



Understanding the next ScotRail Franchise Presentation from Abellio

Douglas Hotel, Aberdeen
Monday 23rd February 2015

Attendance:

Julian Edwards, Deputy Managing Director, Abellio UK
Mike Connolly, Stakeholder Relations Manager, Abellio ScotRail
Louise Dunn, Mobilisation Team, Abellio ScotRail
Councillor Ramsay Milne, Chair, Nestrans
Councillor Peter Argyle, Deputy Chair, Nestrans
Sandra MacDonald, Nestrans Board
Derick Murray, Director, Nestrans
Rab Dickson, Transport Strategy Manager, Nestrans
Lucy Johnston, Nestrans
Councillor Andy Finlayson, Aberdeen City Council
Councillor Ross Grant, Aberdeen City Council
Richard Sweetnam, Aberdeen City Council
Peter MacCallum, Aberdeenshire Council
Paul Finch, Aberdeenshire Council
Patrick Barnham, Aberdeenshire Council
Nanette Milne, MSP
Mark Macdonald MSP
Maureen Watt MSP
Daniel Laird, First Aberdeen
Rachel Elliot, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Stanley Flett, Mobility & Access Committee Scotland
Alastair Williamson, Aberdeen Disability Advisory Group
Jyll Skinner, Aberdeen Cycle Forum
David Jennings, Strategic Development Planning Authority
Steve Harris, Visit Scotland
British Transport Police
Andy Willox, Federation of Small Businesses
Ian Armstrong, SCDI
Caroline Connolly, Transport Scotland

Business:

An Introduction and Welcome was given by the Chairman of Nestrans, Councillor Ramsay Milne. Councillor Milne noted that it was an exciting time for transport in the north east of Scotland with the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route under construction, other road and park & Ride schemes being progressed, the City Centre Master Plan about to be finalised and significant changes in relation to the area's railways.

He pointed out that the £170million upgrading of the Aberdeen-Inverness line has started and a new station would be developed at Kintore. He also highlighted the opportunity with new operators of both the InterCity East Coast and ScotRail franchises.

Councillor Milne pointed out that overcrowding has been highlighted as a key issue in the area and that growth in the north east has been staggering – passenger numbers through the eight stations in the Nestrans area has grown from 2.8million in 2004/05 to 5.8million in 2013/14, an increase of 105% in nine years, more than double the Scottish figure.

Julian Edwards, Deputy Managing Director of Abellio UK noted that there were just 37 days to go until Abellio took over operation of ScotRail on 1st April. He indicated that the majority of ScotRail staff will transfer across and that a “Deep Alliance” has been formed with Network Rail Scotland, which will involve co-locating under a single MD.

Julian indicated that they were committed to Scotland and will be moving their UK headquarters to Glasgow and that their intention was to turn the ScotRail brand “from good to better”. New Hitachi trains will be delivered for Edinburgh/Glasgow and refurbished High Speed Trains will connect all of Scotland’s cities from 2018, providing a 20% increase in capacity. Other key elements include a commitment to Smart ticketing and an aim of growing off-peak use to better utilise capacity.

Integration is another key element, with proposals for Bike & Go hire schism at stations, improved way-finding and an early commitment to consider options for improving Aberdeen station. Waiting facilities and cycle parking enhancements are proposed at stations, including Dyce and Stonehaven.

A copy of Julian’s presentation has been uploaded to the Nestrans’ website and can be viewed [here](#).

There followed a Question and Answer session, which included discussion on wheelchair access and assisted travel; aspirations for new stations; onboard catering; the potential for integrated ticketing including local bus services and ferry services; specific issues relating to access to Aberdeen station; quality of wi-fi and the ability to work on trains; communication with passengers and the complaints procedure when things go wrong; cycle parking and the importance of getting involved with Aberdeen City Centre Master Plan work. There were also questions regarding the single line section at Usan near Montrose and the need to ensure that journey times are improved to make rail an attractive option compared to driving.

RD
6 March 2015