

8 Information Bulletin

- Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide information and updates for the Board on a number of matters not requiring decision.

- Bridge of Dee STAG Study – Part 1 Appraisal

Outline designs of the concept options taken forward to Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) Part 1 Appraisal have now been published on Aberdeen City Council's website. They can be viewed together with further supporting information at http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/transport_streets/roads_pavements/transport_projects/road_brigofdee_techdevelop.asp. A briefing session was held for Members, including Nestrans Members, on 11 March 2013.

A letter has been sent to stakeholders involved in the pre-appraisal stage of the study to advise them of the outline designs and enable them to highlight any issues. It is noted that the concepts are still in development, but that any comments will be considered and made available for reference during a formal public consultation that is planned for later this year and will provide further opportunity for comment.

- Rail franchises

On 26 March 2013, following the review into the rail franchising process, the Secretary of State for Transport announced details of the revised timings for the process. Most of the existing franchises are to be subject to extension to permit the new franchise to be tendered in a programmed manner.

Details of those franchises affecting Scotland are:

Franchise	Due to finish	Extended to:	Start of new franchise
East Coast	Currently being run by direct services		Feb 2015
Transpennine	April 2015	Feb 2016	Feb 2016
West Coast	Nov 2014	Apr 2017	Apr 2017
Cross Country	Apr 2016	Nov 2019	Nov 2019

The Scotrail franchise and the proposed sleeper franchise are not included in the list as they are being tendered by Transport Scotland.

- East Coast Main Line Association

An initiative by York Council has seen initial steps to create an East Coast Main Line Association. This Association appears to be intended to increase "local" input into the East Coast franchising process. This was discussed recently by the RTP Chairs as discussed in item 3(a) Directors report.

Edinburgh City Council has taken a lead in trying to co-ordinate a Scottish participation in the Association. There have been some initial meetings and technical meetings (including a Scottish meeting attended by Nestrans) to discuss developing thoughts and possible remits.

In an initial draft of a possible remit there were a number of issues that caused some concern. Principal amongst these were:

- The ECMA wanting to become involved in some way as franchisers
 - In England there are discussions underway regarding devolving responsibility for some franchises to regional groupings. The English parts of the Association appear to want to extend this, at least in part, to the East Coast franchise. The concern here is that should such a circumstance occur then there would be pressure to extend the East Coast franchise to include more local services. This would dilute the concentration on these services being primarily long distance services between main centres of population including cross border services. Keeping this focus on long distance would perhaps be better served by keeping the franchise under Department for Transport and Transport Scotland control.
- The ECMA wanting to have Local Authorities as Members but the PTE's in England and RTP's as observers
 - Particularly in a long distance franchise this does not seem sensible.
- There has been some confusion within Scotland about the role of Edinburgh City Council as either a co-ordinator for the Scottish end of the line or the Scottish voice
 - In discussion between Officers of Nestrans, Hitrans and Tactran it has been agreed that within Scotland there is a different view on the role of East Coast between the Edinburgh view and the view from stations north of Edinburgh. It has been agreed therefore that this north of Scotland view needs to be represented at the discussions.

The principal of Authorities along the route of the line coming together to try and influence the input to the franchise seems to be a sensible idea and would be a powerful voice to be taken into consideration by the franchisers if there was a general agreement amongst the Authorities.

This was discussed at a meeting of Officers of Nestrans, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City Councils. Each Authority was agreed that the focus should be on the long distance operations, that all Authorities should be involved if they so wished and that a north of Scotland voice was essential to inform the discussions on the franchise.

A technical meeting is scheduled for 25 April 2013 in York where a request was made for one Scotland representative to attend. Following the meetings between the north east Authorities and the north of Scotland RTP's it was agreed that a request should be made to extend the Scottish representation to two Members, reflecting the situation that the train run for almost as long, in time, in Scotland as they do in England where there were at least six areas to be represented. The north of Scotland requested that Frank Roach of Hitrans, given his technical knowledge of rail matters represent the north's view. This has been accepted by the ECMA secretariat (York Council).

Terminating trains from London at Edinburgh

At the last Board meeting there was an update on the latest proposals from the Department for Transport for High Speed Rail. Members were informed of an economic test option that included the removal of through trains beyond Edinburgh and that there had been a joint northern RTP's letter sent to the Secretary of State for Transport highlighting concern over this option continuing to appear despite a number of decisions to keep these trains.

Since the last Board meeting there has been the opportunity to raise this issue again with Scottish Secretary Michael Moore MP and Chief Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander MP, with both visiting the north east. Following discussions with the MP's further letters were sent confirming the conversations and concerns. A response letter has been received from Danny Alexander and is included as Appendix A.

