



DfT Rail fares and Ticketing Review

— Initial consultation

Transform Scotland response

28 June 2012

1 About Transform Scotland

1.1 Transform Scotland is the national alliance for sustainable transport, bringing together organisations from the private, public and voluntary sectors. 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 We welcome the opportunity to comment on this review and the ways in which rail fares contribute to the government's objectives on achieving modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport such as rail.

2.2 As far as the travelling public are concerned, the railway is one entity that competes with the car and the plane and fares should be structured in such a way as to encourage modal shift to rail. It is important that fares are affordable to all sectors of society and that the railway can compete with the perceived convenience of the car. Car owners see the car as instantly available and the current rail equivalent is the walk-on fare. Many such fares are seen as exorbitant and encourage people to drive long distances as opposed to taking the train.

3 Demand management

3.1 There is much discussion in the document on the use of fares as a demand management tool to generate the most efficient use of the rail network. Currently rail capacity is managed through the number of trains that can run on the network and the capacity of those trains.

3.2 There is *no such equivalent on the road network* where most cars carry just one occupant at peak times and have *free access to the road network at all times*.

3.3 Whilst we recognise the benefits of efficient use of networks, we cannot support the use of yet higher fares on the railway as a means of managing demand when no such equivalent exists on the road network. Indeed it is already the case that those travelling on peak time trains and on the busiest rail routes are paying a premium fare as a result of the government's means of managing demand.

4 Smart ticketing

4.1 We support the move towards smart ticketing as a way of making rail travel more convenient and attractive to users. The Oyster card in London has been a success and has encouraged modal shift to rail and public transport in general.

4.2 We believe that the move towards smart ticketing must be accompanied by multi-modal ticketing so that all forms of public transport can be accessed with one ticket and public transport journeys can be a seamless experience. In Scotland all buses are already fitted with readers and so a roll-out across the public transport network should now follow.

5 Tickets

- 5.1 The public believe the current ticketing structure to be complex, confusing and likely to lead to purchase of the wrong ticket. We have already referred to the excessive cost of walk-on tickets on certain routes and would now draw attention to other ticket types and aspects of ticketing that we believe need to be improved.
- 5.2 As discussed in the consultation there is much spare capacity at off-peak times across the network and it is in the overall interest of the railway to see this capacity better used by offering cheaper tickets and family tickets.
- 5.3 We do not support the use of yet higher fares to manage demand at peak times (as explained, above, in the section on demand management).
- 5.4 We do not support the pricing of day singles at almost the same level of day returns. This appears to passengers as unfair and does not encourage single journeys, many of which may be taken by passengers who only use the railway occasionally and will then be deterred from future use. Indeed on certain routes it is only possible to buy a day return as period returns are not available — so someone wishing to travel out for, say, a weekend in North Berwick from Edinburgh has then to purchase two single tickets. Such practice is common across the network.
- 5.5 We have serious concerns about the information that passengers are given at the time of purchasing a ticket. It is simply not acceptable that a ticket lists: 'Route – ANY PERMITTED' and 'Validity – SEE RESTRICTIONS' when no such information is readily available to the passenger.
- 5.6 We wish to see rover tickets much better publicised and more freely available. They offer flexibility and will encourage much greater use of the rail network especially rural routes where more passengers can help to boost the rural economy. Television programmes such as those presented by Michael Portillo have encouraged many more people to seek to explore Britain by rail and yet the existence of rover tickets — which are ideal for such journeys — is not promoted at all by some of the rail operators. Given that this has now been the situation for some considerable time we believe that the Department should investigate and take measures to rectify this situation.

6 Summary

- We do not believe that there is any further case for demand management on the railway until such measures are equally applied on the road network.
- We support the roll-out of smart ticketing and multi-modal public transport tickets.
- We believe that the current ticketing structure is complex, confusing and often likely to lead to the purchase of the wrong ticket.
- We believe that there should be: cheaper off-peak tickets, walk-on tickets that encourage modal shift to rail, better promotion of rover tickets, single tickets at half the price of day returns, and clear information for passengers on ticket and route validity.

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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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