



Consultation
Rail Performance Team
Transport Scotland
7th Floor
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
GLASGOW
G4 0HF

Bordeaux House
31 Kinnoull Street
PERTH
PH1 5EN

Tel: 01738 475775

Fax: 01738 639705

E-mail: info@tactran.gov.uk

5th December 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

Consultation on Initiatives Related to the ScotRail Franchise Extension

I refer to the above consultation. TACTRAN's response to the consultation questions is as follows:

Q1 Which of the Priced Options do you think best support the delivery of "Scotland's Railways"?

Response: It is noted that, insofar as the TACTRAN region is concerned two of the Priced Options are to be implemented with the December 2008 timetable changes, namely the Edinburgh, Fife and Aberdeen service enhancements and operation of additional morning services to provide connections to London. These enhancements, providing improved rail connectivity for internal and external travel, are strongly welcomed.

Of the additional specified "Core Services" initiatives TACTRAN supports the provision of Sunday local services between Glasgow Queen Street, Stirling and Alloa which satisfies the NTS objective – "Promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the network" and "Scotland's Railways" strategic outcome – "Improving journey times and connections".

There is no detailed information provided on the Option to provide **Additional Limited Stop Services between Glasgow and Perth**. Presumably this would increase the frequency of services between Perth and Glasgow to at least half-hourly. TACTRAN strongly supports the provision of additional services between Perth and Glasgow. However, these proposals should be progressed having regard to an imminent study about to be undertaken into the potential for improving rail frequency and capacity in the TACTRAN region on the Express Route West, through the Tay Estuary Rail Study (TERS). This study takes forward proposals identified in the TACTRAN RTS to provide an additional hourly "semi-fast" service between Arbroath – Dundee – Perth – Stirling – Glasgow. The brief for this study has been agreed with senior officials from Transport Scotland, First ScotRail and Network Rail. The proposed service would serve all stations between Arbroath and Stirling. It would provide a second service in each hour between Dundee, Perth, Stirling and Glasgow, significantly increasing access to the rail network via these and intermediate stations; provide a more regular service at lightly patronised stations such as Broughty Ferry and Monifieth; and enable consideration of new stations, including West Dundee, Blackford, Greenloaning and Bannockburn. The TERS proposal has the potential to combine addressing National

Transport Strategy objectives and regional/local objectives, by increasing train capacity and travel opportunities on existing crowded commuter routes, whilst at the same time creating the opportunity to develop new travel markets and modal shift through improved frequencies at existing, poorly served and lightly used stations and also the introduction of including new halts on additional “semi-fast” journeys, without impacting adversely on key Inter-City journey times. The new station at Bannockburn would also serve a new settlement of 2,500 homes to the south of Stirling that has recently received planning approval. Stirling Council anticipates that a significant proportion of these residents will wish to commute to Edinburgh or Glasgow.

TERS specifically supports NTS objectives – “Promote economic growth by building, enhancing and maintaining services, infrastructure and networks to maximise their efficiency” and “Promote social inclusion by connecting remote and disadvantaged communities and increasing the accessibility of the network” as well as supporting “Scotland’s Railways” strategic outcome “Improving quality, accessibility and affordability”.

Q2 Is our schedule for new service introduction right? (This refers to programmes of work listed in “Scotland’s Railways”)

Response: The schedule does not list comparable Options. There is no reference to any of the Options affecting the TACTRAN area. TACTRAN would support the provision of Sunday local services between Glasgow Queen Street, Stirling and Alloa in the Short Term (2006-2009) and TERS in the Medium Term (2009-2014). As well as considering that implementing TERS in the Medium Term time period to be realistically achievable, this time scale would also enable the railway network to fulfil its role within the region in supporting access to the Commonwealth Games and the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, both taking place in 2014.

Q3 Which future Priced Options would you wish to see Transport Scotland develop?

Response: As noted in the answer to Q1 TACTRAN supports the provision of Sunday local services between Glasgow Queen Street, Stirling and Alloa, building on the recent successful Stirling – Alloa re-opening, and also the provision of additional services between Glasgow and Perth, incorporating the TERS proposed hourly stopping service between Arbroath and Glasgow.

