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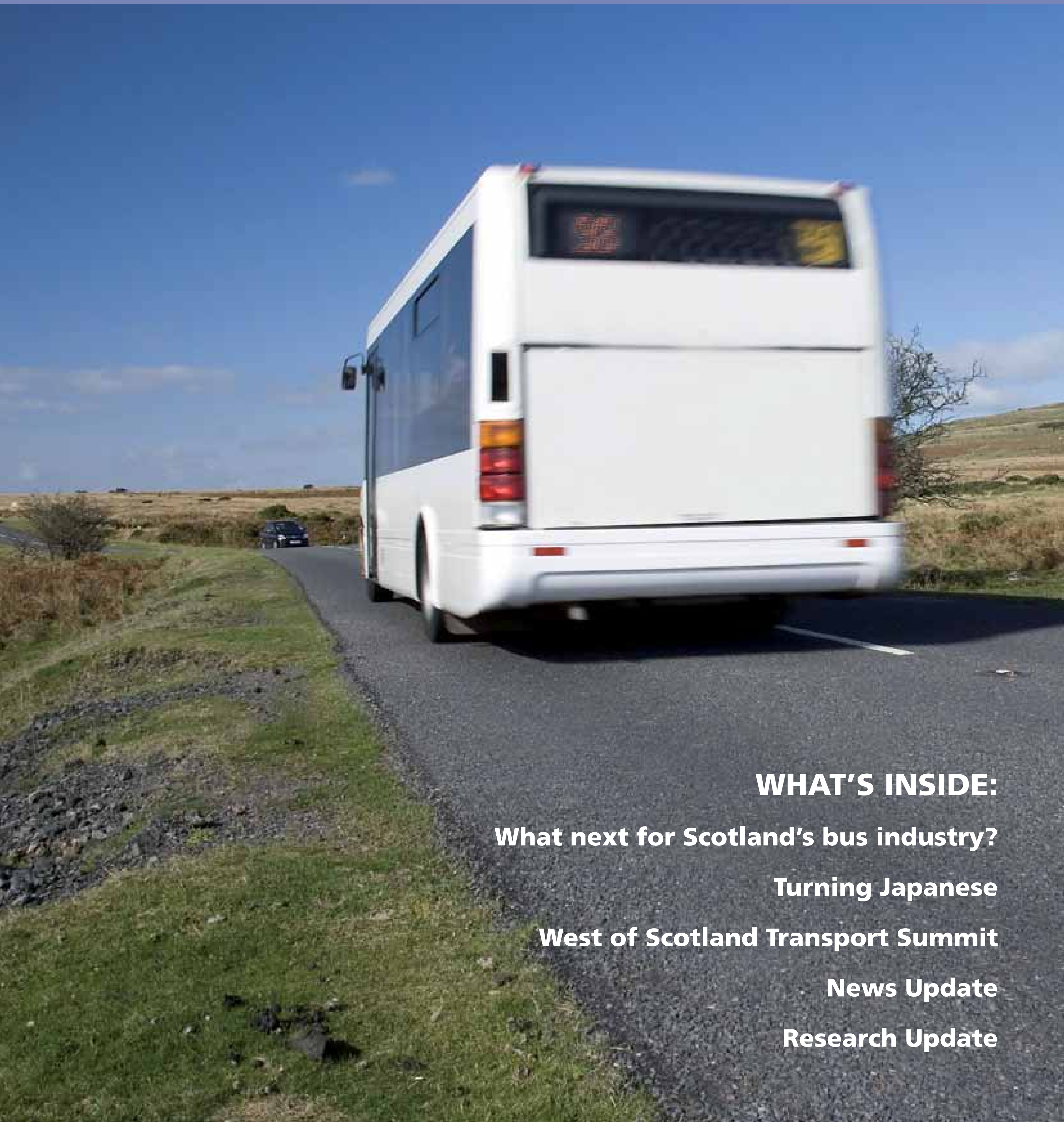
SCOTLAND'S TRANSPORT THINK TANK



WHAT'S INSIDE:

The Scottish Transport Studies Group (STSG)

STR is the newsletter of the Scottish Transport Studies Group (STSG) and is largely funded from STSG membership subscriptions. STSG was formed in 1984 and now has corporate and individual members from transport operators, industry, national government, local government, universities, and consultants.

The aims of STSG are "to stimulate interest in, and awareness of, the transport function and its importance for the Scottish economy and society: to encourage contacts between operators, public bodies, users, academia and other organisations and individuals with interests in transport in a Scottish context; to issue publications and organise conferences and seminars related to transport policy and research". STSG is a charity registered in Scotland number SCO14720.

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Who decides what goes in STR?

Firstly the members of STSG – We rely on STSG members and others telling us about interesting studies they have completed or knowledge they have. To keep subscriptions low we need members to invest time to share their knowledge. STSG has some funds to commission some analysis and reporting but the editorial work is undertaken voluntarily.

Secondly the Editor Derek Halden, assisted by the STSG Committee tries to fit the contributions into 16 pages and create a readable document.

If you can contribute to STR please e-mail editor@stsg.org

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Where next for Scotland's buses?

Derek Halden, STR Editor

Scotland's bus industry faces a dilemma. Should it seek to move towards a more highly regulated model of delivery such as that deployed on the railways to improve prospects for greater public funding, or should it seek to compete more strongly with the much larger private markets traditionally dominated by car and taxi. In this issue of STR, Stewart Stevenson, David Quarmby, Paul White, and Alan Howes identify changes needed to deliver in each market segment creating a world beating bus industry in Scotland.

There is no doubt that the increasing dependence on state funding in recent years makes the arguments put forward by David Quarmby for more bus quality contracts compelling. Yet follow the Quarmby arguments through, that formal and informal bus quality partnerships work well outside large cities and that Lothian Buses is one of the most successful city models, and perhaps the bus policy debate in Scotland is really more about targeted changes with localised contracts to secure public policy goals.

The starting point is to clarify what these policy goals might be. If local authorities set out clear plans to help drive increased profits in bus companies then there could be mutual benefits. In principle there is no reason why partnership agreements could not be used to agree a revenue share between the authority and the bus operators in return for cost sharing arrangements for implementing ticketing, information and bus priority measures. Such arrangements might find a place in an age of austerity, just as the close liaison highlighted by Paul White on public spending programmes has been a hallmark of delivery in recent years.

The bus industry appears to be conscious of its social role, as one might expect from an industry that makes much of its income from social markets. This results in many non profitable routes and parts of routes being run commercially, as operators seek to provide a reasonably comprehensive service for their core customer base. However, the industry seems to be poor at managing change. When services are withdrawn blame cultures quickly emerge between local authorities and operators.