The Secretary of State for Transport also discussed the franchise in Parliament and responded to a question relating to the trains north of Edinburgh saying that he would have to discuss this with the Scottish Minister for Transport. We have subsequently written to Transport Scotland requesting confirmation that, following the consultation on this issue in the Scotrail franchise, the Scottish Minister for Transport's position still remains that these services will continue. We have received confirmation that this is still Scottish Government's policy.

- Inveramsay Bridge

Transport Scotland will be staging two public exhibitions to promote the publication of the draft Statutory Orders and Environmental Statement for the A96 Inveramsay Improvement.

Board Members are invited to attend the preview for either exhibition or during the exhibition time itself.

Representatives from Transport Scotland and their consulting Engineers, URS, will be in attendance to answer any questions.

Venue	The Gordon Arms Hotel The Square, Huntly AB54 8AF	The Acorn Centre West High Street Inverurie AB51 3SA
Date	Thursday 18 April 2013	Friday 19 April 2013
Preview Time	11:00 – 12:00	10:00 – 11:00
Open to Public	12:00 – 20:00	11:00 – 19:00

- Bus Regulation (Scotland Bill)

This section of the report is generally taken from a CoSLA report.

Iain Gray MSP is currently undertaking initial discussions about the potential for advancing a private members bill to strengthen regulation in the Scottish bus industry. The outcome could be to give councils and transport authorities the ability to bundle together profitable and loss-making routes and potentially tender local bus services as packages for bids, improve the quality of vehicles used and increase patronage on buses in general through a series of legislative measures.

Some background information:

In Scotland local bus services were deregulated in October 1986 by the *Transport Act 1985*. However, it was not until 1988 that the then Secretary of State for Scotland, Malcolm Rifkind MP, announced he would privatise the Scottish Bus Group (SBG) company. The *Transport (Scotland) Act 1989* restructured the SBG into ten separate independent bus companies before being privatised. The sales were completed by October 1991 and yielded some £90 million for the Exchequer.

The 1985 Act resulted in dramatic changes to both the operating environment and the pattern of ownership in the bus industry but a UK Parliament Standard Note¹ does

highlight some criticism about predatory behaviour and the powers of the regulatory authorities. The conflicts between rival operators highlighted the absence of a regulatory framework, leaving an ad hoc policing arrangement to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and the then Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Following a consultation exercise on local bus services in 1993, the then Transport Minister, Roger Freeman MP, ruled out major changes to the legislation but announced a package of minor rule changes. These included clarifying the powers of the traffic commissioners to make it clear that they could use their powers to regulate the number of buses used in providing a service and to control the use of duplicate buses.

The Transport (Scotland) Act 2001 provides a framework which allows local transport authorities to enhance the provision of local bus services. The Act provides a toolkit of options including Quality Partnerships, Quality Contracts, provision of information about local bus services and joint ticketing schemes. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 provides local authorities in the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) area with concurrent powers to introduce Quality Partnerships and Quality Contracts.

A statutory Quality Partnership (sQP) is a quality measure whereby local transport authorities can put in place schemes to improve the quality and reliability of bus services, encourage patronage growth and improve the environment by reducing levels of congestion and pollution. Through an sQP, authorities can specify the quality of buses (e.g. age, Euro class, low floor, etc) and minimum frequencies (including in the evenings, early mornings and Sundays). As part of the partnership, authorities will improve the infrastructure (including bus stops and bus priority measures such as "greenways" and priority junctions).

A Quality Contract (QC) is a franchise type arrangement and gives a transport authority more control than can be achieved through a statutory Quality Partnership (sQP). Under a QC authorities are able to determine what local services should be provided and specify routes, the standard and quality of services and fares. Local transport authorities can introduce a QC for a particular area if they can demonstrate that such a contract is necessary in order to implement their local transport policies.

Transport Scotland sets the national policy framework on buses which is delivered by bus operators, local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and the regulatory authorities. The majority of bus services in Scotland are operated on a commercial basis by private bus companies. Provided that an operator registers a service with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner they can operate any route they wish to any timetable.

Local transport authorities can provide subsidy for services that are not provided on a commercial basis but this is entirely a matter for the local authority. The Traffic Commissioner is the licensing authority for the bus and coach industry in Scotland and applies the regulatory regime. The Traffic Commissioner's responsibilities include the licensing of bus operators, the registration of local bus services and ensuring that operators keep their vehicles in a roadworthy condition.