A further Option included in “Scotland’s Railways” programme of work, which is also supported by the TACTRAN RTS, involves the introduction of an hourly “skip stop” service between Inverness – Perth and onwards to Edinburgh/Glasgow. TACTRAN supports the development of work on improving the Highland Main Line, as described within the Medium Term proposals in the Network Rail RUS, where reference is made to additional infrastructure combined with rolling stock with enhanced performance. The Network Rail Strategic Business Plan (Route Plans 24 and 25) confirm proposed implementation of this service enhancement from December 2011, which TACTRAN supports. In considering further journey time and capacity improvements between Perth and Edinburgh, consideration should be given to the potential for including an additional halt at Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn, where approved housing development makes provision for creation of an additional rail halt for commuting and other demands on the M90 corridor.

The RUS Short Term proposes longer trains with increased capacity between Dunblane and Glasgow. Again TACTRAN would strongly support this proposal for inclusion among the Priced Options as an early priority.

Q4 Where should we concentrate our efforts on improving services, in particular journey times?

Response: Efforts on improving services should seek to improve both journey times and frequencies of services on the busiest sections, including between Inverness – Perth and Perth – Glasgow. Engineering and operational measures to support faster journey times

would be of benefit to all services and would support all three of the NTS objectives to “Improve journey times and connections”, “Reduce emissions” and “Improve quality, accessibility and affordability”. In particular such improvements would make travel by train relatively more attractive than driving. Improved frequencies of services, such as those proposed in TERS, will bring a larger population within reach of a local railway station with an hourly train service, particularly the stations between Dundee and Carnoustie that have only four-five calls per day, while also making train travel between the TACTRAN region’s main towns easier.

The approach adopted on the Dundee - Edinburgh service re-cast from December and the proposed Inverness - Perth services provide models to fulfil these requirements. Where a service frequency greater than one train per hour is justified then a combination of fast and alternating stopping services is appropriate. This is the basis for the new fast service between Dundee and Edinburgh and also forms the proposal for TERS between Arbroath, Dundee, Perth, Stirling and Glasgow. Where demand does not justify greater than hourly or there are operational constraints then a “skip stop” service can meet both requirements.

Q5 How can buying a ticket be made easier –

- **more “over-the-counter” services**
- **more “ticket vending machines”**
- **“Customer service” staff to offer assistance and advice when buying a ticket**
- **Internet purchase facilities**
- **Telesales**
- **through mobile phones**
- **Smart cards**

Response: Each of these methods is considered to be important and has a role to play in providing improved accessibility for different markets. It is essential that ticket purchasing methods are geared towards the separate business and leisure markets which rail seeks to serve, including consideration of more integrated and attractive options for offering seamless travel and transfer between modes. Again a number of the above options have the potential to improve and simplify ticket purchasing arrangements.

Apart from ensuring that sufficient counters are open at staffed stations during times of peak demand, there is an issue with smaller stations that are unstaffed for all or part of the day. More ticket vending machines should be provided, particularly where evidence shows that queuing is taking place. There are opportunities to provide these facilities at smaller stations where there is no such provision currently. A major issue with these machines is whether they provide the customer with the cheapest option for travel comparable with the service provided “over-the-counter” and certainly the travelling public needs to be assured of this.

More “customer service” staff would be welcomed though there should be flexibility to enable them to assist in ensuring that peak demands at counters can be met.

Easier Internet purchase facilities are important. This is also an issue for the InterCity franchises operating in Scotland. ATOC has stated that only 12% of ticket sales come via the web, which is below the levels for airlines, hotels and car hire, indicating a significant potential market for rail.

Initiatives which avoid having to visit a station to collect a ticket or rely on a posting out of tickets should be pursued. The obvious option here is ticket purchase and recording via mobile phone or Internet. This is an area that is accepted in other areas of transport, notably car parking.

TACTRAN supports the development of Smart cards and the wider development of multi-modal ticketing, in line with the “short ten action” within “Scotland’s Railways”.