Stronger partnerships are needed between local authorities and operators to help manage change

In the coming years much stronger partnerships are needed between local authorities and operators to help manage change and raise public expectations of buses. Local authorities do not have a good track record in specifying social needs in their areas and policy instability remains one of the greatest barriers to efficiency. Setting out shared goals for bus services would not only make buses more understandable to the public but help to manage change through partnerships or if necessary contracts. Public confidence in bus travel is greatest where operators and public authorities promote joint messages.

The industry stepped up to run rail franchises for government but has so far has not delivered particularly well within business to business, and business to consumer markets. The Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson concentrates on these issues in his vision for the industry. Ticket deals between large employers and bus companies are not yet the norm, and attractive consumer deals associated with yield management and customer relationship services remain very unusual. There remain only isolated examples of the sort of customer services that would be the norm in other industries. Back up systems to protect consumers and customer loyalty and reward services are increasingly expected by discriminating consumers.

Paul White highlights the urgent challenge to use smart ticketing to modernise payment systems, and linked with a new generation of innovation in premium services for new niche markets the prospects for the industry are bright. It seems that the industry has a choice about whether to offer attractive consumer facing services, or retrench to traditional skills in the logistics of bus operation. The future of the bus industry is looking for leadership. Although this could come from either local authorities or industry, the evidence suggests that when both work in partnership the greatest potential can be released.

Perhaps buses could learn from rail that a solutions agenda leads to greater investment, public support and growth in patronage. A clear vision of prospects and possibilities for buses can potentially demonstrate that as the dominant mode of public transport with the flexibility to respond to new challenges, buses are only at basecamp in the ascent towards the vision of future integrated transport.

Customer loyalty and reward services are increasingly expected by discriminating consumers.

Retailing into Recovery

Extracts from Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson's Speech to the annual CPT conference

AIMS OF GOVERNMENT

The bus industry has opportunities to make an increasingly important contribution to the essential aims of the government, which are to deliver a strong and sustainable economic recovery and a world-leading low carbon economy. The theme for the conference this year is retailing into recovery. For me, this is about how you, the bus operators, develop and market bus services to compete with other modes of public transport, and, more specifically, the private car.

Both industry and government are seeking to achieve the same ends, which is to achieve growth in a manner that supports the environment and is broad based. However, it is certainly not for government to set out how this should be achieved in the bus industry, but I think it is appropriate that we discuss the role of bus in providing sustainable growth.

Bus is recognised as the provider of mass public transport to move large numbers of people for a wide range of personal needs at a reasonable cost. The industry has two effects on the economy one of which is direct and the other an enabling role. Bus supports economic growth directly by providing employment for drivers, support staff, engineers, transport planners and managers. Scotland is the base for several world class transport providers and a bus manufacturer. Bus enables economic growth by transporting people to work, retail and leisure services which all stimulate economic activity.

ENVIRONMENT

To enable growth in patronage to be increasingly environmentally favourable means achieving reductions in bus emissions. This government launched the Scottish Green Bus Fund in July to encourage the purchase of more low carbon vehicles. This enables the carbon savings per passenger to grow. Our aim is to enable economies of scale to apply to bus manufacturing thereby enabling increasing numbers of LCVs to operate in Scotland.

The other aspect of achieving growth is through increased patronage which means encouraging modal shift, specifically from the car. There are cities where this is being achieved such as Edinburgh where a combination of carrot and stick encourages the use of bus services. This is partly due to car parking charging on the one hand and bus priority, frequent high quality buses and easily understood information on services and fares on the other. There are more park and ride facilities encircling the city which reduces congestion, integrates with bus services and thus has a positive environmental impact.

The solutions need to vary depending on the issues and needs of different areas. Glasgow City Council and Renfrewshire Council are working towards introducing a statutory QP. These will only be effective if the transport authority is clear regarding its overall aim as this dictates the form of the sQP. For instance Glasgow's main aims are to improve modal shift to bus, reduce traffic congestion thus improving air quality.

And of course we were delighted to continue support to SPT including accelerated capital investment to develop 10 Park & Ride developments in Strathclyde this year. This funding is contributing to the addition of nearly 2,000 new parking spaces for bus passengers across the area.

MARKETING

The recently published Main Transport Trends 2010 showed that in 2008-09 bus remained by far the most used form of public transport despite a drop in patronage. While no one single factor has led to the drop it does demonstrate the need to re-emphasise the benefits of bus in order to encourage modal shift away from the private car.

It is up to you, as operators, to look to how to retain current users and to encourage the non bus user to try, and then continue, to use bus services more often than they currently do. The largest potential impact would seem to be around the commute. It is here that the techniques of marketing and retailing could have a substantial impact.

The government carried out some qualitative research this year which explored perceptions of bus services and barriers to use, amongst people who do not use buses. Infrequent users' views about buses appear to relate to 3 things: previous experience, hearsay and media coverage. Views on 'visible' aspects of the service (e.g. bus stops) were more likely to be based on actual experience, while views on safety issues tended to be based on hearsay or the media. Negative past experiences of buses can have a long term impact.

I consider that there are a combination of actions which are needed to encourage people to try using the bus more: remind people of the benefits of the bus (both personal and environmental); mitigate or challenge views of the disadvantages (e.g. highlight good performance and improvements); and make it as easy as possible to use the bus. The last point has implications for information provision and customer care in particular as well as integrated ticketing initiatives such as Zonecard in Glasgow or One-Ticket in South East Scotland.

This is where generic marketing whenever possible can address and challenge perceived impressions of bus services and try and replace them with current positive messages. It is very apparent for example that those who market air travel focus on the notion of escapism, speed and quality. It is equally apparent to me that bus has not looked to sell its product in a way that excites the passenger. Instead, it is seen as a means to an end, the poor mans train, lower standards exchanged in kind for durability and affordability. These stereotypes serve to undermine a critical part of our public transport network and as a consequence influence peoples travel choices for a long time to come.

Niche marketing can target specific sections of society and demonstrate the particular advantages of the bus for them. This could be to encourage their use in the evening by young couples for instance, showing them the advantage of bus in not having to worry about parking and enabling them to go for a meal and a drink without having to drive back home.

Having achieved market penetration for bus it is critical to retain customers once they have been won. This requires some consideration of the rewards of loyalty, perhaps like some other retailers by use of loyalty bonuses. It is difficult in this environment to get new custom so it is worth making specific efforts to ensure you retain them. The success of loyalty schemes is well known and there is no reason to suggest that the concept cannot be transferred across to the bus industry. Indeed I read recently that a loyalty card initiative intended to boost the bus industry is to be launched in Wigan this autumn.

The essential feature of all marketing is that the claims made about the bus services can be substantiated in general provision emphasising the importance of consistency of quality, reliability and by addressing the finding in the research that one bad experience can last a lifetime.

