

## **SEStran Response to ScotRail Franchise Extension Consultation**

### **1. GENERAL**

- 1.1** SEStran welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Priced Options that are part of the extension to the ScotRail Franchise
- 1.2** It is however regretted that this Consultation exercise takes place after the decision has been taken to extend the franchise and as to what priced options are to be considered. SEStran would have liked additional options to have been priced and included as part of the franchise extension and these are mentioned later in this document.
- 1.3** It is also regretted that the consultation takes place after most of the options have been committed for implementation; out of the £72 million total cost of all priced options and the £70 million total sum available, approximately £56 million is already committed - and out of the eleven 'core' options, nine are already committed.
- 1.4** However, a number of options are costed at zero although there are undoubtedly (currently unknown) cost elements associated with many of them. It is therefore difficult to form a picture of what is affordable within the approximately £14 million left out of the total £70 million initially available.
- 1.5** A further issue that should be given consideration is the current 'restrictions' (due to the First ScotRail franchise) on the First Group regarding bus operations. It could be argued that experience has shown that these restrictions are not always in the public interest and with the extension of the franchise, it is important that this issue is discussed and reconsidered/reviewed as relevant.

### **2. CORE SERVICES; Options 3 - 13**

- 2.1.** SEStran in general welcomes the measures listed but with certain caveats/comments (relevant to those options that directly affect the SEStran area):-

#### **2.1.1. Option 3; Edinburgh – Fife – Aberdeen (committed)**

We are in principle in favour of this improved timetable (to be implemented December 2008) but are very concerned about the reduced connectivity between Fife and Aberdeen. In this context, Kirkcaldy station essentially serves the whole of Central Fife (with a 'city' population close to 150,000) and ought to have good direct links with Scotland's 3<sup>rd</sup> city – especially considering they are both on the

east coast line. SEStran asks that Transport Scotland and First ScotRail urgently reconsider this issue.

**2.1.2. Option 5; Extension of 15 Minute frequency Edinburgh – Glasgow  
Option 6; Sunday Service between Glasgow QS and Alloa**

SEStran welcomes these 'options' - that were implemented in May 2008

**2.1.3. Option 8; Edinburgh – Glasgow via Shotts (committed)**

SEStran strongly welcomes the addition of a fast hourly service i.e. the implementation of the "Caledonian Express" project. We are concerned about the apparent delay to the implementation of this option; we understand it was due to commence in December 2008 but the date is now uncertain. We would welcome clarification on this issue – but also appreciate that the project is now committed.

**2.1.4. Option 9; Early morning services to provide connections to Edinburgh (committed)**

SEStran welcomes the strengthening of the Dunblane to Edinburgh and Perth to Edinburgh services to ensure connections with East Coast service to enable a London arrival before 1200 – to commence December 2009

**2.1.5. Option 10a; Additional Services between Dunbar and Edinburgh**

It is noted that this option (10a and 10b) is one of the two options in the 'core service' list that is not yet committed.

It would appear that two of the three 'additional' services (to be operated by First ScotRail) are already provided by Arriva – with financial support from Transport Scotland – so it would appear it is only a transfer of operator with no new money involved. It is of some concern that these two services currently extend to operate to/from Glasgow whereas in the Franchise Agreement document it would operate only between Edinburgh and Dunbar.

The third 'additional' service (2130 Edinburgh – Dunbar, Mon – Thu) is fairly close to the 2100 to York stopping at Dunbar. We would require assurance that this latter Dunbar stop is not to disappear and it would also make sense to extend the additional service to also include Fridays and Saturdays.

SEStran does welcome the fact that First ScotRail will now also serve Dunbar (should option 10a be implemented) which would mean ScotRail presence at all SEStran stations.

However, we are concerned that this option does not bring much improvement to existing service level and the option cannot therefore be described as 'additional'.

Implementation of the option must however be regarded as essential should the alternative of continuing the current agreement with Arrive not be an option.

There is no indication of the stopping pattern of the 'additional' services but should intermediate stops be considered, SEStran would prefer these to be Musselburgh and Drem (in order of priority).