Q6 To make the best use of available space at stations, how should we balance the use between commercial outlets and other facilities that offer further passenger benefits? Please consider:

- **the size of station based on passenger numbers and demand**
- **type of facilities (e.g. food outlets, news-stands, pharmacies, etc.)**
- **community-based initiatives supported by the Stations Community Regeneration Fund**

Response: There is considerable scope to make more effective use of space at stations. Perth Station in particular has a large building floorspace which could be used more effectively. The initiative using vacant space at Arbroath is welcomed and is an indication of an appropriate and effective use of a station building. Increased footfall has benefits in terms of enhancing perceived security of passengers, and parked vehicles where relevant, and bringing more people into the building with the potential benefit of promoting greater travel by train.

The balance of use between commercial outlets and other facilities will be determined by market opportunities. A minimum level of passenger facilities should be established for each station which should be safeguarded. However, this should be flexible enough to allow for the sharing of facilities, for example the provision of toilets in a fast food outlet could be combined with those for passengers. Combining retail facilities with counter services could be an option. This has already been implemented on the Merseyrail system. However, safeguards must again be put in place to ensure that passengers are aware, for example, that tickets can be purchased in what may appear to be a retail outlet and that the service to passengers purchasing tickets or dealing with enquiries is not compromised by priorities given to other customers.

Similarly, careful consideration also needs to be given to the potential for conflicting demands on other station capacity, such as car parking for passengers (including park & Ride) and other commercial/shared uses.

Q7 How could the station environment be improved? Please consider:

- **lighting**
- **availability of seating/furniture**
- **safety (e.g. through technology such as CCTV, “Help-Points”)**
- **a visible staff presence**

Response: All of these aspects are important. Experience of introducing CCTV with appropriate levels of lighting suggests that this can have extremely beneficial effects in relation to tackling perceived or real security concerns and also problems with vandalism, particularly where stations are unmanned or part-time staffed. These measures should be viewed and implemented as a complementary package. Where basic platform stations and unstaffed premises exist these should include adequate shelter facilities with seating, information and security lighting, “Help Points” and CCTV.

Q8 How could signage be improved at stations?

- **directions within stations to ticket office, platforms, toilets, etc.**
- **directions to facilities nearby, e.g. hospitals**

Response: Signage within stations is variable. In developing sub-Strategies in support of the RTS, issues have been identified regarding pedestrian and cycle links to railway station, including lack of comprehensive signage. Information on connections to onward destinations via bus and other modes should also be improved. This should be taken forward in partnership with RTPs and local authorities, as part of a broader strategy for providing travel information based on a “whole journey” approach.

Q9 How can we improve assisted travel at stations? In particular, please consider:

- **station access (such as wheelchair ramps, facilities for light scooters, facilities for passengers with assistance dogs)**

- **assistance for people with hearing or learning difficulties**
- **increased training for existing staff**
- **the availability of dedicated staff**

Response: Again the quality of these facilities and services is variable. Each type of assistance is extremely important and must be designed to address specific needs and difficulties encountered, and should be as responsive to these needs as possible. Where dedicated staff cannot be provided it is essential that reliable information on the facilities for assisted travel is widely and easily accessible before and during the journey, and at the point of arrival. Once again this is an area where a “whole journey” approach, informed by consultation with relevant user, equalities and other groups, including RTPs and local authorities, would inform good practice.

Q10 Do you have any ideas for further “RailLinks”? (This is in addition to the bus service that currently operates between Glasgow Central and Queen Street Stations). Please consider the accessibility of:

- **hospitals**
- **bus station interchange**
- **car parking**
- **park and ride**
- **Traveline**
- **walking routes**

Response: TACTRAN has a number of initiatives in this area that it would wish to see progressed, linked with the need for development of multi-modal interchanges at key regional and national rail “hubs” including Dundee, Perth and Stirling.

Access to hospitals, including the main regional health facilities at Ninewells in Dundee and the new Larbert Hospital in Forth Valley are major issues, particularly as none are within reasonable walking distance of any railway stations. TACTRAN aims to work closely with Health Boards to improve accessibility to hospitals and clearly in some instances train travel could be of significance for hospital staff, patients or visitors. The opportunity for further discussion on developing proposals would be welcomed.