Earlier this year we completed the 100 per cent roll out of Smart enabled ticket machines to all local buses in Scotland. This represents the largest 'ITSO specification' roll out seen anywhere in the world to date and is already greatly improving the operation of the National Concessionary Travel Scheme. However the ITSO platform is also a platform on which smart ticketing schemes can sit, and I look forward to operators grasping the opportunities that this latest technology can offer. The expansion and marketing of existing ticketing schemes and the introduction of moneyless transactions could be a real driver of patronage growth going forward.

The marketing opportunities to be derived from utilising smartcards to understand better how regular customers use the product is a concept that companies like Tesco have long understood, and I look forward to the more innovative bus operators bringing forward firm plans for smartcards across their services.

37% of the customer complaints received by Passengers' View Scotland last year were regarding driver behaviour and attitude. Customer service is a pre requisite to achieving any modal shift, indeed it is essential to keep current customers never mind growing the market. No doubt you will all tell me that that you have processes in place to deliver customer service yet the statistics and correspondence from the public tell their own story. Training is essential but constant monitoring of actual delivery can ensure that a behavioural change has been achieved.

INNOVATION

Innovation can be difficult and at times risky but the potential rewards can be large. For instance I am interested in the development of the Stagecoach Gold service which operates in several cities. It uses high quality vehicles with leather seats, uniformed staff and has a specific customer charter. This would seem to satisfy the needs of current users but also meet the additional demands of people more used to the car or the train such as business travellers. I was also pleased to see the roll-out of Lothian's new, state-of-the-art fleet of buses serving Edinburgh Airport recently in successful direct competition with other modes of transport, especially the private car. This is a great innovation but it is a level of service which should become the norm and which I would like to see available to the daily commuter as much as the regular visitor to Scotland.

However, too often new initiatives are started with a lot of fanfare but little medium to long-term follow through. I believe that it is important to see change and innovation as a continuous process with regular assessment and analysis of initiatives to ensure that passenger retention and growth is maximised.

Some examples are Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow who are considering bus lane enforcement which is currently out for consultation. Travel planning is being taken forward in Dundee as part of the Smarter Places, Smarter Choices initiative. Statutory Quality Partnerships are in advanced development in Glasgow and in Renfrewshire, and a Performance Improvement Partnership is in place in Dundee. Many of these tools can be adapted to meet the diverse aims of different parts of the country and, in particular in these tough economic times, many interventions can be made for relatively little money.

However the difference is the step change, the synergy, gained from implementing a wide range of actions in a partnership between the operator and the transport authority. This cannot be achieved overnight but it can be developed through effective transport planning implemented determinedly over a period of years. Is this not a result that is worth winning? We know a lot about the individual actions that can be taken to improve priority of buses, to provide customer information, to improve ticketing. The actions individually are not all expensive, nor impossible to achieve. The difficult part is identifying a shared vision of success and to develop plans in partnership to put in place all the actions needed to deliver the vision.

CONCLUSION

I hope I have set out some of the opportunities I see that are available for you to retail into recovery as you are seeking. The Scottish Government will be there to support and facilitate these efforts but, ultimately, success in growing and then retaining patronage can only be achieved by bus operators engaging successfully with new customers and developing their patronage base with improved retailing and delivery of services.

The Keys to the Future

Paul White CPT

"From state run bus companies in the 1980s to integrated transport companies in the 21st century – what needs to happen?"

Scotland is currently home to a commercialised bus market that provides almost 500 million passenger journeys each year. Scottish bus fares remain below that of the UK average and bus passenger satisfaction levels are generally positive. However, against this backdrop of solid performance is the perception that a decline in mileage, passenger journeys and standards is inevitable should there not be a further step change towards integration and environmental performance.

The current recession, the Comprehensive Spending Review and forthcoming Scottish Budget announcement are all factors that may reduce the efficacy of the country's public transport network. Linked to the financial constraints facing government is an apparent devaluation of the vital role that bus plays. The UK Government has announced the removal of the M4 bus lane and a return to more motorist-friendly transport policies, the salary sacrifice scheme has been rendered unworkable by DfT and on both sides of the border Concessionary Travel Schemes are being revised to cut reimbursement levels.

The question for Scotland's bus companies is how they move forwards and grow within this climate.

The outlook is not completely bleak. Scotland's ambitious climate change targets have catapulted public transport back onto the public agenda. Additionally, Transport Scotland has announced that its programme to roll out smartcard ticketing machines to the entire Scottish bus fleet has been completed.

It is now up to the bus industry, in conjunction with its central and local government partners, to see to what extent the industry can utilise hybrid bus technologies and the smartcard platform to encourage modal shift. The industry and its public sector partners will all be aware that if we are to attempt to make the most of technological advancements and the climate change agenda they will have to re-evaluate their relationships with one another and come up with cost effective ways in which to market bus, provide information, improve services and generate an enthusiasm for more intelligent transport choices.

THE SCOTTISH BUS INDUSTRY AND SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

The industry's relationship with Scottish Government is at the centre of its ability to deliver a comprehensive, quality bus network across Scotland. The recent review of the concessions scheme saw the reimbursement rate reduced to 67% and a cap on funding introduced but did at least provide a degree of stability by fixing the budgets for both the concessions scheme and BSOG for the next three years. Stability allows operators to make the type of brave investment decisions required to improve services and marketing to create modal shift.

The three year deal on the National Concessionary Travel scheme and BSOG runs until 2013. It would seem that now is the time for all parties to review every facet of both to make sure that their future iterations contribute to the Scottish Government's aims and are financially sustainable. This may mean difficult decisions about who really requires free travel and when they need it, as well as a look at how BSOG can be used to encourage the industry to make operating decisions that impact positively upon the Government's climate change aims.

The future for the bus industry will likely involve a gradual decline in direct funding from central government. The industry must adjust for this and make strong representations to keep any money lost from these schemes within the government's transport budget and redirected into schemes such as the Green Bus Fund.

SCOTTISH BUS INDUSTRY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The decision by the current administration to give local authorities the power to make local funding decisions without the intervention of ring-fencing through the Cosla Concordat was not good news for public transport. Inevitably public transport suffers against the competing needs of health and education. This can mean the death knell for previously successful schemes such as the Bus Route Development Grant.

It is questionable whether giving local authorities the flexibility to choose to invest or cut transport funding to suit local needs is wise. Yes, transport requirements differ from urban to rural areas but there are many aspects that should arguably be held to national and not local standards. Should the quality of the road surface, the bus stop infrastructure and information provision vary in standard between local authority boundaries?

One intervention that Local Authorities could make is that of Statutory Quality Partnerships (SQP's). An SQP should place an onus on the Local Authority to act as a commercial partner in the delivery of local bus services and provide a level of infrastructure improvements to complement the improvements that the SQP demands of the bus operators involved. In theory it should be a win/win situation with both sides delivering more.

