

# railfuture SCOTTISH BRANCH NOTES

No 67: March 2009

## Spring Meeting & AGM Sat 21st March at 14:00

in Royal Over-Seas League, 100 Princes St., Edinburgh

Topic : Rail Development Projects in Scotland

### Programme:

- Talk - speaker from Transport Scotland
- Questions to the speaker
- Coffee/Tea break
- Branch AGM - a chance for members to vote for office-bearers, ask questions, and to provide guidance to the Committee for policy and activity for the future

ROSL: Just west of Frederick Street junction with Princes St.

## Editorial

It's been quite a busy period since the last issue of Branch Notes. My desktop search application tells me I have received 581 emails relating to rail matters in that period. Many of these have had attached documents. Ken Sutherland is assiduous in monitoring stories and letters in the press and following them up, as well as going over points with both local and national politicians. As an organisation, we have made responses on several topical issues. Most of this issue contains either our responses or related press release summaries.

Note that the only permitted comments on the STPR are on environmental issues, not on their choice of priorities.

## Transform Scotland Press Release

Speaking to Transform Scotland's press release on the 'Consultation on Initiatives related to the ScotRail Franchise Extension', Calum McCallum, Transform Scotland rail campaigner, said:

"Transform Scotland is positive about the current state of the railways in Scotland. However, we are concerned at the way in which the ScotRail franchise extension was awarded. "In our response to the consultation, we have also recommended a number of developments which we regard as 'low hanging fruit': significant improvements which could be quickly and easily implemented. These include:

- Better services in the late evenings and on Sundays, or the introduction of Sunday services where there are none at present
- Additional services on existing lines which are poorly served, and
- A couple of short extensions to passenger services over existing freight lines.

"We also call for expansion of the electrified network and, in the longer term, further development of Scotland's Inter-City and scenic railways. "Transform Scotland is keen to see a more integrated approach to public transport in Scotland. This includes the extension of concessionary fares to railways and the introduction of through tickets and a 'Smartcard' system for all public transport across the country. We also want to see stations developed as local 'hubs' for walking, cycling and other public transport routes. "Finally, we acknowledge the important position of railways in providing more sustainable transport, but we realise that the railways cannot be complacent: best practice for sustainability needs to be enthusiastically promoted throughout the industry."

## Railfuture Scotland Press Release

*Railfuture Scotland has submitted a five point strategy to Transport Scotland outlining five new strategies to encourage greater use of Scotland's publicly supported rail network.*

(1) Last minute 'turn up and fill up' otherwise empty seats at bargain fares, as a pilot scheme on selected longer distance trains currently leaving with 'empty seats'.

(2) Removing the unnecessary and unfair ticket 09.15 ticket restriction applied in remoter areas with very infrequent services and long distances to major population centres in central Scotland.

(3) Ending the perverse fare discrimination against *single* journey rail tickets which only serves to discourage use of rail travel in many situations.

(4) Removing the peculiar and irrational discrimination against those who don't return by train the *same* day.

(5) Extending the National Concession Travel Scheme to include rail travel as an alternative to the current bus-only travel scheme.

Full details of those proposals have been submitted to Transport Scotland as part of the Consultation Document on the ScotRail's Franchise Extension from 2011 to 2014. Its Consultation Question 11 had asked:

*'What pilot scheme changes to fares should be made to encourage modal shift [to rail] ?*

Ken Sutherland, Research Officer, Railfuture Scotland hoped that the suggested innovations to ScotRail's fares policy would be adopted, since he believed there was a large and unsatisfied public demand for rail travel which was presently being discouraged by the unnecessarily complex, restrictive and inflexible rail fares policy.

There was need for a simpler and more customer friendly ticketing policy which could encourage greater use of our publicly funded Scottish rail network and helping to fill otherwise empty seats - particularly on longer distance trains This could .could be achieved with a simpler, and more customer friendly fares policy. in place of the complex,restrictive and relatively inflexible fares policy which is currently a deterrent to the greater use of our publicly funded Scottish rail network.

