

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS AND PROPOSED ANSWERS

Core Services

This section is concerned with those Priced Options which deal with the core business of the franchise - providing rail services across the Scottish network. We seek your views and comments on how best these options can be delivered or improved for the benefit of all rail users.

The initiatives relevant to the core services are:

- Edinburgh, Fife and Aberdeen service enhancements including services to and operation of the new Laurencekirk Station
- Operation of Kilmarnock half-hourly service and recast of Ayr-Girvan and Stranraer-Glasgow services
- Extension of 15 minute frequency Edinburgh-Glasgow service
- Sunday local services between Glasgow Queen Street and Alloa
- Sunday local services between Partick and Larkhall
- Operation of an additional limited stop service from Glasgow to Edinburgh via Shotts
- The operation of additional morning services to provide connections to London
- Additional services between Dunbar and Edinburgh
- Additional limited stop services between Glasgow and Perth
- Far North Recast (being late night Tain, fourth Wick service)
- Virtual branch line to St Andrews.

Considering these initiatives, please answer the following:

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

We would suggest priority be given to the operation of additional morning services to provide connections to London, with particular reference to the stopping pattern at Lockerbie Station on the West Coast Main Line. Please also see comments under Question 4 regarding connections at Carlisle Station.

We would also highlight the operation of a Kilmarnock half-hourly service. We would welcome early consultation on any proposed recast of Ayr-Girvan and Stranraer-Glasgow services. (Within the Route Utilisation Strategy this appears to have been related to relocation of ferry operations away from Stranraer, where it was proposed to review the train service to meet the needs of the local population.)

An Ayr to Stranraer Rail Regeneration Study was progressed by Transform Scotland in partnership with Passenger Focus, SPT and SWestrans. The final report was agreed by the SWestrans Board at its meeting on 25 July 2008. A copy of the Executive Summary of the final report is attached to our response. [attached]

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Account should be taken of the Ayr to Stranraer Rail Regeneration Study in any proposed recast. However, it is very important that there is early consultation with SWestrans on any proposed Stranraer to Glasgow recast and any possible implications with Stranraer to Newcastle services.

Q2 Is our schedule for new service introduction right?

With respect to “faster and most frequent services from Glasgow to London with West Coast upgrade” and “faster connections to Manchester through revised cross—border franchise arrangements” take full account for adequate stopping patterns at intermediate stations, including Lockerbie, to fully utilise access to the line.

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

We would like to see priority given to projects to enhance public transport to the Commonwealth Games from more peripheral regions such as the South West of Scotland. The future programme does not appear to help the situation in a rural area such as Dumfries and Galloway, which is poorly served by rail services.

We would like to see priority given to an hourly service between Carlisle and Glasgow on the Glasgow and Southwestern line together with additional Sunday services on this route.

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

Effort to date on improving journey times has focussed on Main Lines to the detriment of regional services. Greater attention should be given to improving services on, for example, the Stranraer Line and the Glasgow and Southwestern Line. The infrastructure being progressed on the Glasgow and Southwestern Line, including the Gretna to Annan doubling should allow journey times to be improved.

An urgent priority should be connections from the Glasgow and Southwestern Line to the West Coast Main Line at Carlisle. The recast of the West Coast Main Line after December 2008 will considerably worsen already poorly synchronised connections.

We are aware that the timetable recast on the Glasgow and Southwestern Line is a work in progress. However, this needs to be accelerated in order to maintain goodwill with the travelling public.

These should be considered in conjunction with the objectives of the National Transport Strategy and the strategic outcomes detailed in the table on pages 25-26 of *Scotland's Railways*. Both of these documents can be accessed through the Transport Scotland website at:

<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/reports/publications-and-guidance>

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Connecting to Passengers and People

Customers are vital to the success of any business; on the railways in Scotland we have seen a 30% increase in passenger numbers since the franchise was let in 2004. In order to maintain this growth and to encourage even more people to use the railways we must continue to connect with passengers to make rail travel a more attractive option.

Initiatives designed to benefit passengers and to improving the travel experience are:

- Continued operation of the Glasgow Central to Glasgow Queen Street RailLink service
- Improving links between rail services and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary
- Staffing of Edinburgh Park Station to improve interchange with the tram service
- Delivering better efficiency, performance and sustainability
- Pilot schemes to incentivise modal shift of commuters
- Additional ticket facilities at Haymarket Station
- Additional Customer Service staff at major stations.

Considering these initiatives, please answer the following questions:

On our station environments ...

- We want to ensure that passengers can buy their ticket as quickly and efficiently as possible.

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 advice when buying a ticket
- Internet purchase facilities
- Telesales
- Through mobile phones
- Smart cards.

Most of these facilities already exist. However, we see potential in developing ticket purchasing in particular through mobile phones, and smartcards.

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

- Currently, the facilities at stations vary. At larger stations a number of services are available, while smaller stations with less passenger demand can have few.

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 balance between facilities should be related to station size. At medium to larger sized stations passengers will benefit from outlets supplying a wide range of goods and services, including food and drink. Community-based initiatives will be more appropriate at smaller to medium sized stations.

- The layout of a station may have an affect on the comfort and safety of passengers.

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.

All of these are important. However, more importantly, overall stations need to give the appearance of being cared for. Stations need to be well maintained, safe and welcoming. There is a particular need to provide CCTV and help points at all stations. There needs to be a high standard of waiting facilities at all stations.

Q8 How could signage be improved at stations?

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

Signage at stations should be subject to ongoing audit and review.

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

On customer service ...

- Everyone should have an equal opportunity to access our rail services, but we recognise that our passengers have different needs.

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.