In conclusion, SEStran is of the opinion that this option must be implemented; the alternative would appear to be a reduction in the current service provision.

#### **2.1.6. Option 10b; Broader study into options and details around the implementation of an hourly service between Dunbar and Edinburgh**

SEStran welcomes this initiative but this study must also take full account of the recommended options outlined in the East Coast RUS and the East Lothian and Scottish Borders Councils' 'Edinburgh – Berwick Local Transport Study'.

The East Coast RUS recommended that the following options should be investigated further as part of resolving the need to improve services east of Edinburgh

1. Edinburgh to Newcastle; Semi-fast services
2. Edinburgh to Berwick-upon-Tweed local service with possible additional stations at East Linton and Reston
3. New Edinburgh – Dunbar hourly local service with possible additional station at East Linton
4. In conjunction with the above or as stand-alone scheme; New Down platform at Dunbar to improve punctuality and facilitate additional services/stops

The recommendations from the East Lothian and Scottish Borders Study (supported by the Scottish Executive) were that the following should be taken forward to a more detailed STAG Part 2 appraisal

1. The provision of a new dedicated local service Edinburgh – Dunbar or Edinburgh – Berwick-upon-Tweed with new stations at East Linton and Reston as relevant
2. Purpose-designed express coach services linking Eastern Borders and East Lothian to the centre of Edinburgh
3. A network of local feeder as part of the above local rail and/or coach services

It is therefore important that the proposed study as part of this franchise extension takes onboard all the above recommendations and SEStran would be happy to participate fully in this exercise.

#### **2.1.7. Option 13; Virtual branch line to St Andrews (committed)**

SEStran welcomes the commitment to improve bus/rail integration at Leuchars station through published integrated timetables, fully integrated ticketing and provision of STAR ticket machine and rail departure information at St Andrews Bus station .. to be implemented by 2 April 2009

**2.2.** Had this consultation exercise taken place as part of the process leading into an extension of the ScotRail franchise, SEStran would have been minded to include additional service improvements as part of options to be costed. Such schemes would possibly have included the following:-

**2.2.1.** Later train departures out of Edinburgh in the late evening. At present, the local rail services out of Waverley stop operating considerably earlier than the local services out of Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street. We consider this to be due to historical reasons (with SPT being the direct funder of rail services in the past) and a level playing field should be implemented

**2.2.2.** Sunday services should be considered on local services in the SEStran area where not currently operated .. as well as strengthening of existing Sunday services.

**2.2.3.** Local rail fares in the SEStran area are generally higher (over equivalent distances) than those in the SPT area and a costed option of addressing this could have been part of the franchise extension agreement.

**2.2.4.** There are access problems for a number of SEStran stations; poor cycle access and cycle storage facilities, poor or lack of integrated bus connections and lack of car parking capacity. SEStran would have liked priced options to improve this position.

**2.2.5.** Rail could do more to encourage transfer from car to rail for commuting into Edinburgh, including for example a new local station at Winchburgh in West Lothian.

**2.3.** Responses to your specific questions related to the Core Services section:-

#### **Q1 Which of the priced options do you think best supports the delivery of Scotland's Railways?**

SEStran is concerned that Option 10 ('Dunbar') is not a committed option and feels this must be given top priority, especially since the alternative to this option would

appear to be a reduction in the current service level. However, the study must be widened to include findings in the previous study and the East Coast RUS as outlined in 2.1.6 above .. and SEStran would be happy to participate fully in this exercise.

This option will in particular meet the Scotland's Railways programme of encouraging modal split and improving capacity as well as timetable and service enhancements

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

It must be presumed that the options have been scheduled for implementation as soon as reasonably possible but we are disappointed that Option 8 (Shotts line improvements) is not part of this December timetable, i.e. this option is already behind schedule.

We regard it as imperative that Option 10 (Dunbar) is implemented when the current agreement with Arriva expires.

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

In addition to implementation of Option 10, SEStran would ask that further consideration be given to developing the options outlined in section 2.2 above.

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

Journey time improvements would be of most benefit for medium and long-distance journeys whereas reliability and capacity are key issues for local (commuter) journeys.