He also emphasised the 'urgent need' to reform the current National Concession Travel Scheme (administered by Transport Scotland, on behalf of the Scottish Government) in view of declining rail usage certain areas due to transfer to the unequal competition from 'absolutely free' bus travel anywhere/any time/and distance across Scotland - now extended into England. The threat to future rail patronage (against 'entirely free' concessionary bus travel) was also intensifying with many non-concessionary choosing to accompany their concessionary friends and relatives by bus *rather* than by train, resulting from the above inflation rail fare increases being imposed over the next 4 years.

Yet the opportunity of allowing Concessionary Card holders the opportunity of significantly reduced cost rail travel, as a preferred alternative to bus travel in many situations. This could easily be achieved by allowing the rail operator (mostly ScotRail) to reclaim the equivalent amount of subvention as is currently allowed to bus operators for each passenger carried (73.6% of normal fare). Each concessionary passenger would paying a 'topping up' difference for the rail fare if they thought this worthwhile for (superior) service. And should cost no more to the Scottish Government since a person cannot be simultaneously on a bus and train at the same time (see further details enclosed in item (5) Response to Transport Scotland.

Mr Sutherland hoped that Transport Scotland, in conjunction with ScotRail would pursue these suggestions as way of achieving a better used ScotRail network for broadly the same amount of Franchise Subsidy payment as is currently made.

# Transport Scotland – Strategic Transport Projects Review – Railfuture Scotland response to consultation to the Environmental Report

## Introduction

Railfuture Scotland is an independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for both passengers and freight. We seek to move more people and freight from road to rail, by campaigning for affordable, convenient rail services for everyone and better links for buses, bikes and pedestrians.

Trains are the most carbon-efficient mode of transport after cycling and walking - and are expected to remain so. Rail travel is between two and three times more energy efficient than going by car and rail freight is nine times more efficient than road transport. Road vehicles produce 75% of particulate and nitrogen oxide pollutants. Railways take up less land than roads. A double track railway can move 30,000 people per hour in each direction but a 2-lane road can only handle 3-6,000. A double-track railway takes only a quarter of the land needed for a 6-lane motorway.

On a Great Britain basis, rail carries 7% of traffic but only emits 0.2% of carbon monoxide generated by transport, only 2% of nitrous oxides, 1% of volatile organic compounds, and 2.5% of sulphur dioxide emissions. Sulphur dioxide can cause acid rain which damages trees and buildings and harms aquatic wildlife.

Human activities that burn 'fossil fuels' like oil and coal are releasing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere at a far greater rate that would naturally occur. The global scientific community now accepts that this extra CO<sub>2</sub> and other 'greenhouse gases' are causing anthropogenic global warming. This rapid warming of the earth will have a huge impact on weather systems and sea levels, which in turn will have disastrous consequences for many of the world's people, especially in the poorest countries.

In the developed world, transport is the fastest growing sector of human activity that causes greenhouse gas emissions, so it would make sense to encourage those forms of transport that emit the least amount of carbon dioxide. An inter-city electric train causes releases of less than 20 grams of carbon dioxide per passenger km whereas a car emits nearly 40 grams and a short-haul plane emits more than 50 grams (British Rail research). Moving a tonne of freight one kilometre by rail produces 80% less carbon dioxide than moving it by road.

Railfuture has an on-going electrification campaign, to electrify small parts of the network to link up other electrified sections, and for larger schemes like electrifying the line from Glasgow to Edinburgh and from the central belt to Inverness and Aberdeen.

## Environmental Report

The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) Environmental Report - Non Technical Summary makes reference to the following environmental components:

Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna; Population; Noise; Human Health; Soils and Geology; Water; Air; Climatic Factors; Material Assets; Cultural Heritage; Landscape.