However, expected public sector budget cuts and the bite of the recession on the bus industry jeopardises future partnerships. Local Authorities will blanch at the potential financial implications of infrastructure improvements and smaller operators will look for low SQP standards, claiming that any ambitious moves to improve the local bus fleet is tantamount to a barrier to market entry.

If we accept that changing the perception of the bus and bus travel is central to encouraging modal shift then finding new ways to work with local authorities is vital.

One key message for Scottish Local Authority partners is that supporting public transport can reap rewards beyond that of improving the satisfaction level of bus passengers. It can generate income. Removing car parking spaces to allow for bus lanes or stands could enable the authority to charge a premium for the remaining spaces and the dedicated road space created will enable buses to bring more passengers into town centres.

Local Authorities need to be persuaded to 'think bus'. As with its relationship with Scottish Government, the bus industry should demonstrate that making informed, public transport-friendly policy decisions is to the decision makers' benefit. The bus industry must then prove this to be the case by grasping the opportunities that public sector support provides and delivering a high quality and comprehensive network of services

SCOTTISH BUS INDUSTRY AND THE PASSENGER

One challenge for the bus industry is to improve the satisfaction levels of existing passengers to the extent that they become advocates of public transport and espouse the benefits to non-users. Undeniably there is a section of the public who will never wish to consider bus use but there is a great section of the public who are willing to be convinced. The Government report 'Why Some People Do Not Use Buses' recommends highlighting the personal and environmental advantages of using the bus, addressing the issues of journey times and reliability and making it as easy as possible to use the bus i.e. better information on routes, times and fares.

These are not all accomplishable by bus operators alone but initiatives such as Greener Journeys – an operator led scheme calling on car users to switch just one in twenty five journeys to bus or coach are a positive start.

While Greener Journeys is aimed at commuters the industry should also be looking at future passengers. It is counter-intuitive that school children, future bus passengers, often receive the poorest standard of bus service.

The current system of tendering for school transport often leads to local authorities accepting the lowest tendered price and the poorest standard of vehicles to run school services. Local Authorities and bus operators need to consider how this trend can be reversed.

Should journey planning form part of the Curriculum for Excellence? Such a project could potentially fit within the syllabus requirement of providing children with education based on science, health and wellbeing, social studies and technology and leave children better prepared for and more accepting of public transport.

THE FUTURE OF THE BUS INDUSTRY

Inevitably, the bus industry will continue to provide the best network that it can feasibly commercially operate while still looking for opportunities for growth. Its challenge is to make people want to use the services it runs.

Research carried out by Stagecoach indicates that frequency, reliability and punctuality are the three keys to passenger satisfaction. All three are, to varying degrees, dependant on the road environment the bus operates upon. The industry's 'track' does not belong to it. Therefore, how it works with Local Authorities and Scottish Government to address these indicators in the context of little or no transport budgets will define its success.

Perhaps the acceptance of the end of the era of 'big ticket' transport schemes will see a resurgence in the value in the eyes of national politicians of smaller schemes and perhaps a regret that the Cosla Concordat has by and large ended national Government's role in their provision.

What brings more value to the people of Scotland – one rail link or a series of bus and rail Park and Ride sites? 100 miles of strategically sited bus greenways? 500 new bus shelters with real time information displays?

Larger schemes like the National Concessionary Travel Scheme and BSOG will decrease in scale but should be retained alongside a new approach that looks for smaller interventions that enable decision makers to achieve their aims while improving public transport.

With regards, to the bus industry's passengers, technology is the key in many respects. The first step to embarking on a bus journey is the search for information. Traveline Scotland with its call centres, website and mobile application is a fantastic resource that will only improve as real time travel information becomes more prevalent.

Operators will also need to address the role of technology in ticketing. Smartcard transport products have many benefits including increased patronage, increased passenger satisfaction, reductions in fraud and acquisition of more detailed passenger information. One issue with integrated smartcards schemes is that they need sophisticated models to determine how revenue may be distributed between operators. There is a premium attached to this that can inhibit their value to customers.

All stakeholders must ensure the investment by Transport Scotland is not wasted and that integrated smartcard ticketing is realised before the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. This may require Scottish operators to consider the potential long term benefits to patronage growth and accept a reduction in fare revenue through any such schemes – much in the way the industry calls on long term thinking from its local and national government partners when making funding decisions.

With regards to passengers, it would appear that the bus industry must attempt to meet then exceed the customers' expectations where possible. It can do so entirely in areas such as information provision, the comfort and safety of vehicles and the customer service experience. It can only do so with the help of its public sectors partners in areas such as punctuality and reliability and to an extent fares structures, ticketing technology and fleet standards. Again, the relationship between the private and public sector is vital.

The Comprehensive Spending Review, the Scottish elections, the end of the three year deal for the National Concessionary Travel Scheme and BSOG and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games will all present challenges and opportunities over the coming four years. If the bus industry continues to promote a holistic but realistic approach to public transport with Scottish national and local government while continuing to attempt to over deliver for passengers it should be stood in good stead.

Has Institutional Change Delivered a Better Deal?

David Quarmby Chair Transport Research Institute Napier University

Of all the sectors subject to marketisation and privatisation transport has been the one most subject to review and challenge about whether we have got it all right. There are reasons for this: first, the public policy considerations are more complex for transport than for other sectors such as telecommunications or utilities; second, there is considerable public funding in transport but very little in other marketised sectors, and understandably public interest and political accountability follows the money.

Fitness for purpose means addressing three questions:

- *Economic efficiency:* do the arrangements deliver adequate economic efficiency in its narrow sense – that is efficiency of production of service?
- *Meeting market needs:* do the arrangements enable providers – whether moderated by intermediate bodies or not – to meet market needs and aspirations effectively?
- *Meeting public policy objectives:* are the mechanisms effective for reflecting public policy objectives in decisions about resource allocation and service provision. A question within this is whether the total quantity of service provided and the fares people pay is 'about right'. In other words, is at some welfare optimum?

RAIL

The 2005 Act transferred franchising responsibility and railway development to Scottish government, exercised by Transport Scotland. Two issues continue to be live – the governance of Network Rail in Scotland, and whether there is a case for some form of vertical integration with the train operator, or indeed some other ownership.

Are we buying too much railway and too much rail travel? At a net cost to the exchequer of some £4.5-£5bn per annum across the UK, the taxpayer is subsidising about 10p for every passenger km, with the passengers themselves paying about 12p. Whether this represents value for the nation has been taken off the problem agenda and onto the solutions agenda, making it sexy – especially high speed rail.

BUSES

As we all know, deregulation in London which was put off in 1984 was revisited a few years later, but wisely in my view it was then ruled out. What about my tests of fitness for purpose? Competitive tendering system delivers cost-efficient operations, but a KPMG review highlights barriers to entry created by the requirement for bidders to provide their own depot facilities.

