



All of Scotland on One Card

The case for a national public transport smartcard
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1 The Benefits of a Scotland-wide Transport Smartcard

- 1.1 Transform Scotland want to see the introduction of a Scotland-wide transport smartcard within the lifetime of the current Scottish Parliament (before May 2016).
- 1.2 With the completion of the national concessionary travel system, a lot of Scots are now familiar with smartcards, and many of us have visited London and used the Oyster card. We want to bring the benefits of cashless travel to public transport users across the whole of Scotland.
- 1.3 We want to see a single card which is accepted by all public transport operators — bus, train, tram, ferry and subway. Already, smartcards are being used by some local authorities to pay for local services such as sports centres and school meals through the 'sQuid' system. Ultimately, the card could be used for other transport such as car clubs and automated bike hire, as well as purchasing small items.
- 1.4 Smartcards can be held by anyone, irrespective of whether they have a bank account or fulfil particular conditions.
- 1.5 We also want to see smartcards give the option of journeys on combinations of trains, buses, trams and ferries across Scotland. Tickets that allow us to interchange easily are the missing link in Scotland's transport system and to encourage people to use public transport, we need to have the maximum flexibility. Combining the existing Zonocard (in the West) and OneTicket (in the East) into a single system would give multi-modal travel to 70% of the Scottish population and this could be a key stage in the creation of a national system.

2 Frequently Asked Questions

2.1 What is the difference between this and my current season ticket?

- 2.1.1 We would like to see a national card that could have your season ticket on it but also have an amount of cash that would allow you to make other journeys on public transport without being restricted to one operator or route. This would allow you to have a season ticket for buses in Aberdeen, say, and use the same card for journeys on the Subway on a day-trip to Glasgow. If you had enough value, you could use it on the train or coach down as well.

2.2 My existing ticket is a good deal. Will this mean I have to pay more?

- 2.2.1 We think that everyone should have the same card, but you could load your existing season ticket onto it. However, you could also load an amount of cash that wouldn't restrict you to one route or operator and would make it easier to make journeys that aren't covered by your season ticket.

2.3 Why do we need smartcards?

- 2.3.1 Smartcards enable complex journeys which use a variety of operators, without having to handle cash. If all operators agree to accept a single smartcard then we will have the widest choice of how to make our journeys. This is particularly so for those of us who hold a season ticket for their regular journey but may sometimes want to make other journeys by public transport.

2.4 How would I top up the value?

2.4.1 Other smartcards are topped up from bank accounts or by cash, at stations, online or at a network of vendors. Simple cash or bank card top-ups could be done through on-train conductors or even some bus drivers.

2.5 What happens if I run out of value?

2.5.1 Some existing systems have an 'overdraft' facility that allows you to complete your journey. With a sufficiently wide range of top-up options, you would be able to top-up along the way as well.

2.6 If there is interest, won't it just happen anyway?

2.6.1 Covering a whole country requires something much more complicated than the Oyster card. We want to see a single card accepted by everyone that would give all of us the widest possible choice.

2.7 What if other technologies such as mobile phone ticketing (m-tickets), home printing, or advances in bank card technology make smartcards obsolete?

2.7.1 Transport systems worldwide are investing heavily in smart technology, and UK Transport Secretary Philip Hammond has said that he would like to see all ticketing smart-based throughout Britain. In Scotland, SPT are developing a smartcard, ScotRail already have a trial in place and National Express Dundee has a pay-as-you-go smartcard through the sQuid system. If we have a unified system across Scotland, then it should be easier to graft on new technologies as they come along.

2.8 Where I live, there are very few buses. What relevance does this have for me?

2.8.1 Experience would indicate that the further away from the Glasgow and Edinburgh areas you are, the less likely the need for multi-modal commuting (or, indeed, commuting of any kind). However, the smartcard would mean that a complicated (single or return) journey, involving various modes of transport, from John O'Groats to Newton Mearns or Wigtown to Leith, could be made much more easily.

3 Conclusions

3.1.1 A smartcard would remove a key barrier to using public transport — being unsure of how much you will have to pay, fumbling about with small change, and paying separate fares for each stage of the journey.

3.1.2 There is an opportunity to provide something radical — a transport ticket which would allow people to use buses, trains, boats, whatever as it suits them. This would be genuinely seamless travel, allowing individuals to tailor their journey according to their need and their pocket – and a real alternative to the car.

3.1.3 However, bringing the smartcard to fruition will require political action.

Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns. Transform Scotland Limited is a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).

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