TACTRAN has developed a Park and Ride Strategy which includes exploring opportunities for developing rail-based Park & Ride at existing stations; through the TERS proposal referred to above; and through other opportunities such as Bannockburn and other new station proposals.

TACTRAN has also developed a Regional Travel Information Strategy, a key aspect of which is to build on existing sources of information such as Traveline, to provide more comprehensive multi-modal information.

As noted in the answer to Q8 the need to improve walking routes has been identified in work undertaken by TACTRAN in developing its Walking and Cycling Strategy.

On all of these aspects TACTRAN would welcome the opportunity to discuss and work with Transport Scotland and First ScotRail to identify and implement improvements.

Q11 Which pilot scheme changes to fares should we make to encourage modal shift? Please consider:

- **reduced fares for (disabled passengers, families, students, low-income groups, ex-servicemen)**
- **reduced fares at targeted times of day/year**
- **annual season ticket**
- **geographical tickets i.e. tickets for a particular region**
- **other rail cards**

Response: Currently fare levels and systems do not appear to adequately address or support objectives relating to modal shift. Making train travel more attractive to motorists requires a pricing structure which reflects and is competitive with the perceived costs of motoring. The most significant traffic issues in the TACTRAN region tend to be those in the peak periods caused by single occupant vehicles being used on the journey to and from work. These are the times of day when train travel is at its most expensive and therefore less attractive, often because of capacity related pricing and availability, particularly on the main commuter routes operating to and from Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Where there are existing network capacity constraints (including off-train in relation to station parking or other access for Park & Ride/Park & Choose) modal-shift solutions are likely to be dependent upon increasing passenger and associated network capacity. As noted above, train lengthening on the Stirling - Glasgow route is identified in "Scotland's Railways" as a short term measure and this should be implemented as a matter of priority, accompanied by more innovative pricing strategies, aimed at encouraging behavioural change, rather than pricing demand off the network, as has happened in the past. There is an opportunity for Transport Scotland and First ScotRail to work with other providers and operators to increase take-up of Salary Sacrifice schemes for train season tickets, including through journey opportunities.

Where there is spare capacity consideration should be given to encouraging car commuters to shift mode, again through the use of innovative and attractive fares products. This may be by offering improved discounts on season tickets. Other initiatives could be considered. Recognising that some motorists may need to use their car on some days of the week, consideration could be given to more flexible discounting systems such as allowing travel over a number of journeys/days – e.g. 0 or 20 journeys within a four week period, as opposed to more traditional weekly or monthly tickets etc.

Any pilot scheme making changes to fares should ensure that these fares are readily available, recognising that there may be a need to manage the take-up. Headline cheap fares, such as those used by some of the intercity franchise operators, that are then available only in severely restricted numbers do little to encourage modal shift.

Q12 When travelling on the train, how could passengers' experiences be improved. In particular, please consider:

- ***the balance between the provision of seating (including tables) and the availability of storage space (for luggage, cycles, etc.)***
- ***(up-to-date) information***
- ***helpfulness of staff***
- ***catering***

Response: Whilst there are inevitably services on which capacity constraints and demand can result in over-crowding, poorly maintained toilet facilities, inadequate catering etc., in general it is considered that First ScotRail provides a good quality service.

A particular issue raised by our regional Walking and Cycling Forum is the carriage of bicycles. This is in particular regard to tourists visiting the Highlands. It is considered therefore that additional provision should be made for the carriage of bicycles, and particularly on trains on the West Highland and Highland Main Lines.

Q13 Where should we concentrate our efforts in improving the Anglo-Scottish sleeper services? In particular please consider:

- ***the number of locations served***
- ***facilities on trains or at stations***
- ***arrival and departure times***
- ***the provision of airline-style overnight seats***
- ***catering***
- ***staffing***

Response: The sleeper service is considered to be an important element of the Inter-City network for both business and leisure/tourism markets. Where services run according to advertised timetables the existing level and standards of sleeper services are considered to be broadly acceptable.