The initial unit cost reductions in London of some 50% over the first few years of competitive tendering were similar to those found in the deregulated sector. But unit costs have risen since in real terms, driven by higher and more demanding vehicle specifications, by the resource consequences of achieving higher service reliability, and by higher drivers' wages.

Even taking out the effects of lower fares and higher frequency, passenger demand is responding to something qualitative and intangible, as Peter White's work has demonstrated. This is probably about vehicles, marketing, stability in the network, integration with other modes, convenience of the Oyster card and so on.

London Buses perform generally well on efficiency in the narrow sense, and generally well on meeting public demand. The public policy question is whether the service specification leads to buying 'too much' or 'too high quality' a service and at too low fares? While politically the quality, quantity and value of the bus service is acclaimed, the question remains.

Some of those who oppose the adoption of quality contract regimes outside London argue that anything like the London model would be unaffordably expensive. I dispute that. The present level of subsidy is entirely a matter of policy choice of the past and current Mayor. A zero subsidy would involve higher fares and a smaller network, but all the other qualitative features which make it such an attractive and well used service would remain.

Outside London developments since the 1985 Act have reflected two tensions – first between local transport authorities and PTEs who view bus services as part of the transport mix, and who wish to influence networks, services and facilities to support their transport policies and plans, and the operators who want to maintain maximum freedom to operate their services in accordance with their commercial criteria and objectives; the second tension is between the operators and local authorities on the one hand who increasingly share an objective for coordinating services and fares and ticketing arrangements and the competition authorities on the other who are reluctant to see any developments which mitigate on-road competition between operators.

Given that operators generally enjoy territorial monopolies, with relatively few contested markets, the concern of the competition authorities is perhaps understandable – given where they are coming from. And local authorities get worried when – as is often the case – there is only one bidder for socially necessary services or extensions of existing ones. Yet to transport planners it all seems tiresome when collaboration between operators on ticketing to make it more convenient for passengers, or coordinating networks is outlawed except under carefully specified circumstances.

These two tensions are intrinsic and fundamental to the British deregulation model – and while they can be mitigated they cannot be resolved without changing the model. The legislation has sought progressively to frame these tensions and provide partnership-style solutions which reflect the legitimate concerns of both operators and public authorities, and which create some protected space for coordination of services and ticketing safe from the competition authorities.

Although voluntary partnership agreements are well established across the industry, they tend to be found outside the metropolitan areas. Whether as formal partnership agreements, or practical collaboration based on trust and good personal relationships, the successful development and integration of bus services into the local transport strategy tends to be found in free-standing towns. Long term stable policies to support buses – park and ride, serious bus priorities, network planning around substantial pedestrianisation, good bus infrastructure and well coordinated and presented service information – the towns embracing these have seen real success with their bus partnerships.

This is particularly the case in the very few towns and cities where a municipally owned bus operator still exists, albeit at arms length. Lothian

Buses is a real standard setter, with a track record of aligning its service development with the needs of Edinburgh and the surrounding areas, delivering a high quality operation which has seen off three competitive attempts, and increasing its market share. It has won a number of industry awards. The only downside is that its terms of reference are subject to political rather than market factors.

Where it all seems to get more challenging is in the metropolitan areas where the ambition for the bus network may be more substantial – whether in the ticketing and fares policy, in the network development, in the degree of integration with tram or commuter rail networks, or just as part of a more radical transport policy for the area.

The effect of deregulation after 1985 was to turn buses back into a cottage industry – an approach which persisted even during the massive consolidation of the 80's and 90's; only in this last decade has the industry started to develop, and the attention to innovation, sophisticated marketing and modern business practice is welcome and appropriate.

Much is made quite rightly of focussing on the customer, and the cultural changes necessary to support that; but it can be argued that the community as a whole is as much the customer as the passenger, because of the more integrated role that buses need to play in a transport system which supports the economy and quality of life in the whole city.

Conceptually, the decisions and measures taken by the operator to optimise his business in relation to his passengers and their revenue are not necessarily exactly those which optimise the role that buses play in that city. And the larger the city the more likely this is to be the case. In this context, it does seem odd to me that government expects this difference to be addressed successfully through *voluntary* partnerships between city authorities and operators? Voluntary means each party can decide whether to sign up or not, and that terms are negotiated as between equal partners?

I may be being too pessimistic about the prospects for voluntary partnerships. It seems that some of the new European entrants into the transport industry take a longer term view, coupling commercial objectives with a more strategic view about partnering with local authorities. These entrants are all public sector – European public sector – so it could be said they can afford to take a longer term view. But they are already beginning to change the dynamics of local authority/bus industry interaction; it may be coincidental that one or two of the UK transport groups are beginning to think similarly. And we are seeing new broadly-based partnerships emerging as in St Albans, led by the university owned bus company!

So my view about the fitness for purpose of the buses regime is that I don't think it scores particularly well, especially on the last objective.

TRAM AND LIGHT RAIL

Docklands Light Rail has been an immensely successful venture. What are the critical success factors: a combination of a highly competent and intelligent client organisation, a sophisticated, business-like and highly competent service provider, a fit for purpose business model – and all the virtues and benefits of a small organisation. Major line extension projects have – Lewisham extension onwards – been funded and delivered by PFI, on a design-build- finance-maintain basis, with the client paying an availability fee; I have always wondered about the cost efficiency of this method of funding, and of the subsequent maintenance arrangements, but it has delivered trouble free extensions on time and on budget, and in subsequent operation.

Business models have varied a little between the recent tram projects. Generally, my observation would be that the design-build-finance-operate concessions of the early schemes – for example Croydon – hold too much risk for typical lengths of concession, and a correct pricing of that risk with the benefit of hindsight would appear to make that business model unaffordable. To treat the upfront project cost as public sector capital investment, and then to let an operating concession along the lines of the original Serco DLR franchise (ie net cost with revenue risk) seems an appropriate model unless and until the local authority or ITA takes control of public transport fares and ticketing.

ROADS

Apart from the M6 toll and the Skye Bridge the last century saw no departure in the roads model from public sector construction, maintenance and operation. In recent years there have been PFI packages put together for substantial road improvement and maintenance – such as the A13 and the M25. What we haven't seen yet it serious debate about the institutional options for the development, maintenance, operation and funding of at least the strategic road network.

My colleague Stephen Glaister at the RAC Foundation has stimulated debate with a commissioned paper exploring possibilities for armslengthing from government a roads body, which could be a public interest company like Network Rail or a private company. Like the energy utilities and telecoms; it would be subject to independent regulation, which would impose disciplines of transparency, clarity of objectives and goals, clear targets for investment and service performance, and it would be funded by a revenue stream either from government or from a form of road charging.