Physical access to stations (and hence to services) is the fundamental issue. Priority should be given to making every Scottish station accessible to all. This would particularly apply to Kirkcconnel Station as highlighted in our Regional Transport Strategy.

- Currently, a free 'RailLink' bus service provides transport for passengers travelling between Glasgow Central and Glasgow Queen Street Stations. Another 'Rail Link' is also being considered for passengers travelling to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary from Newcraighall and Musselburgh.

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.

The franchisee should engage with Regional Transport Partnerships to consider the potential options on a station by station basis.

In the local context improvements could be made to signing at stations for example improved signing for the Southern Upland Way at Sanquhar Station.

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

- On fares,

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.

Of the options listed, the availability of annual season tickets is the one most likely to deliver sustained modal shift to habitual rail usage.

Consideration should also be given to reduced fares for identified concessionary groups.

We are also concerned about the steep price differential on the Glasgow and Southwestern Line between tickets from stations in the SPT and SWestrans areas.

The Future: looking forward

To ensure the continued success of Scotland's railways it is important to find imaginative and innovative ways of improving the overall travel experience. This will almost certainly involve the use of technology to ease the purchasing of tickets, or enabling people to conduct business online while on the train, for example. But it is also about ensuring and improving sustainability from economic, environmental and social perspectives.

Initiatives for the future

- Project Manager
- Projects to enhance public transport to the Commonwealth Games
- Environmental Improvement Works
- Edinburgh-Glasgow SmartCard project
- Provision of a wireless technology service to passengers on the Edinburgh-Glasgow service
- Anglo-Scottish sleeper services
- Stations Community Regeneration Fund
- Rolling Stock Procurement.

Please consider how these initiatives might improve the travel experience for rail passengers, in particular:

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

On our trains ...

- A difference between travelling by train and other forms of transport, such as the bus, is that a variety of facilities can be available on board. However, at the same time, increasing demand for rail will put pressure on the available space in trains.

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 provision of tables seems popular, and is particularly important to business passengers who may wish to work on the train. Limited availability of luggage space is a more important issue on trains serving rail located airports such as Prestwick and. On-board catering has the reputation of being of poor quality and over-priced.

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.

The provision of airline-style overnight seats would widen the appeal of this type of service. Consideration should be given to improving service to a greater number of intermediate stations along the line, for example Lockerbie.

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On new technologies ...

- We recognise that the easier it is to interconnect with other forms of travel, the more likely passengers will travel by train.

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.

We would give priority to improving connections between services, for example, between services on the West Coast Main Line and the Glasgow and Southwestern Line at Carlisle. We would also give priority to accessibility at stations, for example, Kirkconnel on the Glasgow and Southwestern Line. We consider that all Scottish stations should be fully accessible. Consideration should be given to developing funding partnerships with other stakeholders, including Regional Transport Partnerships, to progress this aspiration.

- Many businesses are offering wireless internet (WiFi) technology to clients. For reasons of geography and geology, there are cost issues in delivery of this on the Scottish rail network as well as in the delivery of wider issues of connectivity.

Q15 What should our communications connectivity priorities be?

For many business passengers there is a benefit in rail travel in being able to work whilst en route. Priority should be given to enhancing mobile connectivity on the train itself, for example, by providing a signal booster.

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

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

Provision of enhanced mobile connectivity would be a major asset to business travellers, but would undoubtedly prove popular with leisure users also. The benefit would be more significant on longer distance journeys.

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Q17 Would you pay for this service?

This cost of this type of service should be recovered through general revenue.

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

- the outcomes which would determine whether the pilot was successful.

The use of SmartCard technology is now widely familiar to the Scottish public and we would welcome this being rolled out across the rail network as quickly as possible.

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.

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

Investment in services should be linked to identified sustainability outcomes.

- The Environmental Improvement Works option is designed to carry out small-scale physical alterations or additions which will help to reduce the use of natural resources, reduce carbon and other harmful emissions, or reduce waste from stations, depots, or rolling stock.

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.

As the biggest consumer of energy, greatest benefit will come from the electrification of rolling stock. However, consideration should also be given to low-cost/easy to implement measures which can deliver quick wins.

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

- 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.

Community regeneration projects are likely to be more appropriate at smaller to medium sized stations. Projects will reflect better the needs of each community by being developed in partnership with local stakeholder groups.

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

The franchisee should engage with the Scottish Government, Regional Transport Partnerships and Local Authorities to identify and prioritise those rail-served communities that would most benefit from this fund.

On the 2014 Commonwealth Games hosted by Glasgow ...

- Glasgow is expecting a large number of international visitors when it hosts the Commonwealth Games in 2014. With major investment in the road and rail infrastructure, a dedicated Games route network and free travel for anyone holding tickets for that day's games,

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?

Given the international nature of the event particular attention should be given to enhancing the amenity of Gateway stations such as Stranraer and Lockerbie.

Attention should also be given to the enhancement of both services and information at these and other feeder stations into and out of the city on, for example, the Stranraer Line, Glasgow and Southwestern Line, and the West Coast Main Line.

The South West of Scotland Transport Partnership

Broader Issues and Questions

- The Project Manager's primary role is to ensure the timely and efficient delivery by the franchisee of the anticipated benefits of the priced options.

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

The Project Manager should engage with Regional Transport Partnerships to help set these priorities.

- The Priced Options are intended to provide a number of service enhancements from which all rail passengers should benefit.

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?

Please give reasons for your answer.

Enhancement of the services, facilities, accessibility and amenity of stations and rolling stock will have a positive impact on the rail travel experience of all of the groups identified above by improving either access to travel opportunities, or safety, or both.

Additional Issue raised by the SWestrans Board

In situations where buses are used to substitute for rail services there is a need to advertise realistic timetables for these bus services.