train of the day from Girvan (the 08:01) can be used by users of Daytripper tickets boarding at stops further on such as Kilmarnock

Q5 How can buying a ticket be made easier?

It should be possible to buy paper tickets over the internet in the same way this can be done for air travel. It seems perfectly feasible to SAYLSA that you can order a ticket online print it off and then present this to station staff to verify either on boarding the train or on the train or where checking facilities are not provided ticket inspectors at destination stations should be able to verify purchases.

Smart cards could be useful for passengers commuting into the SPT area but considering the Zone card does not cover Maybole, Girvan and Barrhill, SAYLSA does not hold out too much hope that matters will change in the short term.

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

- The size of the station based on passenger numbers and demand
- Type of facilities (e.g. food outlets, news-stands, pharmacies, etc.)
- Community-based initiatives supported by the Stations Community Regeneration Fund.
- That the layout of a station may have an affect on the comfort and safety of passengers.

The number of stations on the Stranraer to Ayr line is small and each has its limitations. Only Stranraer is staffed throughout the day (we do not include Ayr as Ayr is not dependent upon the line to Stranraer), both Barrhill and Maybole are unstaffed and Girvan is staffed for one shift only.

The space available is limited. Only Girvan has rooms available and these are pending use by SAYLSA in connection with the Partnership activities. At Stranraer there may be the possibility for re-using the eastern end of the access tunnel that once gave access to the pier side.

At Stranraer drinks are available from a machine and on Saturdays SAYLSA opens its charity shop serving a range of hot and cold drinks, snacks and line specific souvenirs.

Q7 How could the station environment be improved? Please consider:

- Lighting
- Availability of seating / furniture
- Safety (e.g. through technology such as CCTV, 'Help-Points')
- A visible staff presence.

The station environment could be improved by seeing the stations as architectural focus points in their own right. The new Transport Scotland livery for stations is sadly dull, depressing and for some people deadly. We have concerns that the choice of grey and indigo clearly will have a negative effect on people suffering from depression sitting in waiting rooms or about the station generally. In a country, which is invariably cloudy and wet for significant periods of time, one wonders why on earth such colours were chosen. One might have expected to find this paint scheme in a 1930's sanatorium. One suspects there will be considerable opposition to this paint scheme in the Highlands.

Where possible the stations particularly in rural areas should hark back to their heritage. Attempts are being made through First ScotRail's Adopt a station scheme to encourage local groups to provide plants and small gardens.

Lighting must not be harsh. At night Girvan station looks like a security building with two sodium lights glaring down at a set of approach steps.

Q8 How could signage be improved at stations?

- Directions within stations to ticket office, platforms, toilets, etc.
- Directions to facilities nearby, e.g. hospitals.
- On customer service everyone should have an equal opportunity to access our rail services, but we recognise that our passengers have different needs.

We find signage at stations is generally good. What is poor is the availability of onward information. We would like to see information available on bus times, taxi operators possibly local accommodation and places to eat. This 'forward info footprint' is very poor in the railway environment.

Q9 How can we improve assisted travel at stations? In particular, please consider:

- Station access (such as wheelchair ramps, facilities for light scooters, facilities for passengers with assistance dogs)
- Assistance for people with hearing or learning difficulties
- Increased training for existing staff
- The availability of dedicated staff.

Our only comment is on printed matter. It should be illegal for the train operator to print timetables in a font smaller than 12pt. We have no comment on physical

improvements or assistance as we feel there are more user specific groups who lead on such matters.

Q10 Do you have any ideas for further 'RailLinks'? Please-consider the accessibility of:

- Hospitals
- Bus station interchange
- Car parking
- Park and ride
- Traveline
- Walking routes.
- On fares,

We would like to see the introduction of Community Rail Cars in rural areas. SAYLSA are currently investigating the introduction of one of these at Barrhill. This would operate on a demand responsive basis and be driven by volunteer drivers and would operate only to/from Barrhill station.

We also note that effectively the bus and train are in competition with each other between Barrhill and Ayr and this seems plainly daft. The SPT bus timetable actively encourages connections into the bus network at Girvan rather than the rail network thus effectively doubling the journey for passengers.

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

- Reduced fares for (disabled passengers, families, students, low income groups, ex-servicemen)
- Reduced fares at targeted times of day / year
- Annual season tickets
- Geographical tickets, i.e. tickets for a particular region
- Other rail cards.

As we have mentioned in response to Q4, we feel the cost of tickets from Stranraer is very expensive. SAYLSA would like to see a sub-regional ticket particularly for Stranraer and Barrhill to make the train more attractive. Our preferred option is something akin to the Highland residents card. With the

Q12 When travelling on the train, how could passengers' experiences be improved? In particular, please consider:

- The balance between the provision of seating (including tables) and the Availability of storage space (for luggage, cycles etc.)
- (Up-to-date) information
- Helpfulness of staff
- Catering

On the Stranraer to Ayr line we have suggested that the Partnership provide 'hosts' who would walk around the train promoting the line for visitors. Initially we see this happening on certain trains but over a period of time would like to see the frequency of trains 'hosted' increased. SAYLSA have also offered to provide a simple snack service on the line for passengers too.

The provision of additional luggage is difficult since the rolling stock is interworked with other stock and invariably is called upon to service peak hour commuter needs, which are seat intensive.