It is a big subject and there is some appetite in Whitehall for considering it. But do these arguments apply in Scotland, or does the smaller scale make it less necessary?

Does David Quarmby's Analysis Reflect Scottish Needs

Alan Howes, Consultant

The picture for buses in Scotland, where the current trend shows numbers rising at just over 1% per annum, is better than in England and Wales (outside London), where numbers continue to fall slightly – but with higher levels of funding in London bus riders are growing by over 6% per annum, and rail passenger numbers in Scotland are growing by over 3% per annum (and by even more south of the border).

David's analysis of the institutional framework suggests:

- Productive efficiency – is being achieved but established monopolies are pressured only by the threat of market entry.
- Meeting market need – is delivered at a basic level, with some notable exceptions
- Satisfying public policy objectives - for large urban areas like Glasgow the model of voluntary cooperation is not fit for purpose. Quality Contracts may be, if they ever come into force. In smaller towns and rural areas the objectives are being achieved in part?

Why does improving the legislative regime for buses not seem to be a high political priority? Perhaps, the root cause of the problem is that the decision makers never use buses apart perhaps from in London and Edinburgh, where services are much better, and are therefore unable to empathise with the concerns of bus users.

Scottish Transport in the News

What the Papers Say

AVIATION

Edinburgh Airport's £40m new departure lounge and security hall opened in July. The airport saw a 0.6% rise in July traffic and now has almost 25% more passengers than Glasgow. Usage continues to fall at Glasgow and Aberdeen though a rise in traffic to Europe has partly compensated for falls in domestic UK traffic. Ryanair has withdrawn services from Prestwick to Belfast City and is concentrating on lucrative mainland European routes served mainly from Edinburgh.

Budget carrier Jet2, based at Leeds/Bradford, is extending to Glasgow Airport and will fly to nine destinations all year round , creating 150 jobs. Flybe is considering a direct Glasgow-Paris route. Despite many objections, Edinburgh Airport is to introduce a £1 'kiss and fly' charge.

Almost 30% of passengers now use bus access at Edinburgh airport compared to 47% using cars (6% being hire cars) and 24% taxis.

Legal decisions have confirmed that BAA must sell either Edinburgh or Glasgow Airports. Edinburgh is set to become the fifth busiest British airport in 2011, displacing Luton and coming after the three major London area airports and Manchester.

Data for Edinburgh shows a 3.5% year-on-year rise in airport passengers in October. By contrast, passengers through Glasgow fell 7.4% and 5% through Aberdeen.

FERRIES & SHIPPING

Following the DFDS takeover of Norfolkline, the Rosyth-Zeebrugge ferry is to be freight only from mid-December, with two freight ferries sailing 4 times a week rather than the current three sailings. Passenger volumes over the year had been insufficient and could be handled on the existing DFDS Newcastle-Amsterdam service.

CalMac ferry breakdowns have affected service quality to Barra and produced pleas for more vessels able to interchange between the Clyde and the western seaboard. A not-for-profit company is being considered to speed up new vessel delivery by being in a position to borrow private funds.

Funding issues are affecting the ability to continue the summer pilot passenger-only service from Tayvallich to Craighouse on Jura.

The tenth anniversary of the reopening of the Union Canal (Edinburgh-Falkirk Wheel) has been celebrated with a cavalcade of leisure boats.

RAIL

Rail passenger trips in Britain were up 5% in the first half of 2010. Growth in Scotland was more subdued but Anglo-Scottish travel is up. This was partly due to aviation disruption but rail's market share between Glasgow and London has risen from 12% in 2008 to 21% in June 2010. Between 2006 and 2009, rail travel on routes competing with the 10 most popular domestic air services rose 31% while domestic air travel fell by 20%.

The first of the new electric trains for Glasgow-Clyde Coast and Edinburgh-North Berwick services have arrived and will enter regular service over the next six months.

The new electric service of 4 trains per hour between Edinburgh and Glasgow via Bathgate and Airdrie will start as scheduled in December. Two services will be semi-express running through to Milngavie and two running to Helensburgh will serve all stops between Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Apart from 1 train per day, through services from Glasgow to London Kings Cross will end next year but may be replaced by new timetables providing hourly services from Glasgow Central to Edinburgh via Motherwell and running through to Leeds or points south. The Scottish Government is seeking to retain more through services to London, including those operating from Aberdeen and Inverness.

Three companies – BAM, ICMD and New Borders Rail -have been short-listed to build and maintain the rail route to the central Borders under a contract approved in 2011 with opening in 2014.

Scottish Labour leader Iain Gray has promised to restore GARL to the rail programme if elected next May while SNP-led Renfrewshire is seeking continued land safeguards for the rail route into Glasgow Airport.

Alloa-Kincardine line residents have again complained at poor compensation for added noise from night freight compared to more generous treatment on the reopened Airdrie-Bathgate line.

RMT has ended strike action opposing staffing plans for Airdrie-Edinburgh route.

British Transport Police are stepping up efforts to ensure observance of level crossing regulations in Scotland.

BUS, TRAM & TAXI

Edinburgh tram project delays continue and no agreement has been reached in the dispute with the main contractor Bilfinger Berger. To prevent costly delays to peak tram services, Edinburgh City Council is insisting that Shandwick Place must be closed to general vehicular movement once trams come into operation.

The Scottish Government is consulting on proposals to allow Edinburgh and Aberdeen City Councils to takeover bus lane enforcement.

Permission has been given for a pilot scheme for hard shoulder bus operation on the M77 approaches to Glasgow.

Renewed emphasis has been placed on the need to have smartcard integrated ticketing in place before the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, SPT has taken the first step by ordering new ticketing equipment for the Subway compatible with wider use in other parts of Scotland.

Stagecoach gained the main contract for the provision of transport for the September Papal Visit to Glasgow.

SPT is collaborating with Ayrshire Councils and the NHS in providing a shared service for DRT scheduling with improved utilisation of vehicles and staff.

Citylink has introduced non-stop 'Gold' coaches on the Glasgow-Aberdeen route along with snacks, wi-fi and leather seats with higher fares than on Megabus routes but aimed at business travellers presently using cars or rail. A Glasgow-Aviemore-Inverness route may be added.

East Lothian Council is revising the 'Gaberlunzie' rural dial-a-ride service due to high costs per passenger carried. The Council plans to cut bus support from £900,000 to £600,000 a year.

82% of survey respondents were satisfied with facilities at the six bus park and ride sites around Edinburgh. But the Straiton site has suffered from an invasion of gypsy caravans.

Lothian Buses have made a partial restoration of night buses withdrawn due to low usage between Sundays and Thursdays. Following a fine for early running, Lothian Buses have installed buzzers to warn drivers that they are running early.

Based on SPT and Glasgow City Council evidence, the Traffic Commissioner has found First, Arriva West and S&A coaches guilty of blocking bus stops to thwart rivals and of causing congestion by picking up and dropping off passengers outwith their allocated stops.