It is the contention of Railfuture Scotland that the emphasis on major road building in the STPR will have a detrimental effect (on some greater than others) on each of the environmental topics listed in the baseline assessment. Major road building will also make it impossible for Scotland to meet existing or future emission standards.

Transport is the principal sector where emissions continue to rise. Greenhouse gas emissions from the Scottish transport sector are rising, whereas overall Scottish emissions are falling. If the transport sector played its part in reducing emissions then Scotland would be in a much better position to meet any future targets prescribed by climate change legislation. It is possible that future legislation may require public bodies to reduce emissions in line with national targets.

In particular we would request that the following schemes be deleted from the STPR. These schemes are included in interventions: -

- D14 [A9 Upgrading from Dunblane to Inverness]Part 1 - (Project 16);
- D14 Part 2- (Project 16);
- E6 [Inverness Southern Bypass from the A9 to A82];
- E16 [Extension of Glasgow Southern Orbital from East Kilbride to M73/M74];
- D16 - [Upgrade A96 to Dual Carriageway between Inverness and Nairn ] (Project 18);
- D25 Part 1 - (Project 24) the Glasgow Tunnel proposals only;
- Duplicate Forth Road Crossing - (Project 14).

These interventions are considered by Railfuture Scotland to encourage those forms of transport that will emit the most amounts of climate change emissions.

Railfuture Scotland believes that Scottish Government's aspirations for the SPTR - to improve journey times and connections, to reduce transport related emissions, to improve the quality and accessibility of transport - together with the requirements of future legislation can be met by placing more emphasis on public transport schemes. An example of this in the Review document is Project 24 where reference is made to cross-city travel in Glasgow and the prospect of a metro - light rapid transit. We support this approach in conjunction with the Crossrail Scheme rather than the Glasgow Tunnel proposal. The scheme we support will give all the benefits of the tunnel proposal at a significantly smaller cost and with significantly less environmental impact.

There is a variety of public transport related projects in the Review and this is a welcome development. However, there are several projects which have been omitted and we would ask that these projects should be re-considered as they are a better fit with the STPR vision.

These schemes should include the projects that are included in Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategy together with the network outputs included in tier 3 of the Transport Scotland High Level Output Statement (HLOS) that are not already included in the STPR. It is understood that the content of tiers 1 and 2 of the HLOS are not included in the STPR as the associated funding is already committed. In addition the following projects should be re-considered for inclusion in the STPR on the grounds that they meet the Scottish Government's aspirations with the most favourable environmental impact.

- Glasgow Crossrail - the links should include the existing City - Union Line, together with a new west turning curve to facilitate a direct connection with Queen Street Low Level Station and the restoration of the former Strathbungo link to the East Kilbride / Barrhead lines.
- Further extension to Edinburgh Tram
- Rail link to St. Andrews
- Dornoch Firth Rail Crossing
- Edinburgh Suburban Rail

## Conclusion

In order to achieve the likely requirements of the future Climate Change (Scotland) Bill and to support wider efforts to reduce emissions from the transport sector, the emphasis in the STPR on road building and the duplicate Forth Road Crossing should be removed and replaced with more environmentally sustainable public transport schemes.

## Waverley steps Transport and Works Act bid submitted

Network Rail has submitted to Scottish ministers plans to replace Edinburgh's famous Waverley Steps.

The application for a Transport and Works Order to upgrade the entrance to Edinburgh Waverley railway station from Princes Street includes proposals to create a new covered step and escalator link and a lift from the station to the roof of Princes Mall.

Network Rail's Waverley Steps planning application is the first of its kind under the new Transport and Works (Scotland) Act 2007 (TAWS). The application will be considered by Scottish Ministers later this year and providing approval is granted, work is expected to start on redeveloping the steps by the end of 2009. The project will be funded by Transport Scotland.