Q14 How could we improve the travel interchange at stations? Please consider this in terms of:

- **ticketing**
- **service connections**
- **infrastructure (waiting rooms)**
- **facilities for cyclists (cycle racks, National Cycle Route interchange signage)**
- **car parking**
- **walking routes**
- **accessibility for disabled passengers**

Response: Each of these aspects needs improvement at particular stations. An audit of each station would show up localised deficiencies and priorities for action. TACTRAN would be happy to work with Transport Scotland, First ScotRail and Network rail in developing this approach regionally.

In relation to station interchange facilities, TACTRAN would wish to see priority given to improvements at the key national and regional interchanges/hubs at Dundee, Perth and Stirling. Enhancements to Dundee Station will tie in with the Central Waterfront Development that Dundee City Council is undertaking to regenerate the city centre.

The existing station at Dundee is in need of considerable upgrading to provide the level and standard of passenger facilities associated with one of the busiest stations in the Scottish network. Similarly Perth station is in need of upgrading, whilst also offering the potential for development of a modern, integrated bus/rail interchange. The potential for improved multi-modal interchange at Stirling rail and bus stations also exists. The role of all three stations as “key interchange stations” is acknowledged within “Scotland’s Railways”. TACTRAN has previously made submissions to Transport Scotland, calling on these key multi-modal interchange improvements to be included in the STPR, and it is considered that the important national and regional role and potential of these interchanges should be reflected in the priorities taken forward under the ScotRail franchise extension. In addition to the three key stations, opportunities also exist to improve multi-modal interchange at a number of other stations. There are issues, in particular, in respect to the provision of car and cycle parking facilities at Bridge of Allan, Dunblane and Arbroath, all of which are operating over capacity and further provision is urgently needed. A fundamental review is needed of car parking capacity at all stations which function as key commuter nodes, including those outwith the Central Belt network. As indicated above TACTRAN would be happy to work with Transport Scotland on developing a programme for addressing these objectives of the NTS and RTS.

Q15 What should our communication connectivity priorities be?

Response: Priorities should be to ensure that mobile communications (phones and WiFi) can be used reliably throughout the train journey, including on trains and within stations.

Q16 Would wireless internet technology significantly benefit passengers? Please comment on:

- **for leisure use**
- **for business use**
- **short “commuter” gurneys**
- **longer distance journeys**

Response: Yes. WiFi technology would be of benefit to both business and leisure passengers. It would be a marketable benefit of train travel, helping to encourage modal shift, particularly for business and commuter journeys.

Q17 Would you pay for this service?

Response: It would be preferable not to charge for this service, in line with the “added value” approach that most other commercial sectors are increasingly adopting in the provision of free WiFi access (e.g. hotels etc.). Internet users already pay an ISP and therefore this would force them to pay twice. Precedents in terms of free access have already been set by a number of transport operators including National Express East Coast, which operates services within Scotland. Charging for this service would cause confusion with passengers and potentially generate adverse publicity.

Q18 Where should the Edinburgh-Glasgow SmartCard pilot project take us? Please consider the outcomes which would determine whether the pilot was successful.

Response: The primary outcomes will be whether the pilot generates new demand and increased passenger/user satisfaction, resulting in contributing to the objectives associated with modal shift referred to in other questions. Other outcomes will relate to provider and user efficiencies, including improved access and overall passenger experience. In the medium to longer term cost efficiencies might also be expected as a result of developments in Smart card technology. Clearly the reliability of the selected Smartcard and its support infrastructure, and resultant user perceptions and experience of ease of use and value for money will be critical.

Q19 How best can we focus the franchisee on the options for delivering better sustainability?

Response: The revised franchise agreement should contain appropriate targets and performance indices which relate to broader NTS and other national outcomes. It is considered that this is an issue which should be the subject of further consultation based upon focussed proposals and options, including targets and performance indicators.

Q20 How should the Environmental Improvement Works (EIW) budget be used to further improve our carbon footprint on the railways? Please consider:

- **electrification**
- **waste recycling**
- **time switch lighting**
- **“eco” driving training**
- **LED light installation**
- **non-traction energy improvements**
- **other**

Response: This is also an area where it is considered that a more focussed consultation, based upon options which have been subject to appropriate technical evaluation may be considered, in terms of their potential effectiveness. Nevertheless, electrification is strongly supported. “Scotland’s Railways” indicates that a medium term programme of electrification would extend from Glasgow and Edinburgh to Stirling/Dunblane/Alloa. TACTRAN would wish to see extension of electrification to other lines within the region as a longer term commitment, recognising that this is unlikely to be achievable within the current long term horizon of 2020. This should include investigation of new technical solutions to overcoming barriers to extending electrification, such as low tunnels etc.