Currently within Scotland, according to Scottish Transport Statistics, gross total passenger revenue for local bus services is £327 million which includes concessionary fare receipts retained by bus operators and on some tendered/supported services, these fare receipts are passed to the Local Authority. Furthermore, £295 million of revenue is provided by direct government support which includes Bus Service Operators Grant, Concessionary Bus Travel and Local Authority gross costs incurred in support of bus services.

Bus Bill Proposal

Background

- Bus services still in difficulty with respect to passengers, local authorities and operators
- Passengers reached a recorded low last year and bus miles continue to fall

- 2001 legislation has failed to prove useful except in very few cases
- Charlie Gordon consulted on reregulating buses in 2010, but Bill proposal fell with no cross party support
- Appetite for change even more prevalent now across the country, not only from passengers but industry and politicians too
- Deregulation has brought some benefits to bus industry, but where communities can be left without any services then reform is needed

Bill Proposal

- To regulate to give local authorities or groups of LAs more power to protect and specify local services by bundling profitable and non-profitable routes together for tendering
- The consultation will also ask questions about legislating to encourage greater consideration of the environment and service modernisation (Wi-Fi, accessibility, better ticketing, stable pricing, real-time electronic timetables, etc.)

Next steps

- Consultation to be launched end of March/beginning of April, and keen for as wide dissemination as possible
- Will close 12 weeks later
- Depending on parliamentary timetables hope to present draft Bill proposal and evidence after summer recess
- This will be considered by a Parliamentary committee before a final proposal can be lodged

With thanks to George Eckton of CoSLA.

● Rail Fares inconsistencies

A new pricing structure for rail fares will remove more than 1,500 inconsistencies, ensuring customers will find it simpler to access the cheapest fare for their journey. These inconsistencies occurred where prices for a journey were cheaper using multiple tickets for parts of journeys. As a general rule of thumb, end to end fares will now be at least 50p less than the cheapest 'two ticket' option.

This will see fares reduced by up to as much as 41 per cent on certain routes from 19 May. Transport Scotland and Scotrail have agreed to the rail fares change following a Transport Scotland grant of £2.28m. The new fares will begin on 19 May 2013.

Some examples of the reduced fares are:

Dundee – Portlethen: Reduced from £27.90 to £16.60, a saving of £11.30 (41%)

Dundee – Aberdeen: Reduced from £27.90 to £18.50, a saving of £9.40 (34%)

● Smart Ticketing

A pilot smart ticketing project is being progressed in the City, in partnership with Transport Scotland. The initial pilot is looking at introducing smart ticketing on Bains Coaches service 52. This is a supported bus service under contract to Aberdeen City Council with the back office for the service to be provided by Aberdeenshire Council. The service currently in place primarily provides transport to Hazelhead Academy and is used by school pupils. The pilot

project will look into utilising the Accord Card and the Aberdeenshire back office to establish on-bus sales of 10, 20 and 40 journey tickets. It is hoped that online sales will be explored in the future. This is a small scale pilot within a controlled environment to allow lessons to be learned to enable further role out in the future. Transport Scotland is a partner on this project and providing technical assistance and expertise. The project is currently in the process of finalising the business rules and ironing out technical issues regarding the ticket machines and back office functions.

- Scottish Transport Awards

Nestrans, Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council have been shortlisted for a number of Scottish Transport Awards between them. The submissions that have been shortlisted are as follows:

Scottish Transport Local Authority of the Year

Aberdeen City Council
Aberdeenshire Council

Most Effective Road Safety, Traffic Management and Enforcement

Aberdeen City Council – Improving Road Safety in Aberdeen City Council

Integrated Transport Project of the Year

Nestrans – Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Bus Interchange

Best Practice in Travel to School and Work Schemes

Aberdeen City Council – School Cycling Initiatives

Achievements in Cycling

Aberdeen City Council – The Greenbrae Cycle Project
Aberdeenshire Council – Peterhead Cycle Demonstration Town

Excellence in Walking and the Public Realm

Aberdeen City Council – The Green Streetscape

Contribution to Sustainable Transport

Aberdeen City Council – Aberdeen Car Club
Aberdeen City Council – Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan
Aberdeen City Council – Strategic Transport Fund

Most Innovative Transport Project of the Year

Aberdeen City Council – Strategic Transport Fund

Excellence in Technology and Innovation

Aberdeenshire Council – Smart Phones, Smart Timetabling

Excellence in Travel Information & Marketing

Aberdeen City Council – Aberdeen Car Club

The awards ceremony will be held on 20th June 2013 in Glasgow.