Budget cuts are causing some local authorities to restrict free travel on school buses. Parents have expressed safety fears while also arguing that the action will increase car trips to school.

Greenock-based bus operator McGills, also the main operator of Glasgow Airport taxis, has been fined £60,000 by the Traffic Commissioner for lapses in failing to stick to timetables.

Strathclyde Police have dropped former objections to taxi licences to Network Private Hire on the grounds that all previous criminal links have been severed.

ROADS & PARKING

The ongoing National Travel Survey has shown a decline in passenger miles per head in Britain for the fourth consecutive year. Average miles per head are down from 7,208 in 2005 to 6,775 in 2009 with a 9% fall in commuting trips and a lesser fall in shopping trips and visits to friends at home. Road traffic data confirms a similar trend with falls in passenger miles by car in both Scotland and England. Overall road traffic is down in 2009/10 but light van and, to a lesser degree, HGV movement has shown a rise since 2005. Since external travel is omitted from the NTS, this obscures a continued rise in passenger miles by air by British residents and visitors.

Tenders have now been invited for all three elements in the Forth crossing package – the crossing itself (£0.9 to £1.2bn, M9 approach road improvements (c. £50m) and intelligent traffic management (c £20m).

Urban M74 construction is proceeding apace with opening now likely by late spring 2011, 9 months ahead of time.

A9 dualling is to be extended for 3.2 km north of Crubenmore (£10.4m).

Landslides have again affected the A83 north of Rest and be Thankful.

Aberdeenshire Council is looking for an easing of the Council Tax freeze to help finance the local authority share of the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route.

The Edinburgh Car Club now has 3,000 members and Glasgow City Council has signed up for creation of a Car Club.

Road chiefs in Scottish councils have again stressed the need for major road repairs to overcome a rising backlog. Pothole claims have risen after the severe winter. Edinburgh is to cut road maintenance spend by 25%. COSLA claims that extra repairs are not affordable but is seeking a reallocation of some trunk road maintenance funding towards local roads. Highland Council is considering reductions in street lighting as part of planned cuts.

Applecross now has the first open-all-hours unmanned filling station in Scotland with payment by credit cards. Volunteers carry out administration for this community venture.

Edinburgh has become the first council in Scotland to levy higher resident parking charges on larger, gas-guzzling vehicles. The council has also introduced payment for meter parking via mobile phones.

The UK government decision to end support for speed cameras has sparked considerable debate with the balance of view, even among motorists, that discouragements for speeding are important for road safety. East Lothian is to introduce mobile cameras on rural roads in an effort to crack down on excessive speeds while lollipop personnel are to be issued with head cameras in efforts to catch inconsiderate drivers approaching school crossings at speed.

£6.5m has been lost in Glasgow over 4 years in enforcing parking tickets whereas, over the same period, Edinburgh had a surplus of £8.2m plus almost £1m a year from speed cameras. Other loss-making councils include South Lanarkshire and Perth and Kinross with many others still very reluctant to impose parking charges and efficient collection systems.

WALKING & CYCLING

Glasgow City Council has set up car exclusion zones around two primary schools as part of efforts to encourage walking to school.

Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson has opened the 4 km Kincardine-Culross cycleway and announced £4m of funding towards traffic free routes through central Glasgow.

Dumfries has launched a self-service bike-hire scheme with Scottish Government funds. 30 cycles will be available for hire.

The Scottish Government has published a Cycling Action Plan including £2.5m of new funding.

Edinburgh Council plans to get more staff using bikes and other sustainable modes have led to a 10% fall in staff cycling, an 8% rise in bus use and a 25% rise in car-sharing.

LAND USE AND TRANSPORT

Glasgow City Council is planning to use TIF (tax increment finance) to make viable a major expansion of the city centre Buchanan Galleries shopping complex. Former plans to move multi-storey parking for the Galleries to above Buchanan Bus Station have been dropped in favour of multi-storey parking on a Network Rail site on the east side of Queen St station.

The new Larbert Hospital, replacing hospitals in Falkirk and Stirling has been completed on a greenfield site. This has attracted some commercial bus services but much higher car mode share is expected due to the nature of the location.

Work has stared on the £110m Scottish National Arena extension to the SECC in Glasgow. Car parking is being reduced and the site is served both by rail and the planned BusFastlink from the city centre to the new Transport Museum.

Transport Priorities in the West of Scotland

Tom Hart summarises some of the views from the transport summit in September 2010

AIR

There was general agreement that a revival of the former Air Route Development Grant (subject to EU approval) could help establish a larger number of direct overseas services at Glasgow Airport which could improve international business perceptions of the west of Scotland as a location and also encourage growth of in-tourism through Glasgow. Some eastward European flights were likely to operate via Edinburgh but rail links to both Glasgow and Edinburgh could help airport access with Glasgow also aided by completion of the urban M74.

MARITIME

Scottish ports were considered to be in good condition but continued to suffer from a larger volume of exports than direct imports and 'legacies' of existing trading patterns which tended to perpetuate road and rail hauls to and from English ports rather than direct sea feeders to continental hubs for world trade.

There were major issues affecting internal ferries – including high subsidies and an urgent need for ship replacement and harbour upgrades. CMAL pointed to the all-weather advantages of larger ships on exposed routes and was making progress towards lower fuel and crewing costs in the latest designs.

Western Ferries argued for greater innovation with smaller ships, low crew requirements and much lower fuel costs. This could also offer improved frequency and the ability for buses to use vessels as part of through routes rather than being tied to inconvenient interchange at ferry railheads. Route Development Grants, rather than ongoing subsidy, were advocated.

FREIGHT

For the most part, Scotland did not have serious problems from existing and potential conflicts between passenger and freight use of the road and rail network but this was a bigger issue in England which required attention. There were localised problems of congestion and unreliability which detracted from the efficiency of freight movement.

Delivery requests were still concentrated between 8 and 10 am and work remained to be done on encouraging freight operators, users and local authorities to develop delivery partnerships, easing night curfews where possible and reviewing policy on parking fines and street loading/unloading bays.

ROADS & PASSENGER TRANSPORT

Better public transport had a particular role to play in and around cities where population and employment was growing and contributing to increased problems of congestion. Greater use of public transport could be crucial in meeting labour market needs without high costs.

The current state of the economy required a sharper focus on cost-effective schemes giving good value. Emphasis was put was expanded park and ride on the edges of cities and at more distant locations, improved frequency, reliable and reduced rail and bus trip times, smart multi-modal ticketing, more and better quality buses and trains, and marketing.

There was support for an M8 upgrade to 3 lanes throughout.

There was a strong case for a Bus Fastlink improvement on corridors such as that from central Glasgow to the Southern General Hospital and Braehead.