On services that divide (currently the practice at Kilmarnock) it would be advantageous to have information panels facing out of the sides of the rolling stock advising people of the service pattern. Equally it would help if internal panels could be separately operated from each cab so they can display the correct stopping pattern for that portion of the train rather than what it is considered the main portion of the train.

We would not like to see a move towards Driver Only Operation. We believe that having on train staff is both welcoming and reassuring and is one of the plus factors of the ScotRail franchise.

Q13 Where should we concentrate our efforts in improving the Anglo-Scottish sleeper services? In particular please consider:

- The number of locations served
- Facilities on trains or at stations
- Arrival and departure times
- The provision of airline-style overnight seats
- Catering
- Staffing

SAYLSA would like to see the diversion of the Glasgow sleeper service via the G&SW line to serve Dumfries and Kilmarnock with connections to Ayr and Stranraer. The south west of Scotland has a structural image regarding tourism and most visitors see the region as merely a stepping stone to Ireland, seeing the “real Scotland” only beginning at Edinburgh or the Trossachs. In order to change that perception we must promote tourism and part of that promotion is to make access to the region better than it is at present.

Q14 How could we improve the travel interchange at stations? Please consider this in terms of:

- Ticketing
- Service connections
- Infrastructure (waiting rooms)
- Facilities for cyclists (cycle racks, National Cycle Route interchange signage)
- Car parking
- Walking routes
- Accessibility for disabled passengers .

The railways have always been fairly good at promoting moving you from *station* to *station* but pretty useless at taking you from *origin* to *destination*. This oversight has continued into the re-privatised railway.

The introduction of Traveline might have been expected to solve the situation but the website is ridiculously clunky, has multiple names often for the same bus stop and unless you know the exact name of a bus stop often cannot make use of the information that is contained therein.

SAYLSA would like to see an overhaul of this travel information package to make it easier for passengers to move between transport modes.

Facilities for cyclists could be enhanced by standardising on one cycle locker/storage type. On the Stranraer to Ayr line the cycle lockers do not work properly which is why so few passengers with cycles use them.

Signage to stations still remains poor. On the Stranraer to Ayr line all the stations are poorly signed. We would like to see a standard secondary (B road) sign used for all stations some 100m in advance of the approach to rail stations. For some stations signage is particularly bad notably Barrhill and Stranraer.

Q15 What should our communications connectivity priorities be?

We have no views on this topic.

**Q16 Would wireless internet technology significantly benefit passengers?
Please comment on:**

- For leisure use
- For business use
- Short 'commuter' journeys
- Longer distance journeys.

For business use and longer journeys there could well be some benefit but south west Scotland is characterised by a fairly hilly terrain which may make reception poor in the short term and mitigate against the introduction of this facility.

Q17 Would you pay for this service?

No, it is not paid for on East Coast services so why should it be paid for on ScotRail. Passengers are already paying 1% above inflation fare rises.

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

- The outcomes, which would determine whether the pilot was successful.
- On improving sustainability and our environment...
- Sustainability on our railways is about ensuring that we continue to operate an efficient, high level of services well into the future. New ways of ensuring sustainability consider economic, environmental and social aspects.

This is outside of SAYLSA's area of interest and have no comment on this topic.

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

The key attribute we feel is for drivers to turn off their engines at terminal stations where the dwell time is greater than 5 or 6 minutes. We notice at Girvan with 40 minute turnarounds that units are sitting here idling away burning fuel, emitting

gasses that are unnecessary and being noisy when the noise is not appropriate. WE believe First ScotRail would save hundreds of pounds if they turned their engines off.

To mitigate against poor re-starting each terminal station should be fitted with a wheeled electro-starter and drivers paid for this contingency as part of their duties.

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

- Electrification
- Waste recycling
- Time switch lighting
- 'eco' driving training
- LED light installation
- non-traction energy improvements
- Other .

We want to make stations a place for communities to come together - the Stations Community Regeneration Fund has been devised to encourage the efficient use of station buildings through community initiatives.

Q21 What should we consider in station and community regeneration? Please think about:

- The size of station
- Facilities which reflect the needs of each community.

At the current time our understanding is that the Stations Community Regeneration Fund is administered by First ScotRail. We would like to see greater clarity concerning this fund, as little seems to be known about the criteria other than the five Strategic Scottish Government's Objectives.

SAYLSA has already re-opened the station shop and a community office at Girvan and is considering opportunities for the third room it has "adopted" from First ScotRail. Opportunities for other facilities to be developed at the other stations on the line are limited by the lack of rooms and buildings.

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

We believe efforts should be concentrated on areas whereby the line is under threat from road alternatives and the environmental benefits of rail needs to be enhanced. Also efforts could be targeted at socially deprived areas to try and reduce the incidence of vandalism and engaging with communities to take a more responsible approach to their responsibilities as citizens.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the details below and return it with your response. This will help ensure we handle your response appropriately. Thank you for your help.

Name: Richard Carr

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1. **Are you responding: (please tick one box)**
- (a) as an individual
- (b) on behalf of a group/organisation **X**
The Stranraer to Ayr Line Support Association (SAYLSA)

ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

3. **The name and address of your organisation *will be* made available to the public (in the Scottish Government library and/or on the Transport Scotland website). Are you also content for your response to be made available?**

Yes

SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

4. **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 the Scottish Government to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response?**

Yes