



# **Network Rail Scotland Route Utilisation Strategy Generation Two Draft for Consultation<sup>1</sup>**

**Response from Transform Scotland**  
Tuesday 11th January 2011

## **1 About Transform Scotland**

- 1.1 Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance. We campaign for a more sensible transport system, one less dependent on unsustainable modes such as the car, the plane and road freight, and more reliant on sustainable modes like walking, cycling, public transport, and freight by rail or sea. We are a membership organisation bringing together rail, bus and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation organisations; local environment and transport campaign groups; and individual supporters.

## **2 Introduction**

- 2.1 Transform Scotland welcomes the opportunity to comment on this important strategy document looking forward to the needs of Scotland's rail network to and beyond 2024.
- 2.2 Our comments are largely confined to the principles upon which the strategy is based and the development needs of the different sectors of the railway.
- 2.3 We are aware of the more detailed responses being submitted by some of our member groups, and in particular those from Railfuture Scotland and the Scottish Association for Public Transport, and we would also refer you to their consultation responses.

## **3 Methodology and Assumptions**

- 3.1 We note that two growth scenarios have been used to establish the likely level of future demand. All recent evidence shows that rail growth on new lines and at new stations follows a high growth scenario and we would urge that this is the one adopted.
- 3.2 We note that the Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) has been used in appraising options. We do not consider that this adequately values wider societal issues such as the need to reduce climate change emissions and to reduce our dependency on oil. We have serious reservations about the use of this tool as presently formulated to look forward to our transport needs for 2024. This is further compounded by reading under section 6.3 that the benefits of rail schemes are reduced by the "expected loss in tax duty related to reduced car miles". We had understood that this anomaly had been removed from STAG as it is certainly at odds with a general desire to achieve modal shift away from the private car to public transport.

## **4 Demand Management and Fares Policy**

- 4.1 Peak time demand on rail is already managed by making passengers pay higher fares for travelling at such times. The document gives detailed analysis of load levels at various times and it is clear that certain trains operate at well beyond 100% seating capacity. So we have a railway whose track capacity is saturated with some passengers standing on their journey. The Executive Summary speaks of an incentivised fares policy to encourage staggering of working hours – presumably yet further demand management by higher fares.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/browseDirectory.aspx?dir=\RUS%20Documents\Route%20Utilisation%20Strategies\RUS%20Generation%20\Scotland&pageid=4449&root=\RUS%20Documents\Route%20Utilisation%20Strategies>

- 4.2 We are aware of no similar strategy for the road network where the vast majority of cars carry just one occupant at peak times. If demand management is to be exercised then the competing modes must be treated in a similar manner.

## 5 Inter-urban Routes

- 5.1 We are pleased to note the commitment to EGIP.
- 5.2 However, we are disappointed to note that all-night trains on the Edinburgh – Glasgow route do not have a business case. However, we believe that the current 23.30 last trains should be extended to 00.30 at least on Friday and Saturday, perhaps initially for a trial period.
- 5.3 Furthermore, it is disappointing that the lack of an hourly Perth-Glasgow service as this would have relieved overcrowding on this route and given Gleneagles an all-day service.
- 5.4 On the Highland Main Line (HML) we are disappointed at the slow rate of progress in providing more frequent trains and faster journey times. To put this in context, since Victorian times, this route has seen 12 passing loops and a section of double track from Culloden to Daviot removed. In contrast the parallel road (A9) has seen massive and sustained investment. We believe that upgrading of the HML is a priority if the Government's desire for better connections between our cities is to be realised and to allow rail to compete with road.
- 5.5 Similar arguments apply on the Aberdeen – Inverness route which has been 'studied to death'. We now need to see improvements in journey times and frequencies.
- 5.6 As regards the route from the Central Belt to Aberdeen it is clear that the single track section from Usan to Montrose is a major impediment to journey time improvements and more frequent trains. If the parallel A90 trunk road still contained sections not of single track (nevermind the luxury of single-carriageway!), it is inconceivable that government would not be rapidly proceeding with dualling.
- 5.7 The issues on the lines north to Inverness and Aberdeen need to be addressed with much more urgency in order to allow rail to offer a competitive service.

## 6 Rural Routes

- 6.1 Section 7.5.7 suggests that "rural routes in Scotland provide a significant challenge going forward" and yet Wanderlust readers voted the West Highland Line as the 'Top Rail Journey in the World'.<sup>2</sup> This appears to us to neatly encapsulate the failure of the current approach to rural rail routes in Scotland. The rural routes have been seen as a problem and their survival has been largely on social grounds.
- 6.2 We believe that a complete new approach is required for our rural routes. They represent a significant part of the product Scotland offers to tourists. Even those who never travel by rail are drawn to Scotland by iconic images of trains in dramatic scenery and yet the huge potential of these routes is not being realised. We need to see a multi-agency approach whereby the franchise operator works closely with Network Rail, Transport Scotland, tourism bodies, local authorities and the private sector to market these routes and grow income to allow their further development.<sup>3</sup>
- 6.3 It may be possible to make this a requirement of the next franchise or for Transport Scotland to take the lead but a new approach is clearly required – as the current fragmented efforts are not working.

## 7 Tram-Trains

- 7.1 The document looks forward to a 30 year vision and yet we can see no reference to the potential for tram-train operation in Edinburgh and Glasgow. We believe that the Edinburgh South Suburban Railway and

---

<sup>2</sup> <<http://www.scotrail.co.uk/content/west-highland-line-voted-top-rail-journey-world.html>>

<sup>3</sup> Please also see the response from the Scottish Association for Public Transport for their views on this matter.

Glasgow's Cathcart Circle both offer opportunities and believe that these should be explored to broaden the public transport offering and allow complete penetration of the city centres.

## **8 Electrification**

- 8.1 We support the proposals for further electrification of the Glasgow commuter network. However we would wish to see the routes north to Aberdeen and Inverness electrified to a much quicker timescale than that outlined.

## **9 Opportunities from a New Franchise**

- 9.1 We believe that the new franchise offers the opportunity to gain major enhancements to the network and service offering. Re-openings to such as Methil and Grangemouth could well be levered from a new operator as well as additional services and improved rolling stock.

## **10 HS2 Connections to Scotland**

- 10.1 Within the 30 year timeframe we may well see new high speed trains running via the classic lines to Scotland. It is essential that planning takes place to ensure that city centre stations with good interchange facilities are provided for these new services.

.....

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).

Transform Scotland  
5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR  
t: 0131 243 2690

e: <[info@transformscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@transformscotland.org.uk)>  
w: <[www.transformscotland.org.uk](http://www.transformscotland.org.uk)>