Plans to upgrade the Waverley Steps were unveiled at a public exhibition in 2005 (Transport Briefing 12/05/05) but have been delayed because of problems securing funding and design approval. The proposals were modified in response to objections from the adjacent Balmoral Hotel which felt the original design was not in keeping with the hotel architecture.

Ron McAulay, Network Rail director, Scotland, said: "We view this project as vital to helping bring Waverley into line with modern accessibility requirements. The existing steps are impossible to access if you are using a wheelchair and near impossible with a pram or with a lot of baggage. With around 37% of Waverley's 24 million annual passengers making use of this entrance, it's easy to see why we need to make better use of this access point.

"The submission of this application is a major milestone for this project following an extended period in development. We have now reached agreement with our neighbours about the final design of the scheme and, provided our application meets the approval of Scottish ministers, we hope to see work begin within the next 12 months."

## HIGH SPEED NORTH - 2M

The 2M Group is a consortium of 12 local councils representing the 2M people living close enough to Heathrow to be affected by its proposed extension. Their plan is for high-speed railway which would link not just to central London, but include Heathrow as a major hub. This would encourage domestic journeys to be made by train, and obviate the need for an additional runway. They say:

*The M1 offers a direct corridor for the new line. The topography allows a straight and level alignment while the existing noise and pollution from the motorway has discouraged residential development alongside the route. This makes the M1 suitable for the parallel construction of a high speed line.*

*The full north-south line would be built in phases. The first section would run from London to Leicester with a branch to Birmingham; it would connect to both West Coast and Midland Main Lines. The second phase would extend from Leicester along the M1/M18 corridor and connect to the East Coast Main Line in Yorkshire. The third phase could extend from Sheffield to Leeds, and follow the disused Woodhead corridor to Manchester. This would require the former rail tunnel here to be re-opened for high speed track. The final stages would extend to Liverpool along the M62 corridor and shadow the East Coast Main Line and M8 corridors to Edinburgh and Glasgow.*

*The end result - a UK high speed network bringing vast benefits in improved connectivity and capacity.*

## snippets

I have been informed the SAPT AGM is on Sat 28th March, ending at 13.00, in Glasgow [but not of the start time! and the venue is not yet fixed]

The guest speaker is Mr. Mike Connelly, Stakeholder Relationship Manager of tie (Transport Initiatives Edinburgh).

Mike's presentation will cover progress on the Edinburgh Tram project. We will also hear of future extensions, and the potential for Tram or Tram-Train networks in other Scottish cities including Glasgow.

email received by the Secretary [but although there is a signature, it never says who 'we' are]

*We are in the early stages of setting up a campaign to revitalise public transport provision in Renfrewshire. Part of this is likely to involve campaigning to reopen some of the Beeching cut lines (Renfrew link, Paisley Canal, Kilmacolm line). Would you be interested in working with us in this?*

Passenger Focus published its *Fares and Ticketing Study - Final Report* on 19 February 2009. The report and appendices are available on its website at: [www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk)



# CROSSRAIL : A PHASED PROJECT ACHIEVABLE BY 2014

Insofar as making progress on the crucial Crossrail project (as per that intended/detailed within the SPT's 'Statement of Case') I would hope that that the 'end completion date' should be stated as highly desirable by early 2014. This represents an eminently achievable 'target date' with a major bonus also for Glasgow/Scotland, by assisting with the exceptional transport demands generated by the Commonwealth Games later in the same year.

A logical 'phasing' (as already identified by SPT) would seem to comprise:

## Phase (1) Shields Junction to Bellgrove

Required upgrading to passenger train standards, and electrification of the Shields Junction (Paisley Line) to Bellgrove (Queen Street Low Level Line) section of existing freight-only route - often referred to as the 'Glasgow City Union Line'. Excluding construction of a new Glasgow Cross Station, and the West Street Station (interchanging with the Glasgow Subway) the other structural /engineering work required for this phase is not complex or 'onerous'.