Q21 What should we consider in station and community regeneration? Please think about:

- **the size of station**
- **facilities which reflect the needs of the community**

Response: Any size of station would be appropriate. Whilst there should be a presumption in favour of community regeneration, the largest stations may be less appropriate, in terms of controlled access etc. The facilities made available need to reflect demands within each

community, so cannot be prescriptive. Ensuring that uses do not conflict with the safety and security of passengers, that rents and legal agreements do not deter community uses and that any non-rail use does not compromise station car parking and other availability for rail passengers, or create traffic or parking difficulties in the vicinity of the station, are amongst the operational issues which should be considered.

Q22 Where should we concentrate our efforts on the Station Community Regeneration Fund?

Response: Again this should reflect demand from individual communities and should not be confined to traditionally recognised areas of community regeneration. It is suggested that priority could be given to stations having no staffing or only partial staffing. Gleneagles Station, for example, has boarded up buildings and no staffing presence. Use of at least part of these buildings would provide assurance to passengers using the Station whilst improving the value of the asset.

Q23 What additional services or projects in furtherance of the Commonwealth Games Bid commitments do you feel would most benefit the city during the Games period?

Response: Most of the additional services or projects will be situated in the Glasgow area. TACTRAN believes that implementation of the TERS proposal outlined in answer to Q1 above will be of considerable benefit in relieving the Glasgow area of car traffic associated with the Games. The additional travel opportunities offered through the enhanced frequency and additional stopping pattern will enable Games spectators to avoid having to drive to Glasgow. Ticketing offering inclusive admission to Games events would encourage long distance rail travel. There may be scope to consider offering Park and Ride facilities also, for example, using Castleview Park and Ride at Stirling, adjacent to the A9, in conjunction with a Park and Ride bus service operating via Stirling Station, or a park and ride facility based on a new station at Bannockburn. Opportunities for enhancement to rail services and facilities on the Express Route West and Central Scotland networks should also recognise the benefits which might be afforded in relation to rail's potential role in providing an efficient and "first class" travel experience for visitors to the international Ryder Cup event which is being held Gleneagles in 2014.

Q24 What aspects of the Project Manager's role are priorities to ensure the successful delivery of the projects?

Response: This is an issue broadly for Transport Scotland, First ScotRail and the Project Manager. TACTRAN would be happy to meet with the Project Manager following appointment to expand on the issues and opportunities raised in this consultation response.

Q25 Do you think that any of the improvements and enhancements proposed above will have either a positive or adverse impact on equality groups in terms of:

- ***age***
- ***disability***
- ***gender***
- ***LGBT***
- ***race***
- ***religion and belief***

Response: It is believed that the improvements and enhancements will have a neutral or positive impact on the equality groups, some of which have an above average dependence on public transport for basic accessibility needs. It is expected that, in accordance with good practice, the needs of all equalities groups should be appropriately addressed in all initiatives taken forward to ensure that there are no negative or adverse impacts.

Further issues

TACTRAN believes that there are a number of areas that should be considered in addition to those listed in the consultation. As indicated above in response to Q14, it is considered that a high priority should be given to enhancing existing key interchanges such as Dundee, Perth and Stirling, as national and regional gateways. There are also opportunities to promote development of existing and new Park & Ride opportunities within the region through addressing parking constraints at Bridge of Earn, Dunblane and Montrose Stations as well as giving consideration to new stations, such as at Bannockburn, West Dundee and Blackford. A major issue at a number of stations throughout the region is improving accessibility and consideration should be given to accelerating and extending the current Access for All programme.

The duly completed Respondent Information Form from Annex C of the Consultation document is enclosed.

I trust that this response is of assistance and would be happy to provide further information or clarification of any aspect if this would be helpful.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Guthrie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Guthrie
Director