However, journey time improvements must not be at the cost of significantly reducing access to the network by taking out too many stops .. and SEStran feels that removing the Kirkcaldy stop on the Edinburgh – Aberdeen service is 'counter-productive' as it takes away the direct service to Aberdeen for around 150,000 people served by Kirkcaldy station .. especially since much of the time saving has been used to reinstate the local station at Laurencekirk.

SEStran would also welcome measures to improve journey times between Edinburgh and Inverness but this should not be through taking out stops in the SEStran area.

New and Improved infrastructure as well as additional services should ideally be the key tools for achieving journey time improvements .. and SEStran would give strong support to most of the measures outlined in Scotland's Railways. This would include consideration of high speed link between Edinburgh and Glasgow (albeit as part of an Anglo-Scottish network) and direct rail access to Edinburgh Airport.

Consideration should also be given to enhancing the local rail network by extending the Fife circle to Levenmouth and also operating passenger services between Alloa and Edinburgh via the current Alloa – Kincardine – Dunfermline freight-line.

SEStran does of course expect the construction of the Waverley line to the Borders to take place within the next few years.

### **3. CONNECTING TO PASSENGERS AND PEOPLE**

**3.1.** In general, SEStran supports the implementation of all the options outlined and would also comment as follows:-

**3.1.1. Option 14; Continued operation of the Glasgow Central to Glasgow Queen Street RailLink service**

SEStran feels this is an important link as long as rail connections from the SEStran area into Glasgow Central is relatively poor

**3.1.2. Option 15; Improving links between Rail services and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary**

This study should be extended to also include links from future station(s) on the Waverley line .. assuming this line is opened within the franchise period. SEStran would be happy to fully participate in the study.

**3.1.3. Option 16; Staffing of Edinburgh Park Station to improve interchange with the tram service.**

SEStran also request that further consideration be given to stop some of the Edinburgh – Glasgow trains at Edinburgh Park to further improve integration .. but at least staffing the station will improve advise to the public regarding interchanging onto the Edinburgh - Glasgow service at other stations.

**3.1.4. Option 19; Delivering better efficiency, performance and sustainability (committed)**

**Option 20; Pilot Schemes to incentivise modal shift of commuters (committed)**

**Option 21; Additional Ticket facilities at Haymarket**

**Option 26; Additional customer service staff at major stations**

SEStran supports these measures and would be pleased to be involved as relevant in developing details of these options further, in particular with regard to Option 20.

Regarding Option 26, it could be argued that 'Additional customer service staff' should also be considered for deployment at some currently unstaffed stations.

### 3.2. Responses to your specific questions related to the Core Services section:-

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

- More 'over-the-counter' services
- More 'ticket vending machines'
- 'Customer service' staff to offer assistance and advise when buying a ticket
- Internet purchase facilities
- Telesales
- Through mobile phones
- Smart cards

All the facilities listed are of relevance as customer preferences will vary considerably. A large proportion of the population is still not fully comfortable with 'modern technology' and will depend on manned ticket facilities. In addition to considering the manning of currently unmanned stations, this should also include a wider range of tickets available for purchase on the train - and this facility is apparently not included in the list.

At stations, the key issue must be to ensure that queuing for tickets is minimised – through the provision of a range of facilities relevant to the level of passenger usage and just as important, the type of journeys involved .. e.g. long-distance journeys require 'more attention' than short local journeys.

First ScotRail should of course make great effort in enhancing facilities to pre-purchase tickets over the net and through telesales .. but this should not be in isolation from other train operators in order to ensure maximum availability of the widest possible range of ticket options, including where a journey involves more than one operator.

#### **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 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

The service requirement and opportunities at each individual station will vary so there's no 'fits all' solution. The facilities directly linked with passenger facilities (waiting rooms, ticketing etc) must be top priority and sales outlets should first of all be those that most directly enhance the journey (food and news-stand).

At major stations, a wider range of shops and facilities could be considered but there must be concern should the station take the appearance of a shopping centre rather than a travel interchange. Care must also be taken so that walking distances are not increased just to facilitate more shops (the situation at some airports may be a 'warning' in this respect).

Community involvement and community use of station facilities should be encouraged but will most likely be suitable primarily for rural and relatively lightly used stations.