As Councillor Alistair Watson (SPT Chair) has suggested, it would surely seem prudent to gain a synergy/financial benefit by utilising the electrification team engaged in 'wiring up' the restored Airdrie-Bathgate route, to do similar work for this part of CrossRail by late 2010/2011. And delivering the benefits of running a direct 'all-electric' Ayr - Edinburgh service.

Such work could take place with due allowance/anticipation for the structural aspects associated with a new Glasgow Cross Station (from design drawings etc) even although this new station was not fully completed until [say] 2012/2013. Similarly with the new Crossrail / Subway interchange station at West Street.

Design details of a new Glasgow Cross Crossrail (upper level) Station should also provide for a future interconnecting passenger link with a reopened Glasgow Cross low level Station on the adjacent Argyle Line into Central Station.

## Phase (2) Strathbungo to Gorbals Junction

Track restoration and electrification of Strathbungo - Gorbals Junction section (largely on existing viaduct) with a new Gorbals Station by 2012/13. Possibly this might include authority for logical East Kilbride /Barrhead electrification (as a prelude to future electrification extension of the of the Barrhead-Kilmarnock-Dumfries-Carlisle section of line.

## Phase (3) Construction of short west turning Curve at High Street

Creation of the short, but crucial, west-turning curve, often referred to as the High Street or 'St John's curve. This very short new new section of line, across mostly vacant land, is only about 200 metres long, but forms the vital 'core' of Crossrail.

This would allow a huge range of services from Ayrshire/Inverclyde/ Glasgow Airport and East Kilbride/Barrhead to turn west into Queen Street Low Level Station, and through Glasgow's City Centre (CBD), to Charing Cross and out to a wide range of north Clydeside destinations eg Partick (with Subway interchange) Milngavie/Dalmuir/ Dumbarton/Balloch/Helensburgh etc

In addition, the SPT's proposed 'Yorkhill turnback/siding' (required for operational reasons), could be further exploited as an associated new station at this site station at this site: (a) capturing much potential traffic in this area of extensive new housing, remote from public transport routes, and (b) offering a more logical and direct access to the SECC from the Queen Street Low Level services (which would avoid of the current 'double detour' involving time consuming detour/hassle of travelling west to Partick then change of trains and 'travelling backwards' to the Exhibition Station on the Central Low Level line - repeated also on the return journey).

Map and aerial photographic evidence suggests the walking distance from a new Yorkhill Station to the SECC (west) car park would be little different than walking/time distance from the existing Exhibition Station on the Central Low Level Line

It may be, however, that construction of Phase (3) might be more beneficially undertaken before Phase (2) to capitalise on the early benefits of creating a direct link from Glasgow Airport/Paisley directly through to the north west Glasgow conurbation catchment areas, immediately after the opening of the Glasgow Airport Rail Link in early 2013 giving direct, or same platform interchange interchange [at Queen Street Low Level].Station] to the north west conurbation rail catchment areas.

This could give the opportunity of running every alternate train from Glasgow Airport into Queen Street Low Level and Central High Level Stations, at 30 minute intervals, for very convenient interchange into Queen Street High Level services eg Edinburgh, as well as into Glasgow Central High/Low level destinations.

In addition to conveniencing those interchanging into other trains at Central Station and Queen Street Stations, this scheduling possibility would still retain the benefits of a 15 minute frequency rail service to/from Glasgow Airport, but with the advantage of four conveniently sited stations across Glasgow City Centre CBD - at Central/Glasgow Cross/Queen Street and Charing Cross.

The benefits of a more 'streamlined' Parliamentary scrutiny process, through the [new] Scottish TWA Order process, should greatly assist in achieving this eminently reasonable and practical timetable for completion of Glasgow's CrossRail 'missing link' by early 2014. Just in time for the key travel/accessibility demands of the 2014 Commonwealth Games!

The more this 2014 'achievable target date' for Crossrail is reiterated the greater its impetus becomes a self-fulfilling objective!

*Ken Sutherland*

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