

Scotland RUS Response - Calum McCallum 14.01.2011

The Glasgow commuter market accounts for 59% of the Scottish passenger rail market. Even with the predicted substantial growth over the next 15 years in other sectors (over 100% in the Edinburgh commuter market, for example) and more modest expected mature market growth in the Glasgow market (24-38%), it will remain the most important sector, by quantity, of the Scottish passenger market for the foreseeable future. I therefore feel that there needs to be a significant focus on the rail services provided in the Glasgow area. For that reason, I have only discussed this element of the Strategy.

The key developments affecting Glasgow within the document are the proposed changes to the Paisley/ Ayrshire/ Inverclyde corridors, facilitated by the additional capacity originally intended for the Glasgow Airport Rail Link, and changes to the peak Argyle line service in order to alleviate overcrowding. I would support the Paisley developments without reservation (although I may wish to comment on detailed timetable proposals), and would generally support the separation of the inner and outer suburban services on the Argyle line. I wonder, however, if the arrival/ departure of Lanark trains from Glasgow Central High/ Low Level stations at different times of the day might not produce confusion in the travelling public in what is already a highly complicated service pattern.

The extension of electrification to cover all suburban services radiating from Glasgow is to be welcomed but it is a disappointment not to see clearer commitment to this aim. Moreover, I remain concerned that, whilst the synergies to be gained from all routes being electrified and sharing a single fleet are to be recognised, the fact remains that routes in the Glasgow area vary considerably in character: whilst some are short and could have a 'crush load' capacity, others are longer and require greater comfort, and that therefore separate fleets of rolling stock may be required. (That said, I also recognise that rolling stock policy is not within the immediate gift of Network Rail.)

It is disappointing to see that no further progress has as yet been made on the on-going problem of capacity between Finnieston and Hyndland and I feel that this is something which should be addressed with some urgency. Also, whilst capacity problems on the approaches to Glasgow Central (HL) from Eglinton Street have been to some extent resolved, I have concerns at the reduction in frequency of peak suburban services. I feel that further investigation is required on the long-term development of some or all of the present 'South Electric' services, given their short length, relatively low frequency and current low levels of patronage.

There are also a number of other issues regarding the Glasgow network which are not discussed:

- Implications of Whifflet electrification on Argyle line services
- Previously mentioned re-instatement of the Carmyle - Newton chord, which would go some way to alleviate capacity problems in the Cambuslang area

- Improvement of facilities to allow for termination of trains from the east at Exhibition Centre (rather than Anderston as at present)
- Implications of electrification of Cumbernauld services and their diversion into Glasgow Queen Street Low Level by way of part of the Springburn branch
- Previously discussed turnback facilities allowing trains from the east to be turned at Charing Cross
- Implications of electrification of the Cowairs - Anniesland line as part of EGIP and the long term future of the suburban service on the line (with the possibility of diversion from Glasgow Queen Street High Level

Finally, I am interested by the brief mention of the possibility of development of additional terminal facilities in central Glasgow (irrespective of the introduction of HS2 services) which is not further discussed. I would be very interested as to where such facilities would be located and which services might be affected.

In conclusion, then, I feel that there are positive developments likely in the Glasgow area in the near future. However, issues such as further electrification, addressing specific network capacity constraints and the future development of inner as opposed to outer suburban services are longer term problems which do not have immediate - or cheap - solutions, but will need to be addressed with increasing urgency in the future.