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

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

The answer is already given in the list above; all the measures must be considered .. and SEStran welcomes that almost all SEStran stations are now provided with remotely controlled CCTV and 'Help-Points'. However, this does not include the only 'non-ScotRail' station (Dunbar) and SEStran strongly asks that this station is also incorporated into the Dunfermline control centre.

At many stations, improved seated waiting facilities / shelters is probably one area where there's a particular need for improvement.

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

- Directions within the stations to ticket office, platforms, toilets, etc
- Directions to facilities nearby, e.g. hospitals

In general, the rail industry is good at signing internal station facilities but quite often much less so for external facilities. This must in particular be provided for connecting transport facilities, e.g. bus and taxi but also to main destinations/facilities that are reasonably within walking distance.

Each station would have to be considered separately .. but a universally accepted signing standard should be utilised. External signage must however also fit in with local authority signage provision .. so relevant consultation with local authorities should take place.

**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

All these options must be considered as relevant options but the requirement will vary dependent on the location and the presence of facilities nearby, e.g. retirement homes etc. We would however question the value of 'dedicated staff' .. but we would welcome the employment of additional staff in general and all station staff should receive a high degree of training regarding 'assisted travel'.



We would also argue that accessibility at Haymarket station requires significant improvement .. but this must not be read as meaning accessibility at all other SEStran stations is adequate.

It is essential that full consultation takes place with recognised organisations that act on behalf of the various disability groups – both nationally and locally.

**Q10 Do you have any ideas for further RailLinks?** (other than Glasgow Central to Queen Street and ERI to Newcraighall)? Please consider the accessibility of:

- Hospitals
- Bus station interchange
- Car parking
- Park and Ride
- Traveline

In addition to the comment in section 3.1.2 (Option 15), SEStran would like to discuss possible further requirements with Transport Scotland and First ScotRail.

Perhaps ‘walking RailLinks’ should also be considered, with ‘continuous signing’ for pedestrians for example between Edinburgh Waverly and St Andrew Bus Station.

SEStran would also like further consideration to the provision of more ‘virtual branch lines’ as that being introduced for St Andrews (Option 13)

**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 the day / year
- Annual season tickets
- Geographical tickets, i.e. tickets for a particular region
- Other rail cards

There must be a balance between cost, capacity of the network and benefits to the individual and the community at large (the latter would include benefits of modal shift from the car).

Perhaps reduced cost of season tickets or multi-journey tickets would have the widest benefits since they would be more captive (prepaid and likely to lead to continuous modal shift). Perhaps ‘off-peak’ season tickets could be considered (with a small premium being applicable whenever the holder requires to travel at peak periods).

SEStran considers it imperative that cost of rail travel should not vary between areas of reasonably similar nature, (e.g. SPT and SEStran with both being City regions or perhaps even one City region) and equalisation of local fares between the two areas should be seriously considered as outlined in section 2.2.3 above.

## **4. THE FUTURE: LOOKING FORWARD**

**4.1.** SEStran comments on the various priced options are:-

- 4.1.1. Option 1 Project Manager (committed)**  
**Option 2 Rolling Stock Procurement (committed)**

These must be considered essential in delivering relevant options as part of the franchise extension.

- 4.1.2. Option 17 Projects to enhance public transport to the Commonwealth Games**

See Question 23 below

- 4.1.3. Option 18 Environmental Improvements Works**

See Question 20 below

- 4.1.4. Option 22 Edinburgh – Glasgow SmartCard Project (committed)**  
**Option 27 Provision of a wireless technology service to passengers on the Edinburgh-Glasgow service**

See Questions 15, 16, 17 and 18 below

- 4.1.5. Non-numbered Option Anglo-Scottish sleeper services**

See Question 13 below

- 4.1.6. Option 28 Stations Community Regeneration Fund**

See Questions 21 and 22 below

**4.2.** Responses to your specific questions related to 'The Future; Looking Forward' section:-

**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

The balance between seating and storage facilities will depend on service, but is perhaps reasonably right on ScotRail services. It may be that location of luggage facilities need to be reviewed so that more storage can be provided near the seat

rather than at the end of the carriage .. in general passengers don't want to be separated from their luggage.