- Nestrans Press Releases

Since the last meeting of the Board in February, there have been press releases on the following (more details can be accessed by clicking on the title):

[20/03/2013 Case for Laurencekirk Junction Improvements taken to Holyrood](#)

Aberdeenshire Council and Nestrans attended Holyrood's Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee on Wednesday, March 20 to present the case for a grade separated junction at Laurencekirk where the A937 crosses the A90.

21/03/2013 [Nestrans emphasises important role of bus lanes](#)

Nestrans and Aberdeen City Council held a joint press briefing on Tuesday 19 March 2013 to emphasise the importance of providing and enforcing bus priorities on major corridors in and around the city. Nestrans has funded a network of enforcement cameras which go live from Monday 25 March and will be administered by Aberdeen City Council.

• **Getabout events**

The planning for Getabout events progresses for the spring in the meantime

- Joint promotion with Aberdeen City Council using City Centre bus shelters to promote using public transport, Active Travel, car sharing and car clubs to solve the city's air quality problems
- The roadshow visited day 1 of the Scottish best outdoors exhibition at the AECC. This was an indoor event which was very successful with over 130 people visiting the Getabout show
- The joint event with Aberdeenshire Council and Chest Hear Stroke Scotland the day after was less successful with heavy snow causing a very late cancellation of the event on safety grounds. It is now rescheduled for 2nd June
- Working with Prime 4 the new business park at Kingswells to develop their travel plan, unusually the developers want to provide travel plan training for the nominated travel plan workers this is now being organised
- New vinyl's have been fixed to the Getabout trailer



It is recommended that the Board note the contents of this report.

RGM/RD/JA/DK/April 2013



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AB24 5AA

27 March 2013

ABERDEEN AND GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Thank you for your letter of 5 March, following our meeting in Aberdeen a few days earlier.

As a regular traveller between the north of Scotland and the central belt and London I as much as anybody understand the challenges in travelling to and from the north of Scotland. I therefore agree completely that good transport interventions should benefit Scotland as a whole and not just the central belt of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

That is why I have ensured that this Government continues to support transport infrastructure in Scotland. Much of the responsibility in this area is of course devolved to the Scottish Government but since the Spending Review in 2010 we have provided more than £1.7bn of additional capital funding for the Scottish Government to determine its own priorities in this area. We have also committed £50m to refurbish the Caledonian Sleeper Service – a key link between the north of Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom.

Given devolved responsibilities for investment in rail infrastructure, in June 2012 the Scottish Government published its own High Level Output Statement and Statement of Funds Available which outline what they expect the rail industry to



achieve in Scotland between 2014 and 2019 and the public finances which are available to support that. In coming to these decisions Scottish Ministers will have made their own assessment of the transport priorities for Scotland. I know you will already be engaged with Transport Scotland on these issues.

On High Speed 2, I'm grateful for your welcoming of the Government's announcements on the second phase of the programme. The service specification released alongside the announcement is purely indicative but demonstrates the scale of benefits that HS2 will bring to passengers across the UK. The Government considers that once phase 2 is complete there could be significant 'released capacity' on the classic rail network. While it would not be appropriate, or even possible, to take any decisions on the use of that capacity at this early stage on the project it is clearly important that we begin planning and collecting evidence so that eventually we are able to put that capacity to use in ways that will maximise the benefits for the whole of the UK.

Your letter also highlights the issue of airport capacity in the South East and the impact on regional connectivity. Decisions on how airlines utilize airport slots are a matter for the airports concerned and the Government is restricted in its ability to influence such decisions by EU regulations. However, the Government has highlighted the importance of regional connectivity with the European Commission and has explored whether scope exists to use the regulations to secure ongoing provision of air services between UK regions and congested London airports.

Separately, the Government has established an Airports Commission to report on how to maintain the UK's status as a leading global aviation hub, but also to identify how the demand for additional capacity should be met. The Commission will give a UK-wide perspective, taking account of the national, regional and local implications of any proposals. The final report of the Commission is due in



2015, though there will also be an interim report looking at short-term measures by the end of this year. If you have not already, you may want to engage with the Commission to feed in your concerns.

In the meantime, I was pleased to see that following the bmi-BA merger, Virgin Atlantic Airlines will begin operating three daily flights between Aberdeen and Heathrow from 9 April – ensuring both choice and frequency of flights into Heathrow from Aberdeen.

Finally, please do let me know when you have firmed up arrangements for the meetings to which you refer.

Am the best

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Danny Alexander', written over a large, stylized flourish.

DANNY ALEXANDER