

TRANSform Scotland

the campaign for sustainable transport

Transport Scotland consultation: *Integrated Ticketing: A Strategy for Scotland*

Response from Transform Scotland
Monday 30th June 2008

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Transform Scotland welcomes Transport Scotland's consultation on Integrated Ticketing. The document has a clear aspiration to create a comprehensive ticketing scheme for Scotland but recognises that this is problematic, both operationally and legally.
- 1.2 Genuine integrated ticketing elsewhere has been successful through a combination of:
 - Necessity: where a transport network is so complex that no one element on its own can facilitate complete journeys.
 - Compulsion: where regulation limits or prohibits duplication of routes and each journey requires one or more changes.
 - Discount: where using the integrated ticket has a clear cost advantage over single-mode tickets.
- 1.3 The London Oystercard has elements of all three of these, but none are applicable to Scotland at present. However, this should not be allowed to be a barrier to delivery of a Scottish Smartcard. As a first step, we recommend the introduction of a comprehensive Smartcard system as a replacement for existing paper tickets.

2. Existing Multi-modal Tickets in Scotland

- 2.1 Two systems cover the most densely populated area of Scotland at present: Zonocard in the west and One-Ticket in the east. Of the two, Zonocard is the better established, and is more flexible, allowing freedom to use any participating operator (rail, bus, ferry and Subway) within the area purchased. One-Ticket is more limited, coming in a 'bus-only' or a 'train-plus-bus' form, the latter allowing local buses to be used to complete a train journey to/from Edinburgh. Both are, however, awkward to use for those unused to the system and One-Ticket, in particular, is over-priced. As a result, the vast majority of Scottish season-ticket-holders continue to use single-mode tickets.
- 2.2 There are also a number of 'rover' tickets, allowing one or more days travel which allow limited transfer between rail, ferry and bus routes, as well as single and return tickets allowing through-travel between bus/rail and ferries. 'Plus-Bus' tickets allow local bus travel at the end of certain rail journeys and full through-ticketing has now been enabled between the National Rail network and Glasgow Subway. Finally, SPT has a 'Day-Tripper' ticket that allows similar freedom to Zonocard over a large area surrounding Glasgow and represents very good value over longer distances.

3. Transform Scotland's position

- 3.1 From the brief overview above, it can be seen that the range of tickets on sale at present is varied with often overlapping and confusing validity. *We would not, then, support the introduction of Smartcard as an addition to the existing range of tickets.* We would rather

see the development of a Smartcard 'platform' which would be able to replace existing paper tickets. In this respect the Smartcard has to be attractive to operators as an alternative to cash and prepaid season tickets. Administratively, *we recommend the Smartcard system as an extension of that being developed for the concessionary fare system*, with the necessary readers installed on the railway.

- 3.2 We would maintain that most transport users do not particularly care what their ticket is called, or the precise details of its validity, but rather that it allows them to complete their journey easily and represents best value available. The incorporation of 'capping' – charging of the best value fare – in Smartcard technology is a key element in its success.
- 3.3 It is our view that the Scottish Smartcard should provide for three functions:
- Season tickets
 - Pay-as-you-go
 - 'Add-ons' (season tickets plus stored value, such as in Oyster).
- 3.4 While we see the introduction of Smartcard facilitating paperless, cashless ticketing in the short term, we would want to see the effects of its introduction closely monitored. The crucial effect we would seek is modal shift from car onto public transport and the system should develop to reinforce this. *A clear aspiration should be for every Scots resident to have a Smartcard in their pocket, whether season-ticket holder or not.* Ultimately, it may be that this can only be achieved through discounts or other incentives. There is also evidence that public transport users want simplicity and that existing systems are over-complicated. The aim to create a single, unified system for all public transport is one that should be kept in clear view despite existing political and logistical hurdles.

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 The proposal of a unified ticketing system for Scotland ('Scottish Smartcard') is to be welcomed. It would make the use of the public transport network easier, both for those who currently make regular use (such as commuters) but also for occasional users.
- 4.2 The difficulties in creating a unified Scottish ticketing system should not be seen as barriers to the introduction of Smartcard ticketing, and a unified system should remain the goal.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The aspiration for integrated ticketing should be for every Scot to have a Smartcard in their pocket.
- 5.2 In order to make public transport easier to understand (especially for those who are not currently regular users), it is imperative that the Scottish Smartcard replaces, not duplicates, the existing range of tickets.
- 5.3 The first stage should be the replacement of existing paper tickets (particularly season tickets) with a single electronic format. As Smartcard readers are already being installed in buses across Scotland, this should be the short-term priority for integrated ticketing in Scotland.

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.

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