Information and helpfulness of staff goes together .. so it is important that train staff have easy access to all information that may be of relevance to passengers .. and are willing to provide such information in a clear and friendly manner.

Catering facilities may sometime be short of what should be expected .. in particular in relation to the cost.

**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

In light of the growth in inter-city travel between Scotland and major cities outwith London (both rail and air), there may be opportunistic to look at a wider sleeper service network, in particular between Edinburgh and the West of England.

Provision of sleeper services must be seen as rail in competition with air and should therefore be complementary to intercity services provided by East Coast and Cross Country franchises rather than as a ScotRail service in isolation.

It is also the case that sleeper carriages are by now very old and need upgrading, in particular with regard to facilities. To attract passengers and premium fares, the standard must at least be 'en-suit' facilities for each compartment.

**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 Route interchange signage)
- Car parking
- Walking routes
- Accessibility for disabled passengers

All of the above would be of relevance but to varying degrees dependent on the station concerned.

However, note the SEStran request for further additional options as outlined in section 2.2.4 .. and SEStran would welcome further dialogue with Transport Scotland and First ScotRail on this issue.

In particular, future interchange facilities at Haymarket will require to take full consideration of the tram network.

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

See answers to Questions 16 and 17 below.

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

Please comment on

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

This will become increasingly important, in particular for business and longer distance rail trips.

**Q 17 Would you pay for this service?**

It ought to be provided free of charge .. in order to encourage rail use which is expensive enough as it is.

**Q 18 Where should the Edinburgh – Glasgow SmartCard pilot project take us?**

Please consider:

- The outcomes which would determine whether the pilot was successful

One would have thought that the existing national entitlement card (concession smart card) issued by Transport Scotland / Local authorities would be the starting point for a further expansion of travel smart cards in Scotland. This could then also absorb individual local authority rail concession schemes. It would obviously be a 'multi-function' card to also suit 'ordinary' rail travellers. It would avoid travellers ending up with a multitude of smart cards .. just for the purpose of travelling.

The success of the scheme should therefore be judged on achieved compatibility with other smart card functions .. as well as the uptake of the card amongst 'ordinary' rail travellers that would not require the card for other purposes.

The practicality of introducing relevant infrastructure (e.g. barriers) at all the stations will have to be given careful consideration .. with each station being individually assessed so that station accessibility was not being compromised.

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

The specification outlined in the franchise amendment agreement for Option 19 seems reasonable

**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.

All the options are commendable and included in the specification for Option 18 in the franchise amendment document. However, this ought to also include waste reduction (before waste recycling).

**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

Both issues are relevant

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

SEStran would like to discuss possible options with Transport Scotland and First ScotRail.

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

Such projects must include improved links between the SEStran area and the various Commonwealth Games sites. It should not be for the sole benefit of Glasgow.

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

We consider it to be of great importance that the Project Manager liaise individually with the Transport Partnerships on all issues / options that are of concern to the partnership(s).

**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 term of:**

- Age
- Disability
- Gender

- LGBT
- Race
- Religion and belief?

It would appear that the measures will in general have a positive impact or neutral effect on these groups and nothing in the options would appear to further disadvantage these groups.

## **5. OTHER 'PRICED' OPTIONS**

**5.1.** SEStran would like to comment on these options as follows:-

### **5.1.1. Option 23      Branding (committed)**

SEStran welcome the decision to provide a common branding to all ScotRail rolling stock that will survive any future change of franchise .. which should lead to a cost saving in the longer run.

### **5.1.2. Option 24      Use of additional rolling stock for service strengthening**

This option is costed as ZERO but is understood to involve a cost of £64,000 per vehicle per annum in any future options to be costed. It would be particularly relevant to the proposals outlined in our response to Question 4.

Replacement or refurbishment of some of the existing rolling stock (within the extended franchise period) should be included as part of this option.

### **5.1.3. Option 25      Revenue implications of Capital Projects**

Again this is listed as ZERO but there will inevitably be capital cost implications that it is understood will have to be met from the £70 million pot.