There was strong support for Subway modernisation and for ongoing suburban rail improvements as part of programmes to replace ageing rolling stock and expand rail services. Many sought the restoration of GARL as part of a reduced ongoing programme for transport investment. There was also support for the benefits of a phased approach to higher-speed rail not only linking Glasgow with London but also offering improved links and frequencies to other major English cities and to Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness.

Many supported a shift from the trunk road programme to greater spending on local authority roads, including maintenance, lesser improvements and demand management.

Taxis and the relationship with other demand responsive transport and with scheduled services deserved more attention.

Integration of rail, bus and road policies (including pricing) could yield gains for the west of Scotland economy and quality of life. Fewer agencies did not necessarily mean centralisation at Scottish Government level. Mark Savelli of First Glasgow argued that the public sector could do more to cut risk for the private sector and thereby increase private sector funding in partnership agreements. Work on this was under way in Glasgow.

Transport Plans for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014 were important. Funding would be restricted but the aim was 100% spectator access to the Games by fare-free public transport or active modes. Though the physical legacy would be small, a greater and lasting impact was expected from the impetus to changes in travel behaviour.

Better marketing of public transport was needed for tourist and visitor use.

There was scope for riverbus services linking Govan and other locations with the new Transport Museum and SECC.

Using PTP to improve health: evidence from Dundee

Caley McDowall – JMP

In the current public policy and economic climate, transport planning professionals must work hard to justify the outcomes from transport investment. Whilst we understand, and have long been able to demonstrate, the economic and environmental benefits of transport decisions, the links with health have not been so well developed.

However, it is well recognised that the increasing use of sedentary transport modes is a key contributor to less active lifestyles, which in turn exacerbate a range of chronic health problems. However, active travel choices are identified as one of the most effective means to enable people to increase physical activity in their day to day lives.

JMP has recently delivered a Personalised Travel Planning (PTP) project in Dundee. As part of the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places-funded Dundee Travel Active programme, this is the UK's first large-scale PTP initiative focussed on active travel and active lifestyles with a specific health improvement objective.

The initiative encourages walking, cycling and use of public transport (in recognition of its role in helping people get more activity) as a replacement for sedentary modes.

The PTP programme has been supported by a co-ordinated package of measures including those:

- to enable a change in travel behaviour (such as adult cycle training and community bike loan scheme);
- to improve active travel infrastructure (streetscape, lighting and network enhancements); and
- to improve information (including new printed and web-based guides to walking and cycling routes).

The PTP programme has targeted 13,500 households in Dundee during 2009 and 2010 and has engaged with members of public in a variety of other settings; including in schools, workplaces, universities, with members of community groups and by attending local events.

The work has drawn on a range of social marketing techniques adapted from both health and transport sectors in order to influence travel and lifestyle choices. Work is still continuing, however the PTP programme can report a number of highly encouraging interim outcomes.

WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED?

Since August 2009, more than 3,400 households have received personalised active travel advice at their doorstep and over 1,000 people have participated through community events, workplaces and universities.

Approximately 500 participants completed an aftercare survey by phone around three weeks after the initial engagement.

This revealed that:

- Over 40% of all the individuals participating report that they have increased activity as a result of the information and advice they were given. Over half of these say that other people living in their household have also increased their activity.
- The amount of increased activity is enough to make a significant contribution to many individuals' health: the average reported increase was more than 20 minutes per person per day.
- In contrast with many activity-promoting projects, which frequently exacerbate health inequalities, people in poor health have shown a slightly higher propensity to increase activity following our interventions (47% of people that describe their own health as 'not good' have reported exercising more, compared to 43% in 'fair' health and 42% in 'good' health).
- The change is sustained over a period for most people: a separate survey of found that three-quarters of individuals reported that they had maintained the initial increase between four and six months after our initial intervention.

It is worth noting that it appears that the project has had just as much success in encouraging people to be active in their leisure time as facilitating shifts in mode choice. Investigation of this aspect continues, but is potentially significant for future consideration of how transport investment can contribute to health outcomes.

Participants have told us that they have noticed the benefits of being more active, essential if changes are to be sustained. More than two-thirds of all the people who increased their activity have said they feel better as a result, with reported benefits to both physical health (such as losing weight and feeling fitter) and mental wellbeing (such as sleeping better and feeling less stressed).

Some examples of feedback received are:

"My asthma seems to be clearer and I've lost weight"

"Walking to and from work helps to get you ready for the day ahead and releases tensions for going home to family life"

"It's good for you and it gets you outside. It's relaxing and is better than sitting in the house being bored; you can walk and see everything that is around you"

"I see more people walking past my window and out and about, and I think that's due to Dundee Travel Active. Sometimes you just need that push to say go on, you can do it!"

IN CONCLUSION

The experience from Dundee shows the contribution that PTP can make to public health outcomes.

In the current economic climate, significant changes to active travel infrastructure in our urban environment will be rare, however PTP can help to encourage greater uptake of active and sustainable modes by changing peoples' perceptions of their local environment, mostly by providing greater awareness of what is on offer in their local area.

By demonstrating the links to health, there are opportunities for mainstreaming PTP into local, regional and national transport, healthcare and land use planning policies and creating greater opportunities for sustained transport funding.

What Transport Factors Make Good Places to Live?

From Scottish Social Attitudes research by Susan Reid and John Curtice, Scotcen

The 2009 Scottish Social Attitudes survey (SSA 2009) included 3 key questions about use of space:

- What are the key factors that people in Scotland think makes somewhere a good place to live?
- What is the role of greenspace in particular in making somewhere a place people want to live?
- What is the relationship between perceptions of greenspace in the local area and health, subjective well-being and social trust?

The survey involves about 1,500 interviews annually, with respondents selected using random probability sampling to ensure that the results are robust and representative of the Scottish population. The 2009 survey, which was conducted between April and September 2009, involved face-to-face interviews and a self-completion questionnaire.

WHAT DO PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THEIR LOCAL AREA?

The general ambience of an area is of central importance to people in Scotland in making somewhere a good place to live. 50% of people mentioned the area being 'quiet and peaceful' as either the first or second most important feature in making somewhere a good place to live. Other transport related factors mentioned by people were, availability of local services (17%) and public transport (15%).

There was little consensus in terms of what people said was most in need of improvement in their local area. However, there was a tendency for people to prioritise the provision of services and factors relating to economic conditions: for example, 22% of people mentioned the availability of good jobs locally as either the first or second thing most in need of improvement. Factors relating to greenspace or the ambience of the local area were less commonly mentioned as needing improvement.

There were clear differences in priorities for improvement locally by income and deprivation. People on higher incomes and in the least deprived areas were more likely to want to see improvements in public transport and to traffic levels. People in low income households and in the most deprived areas were more likely than those with higher incomes and in less deprived areas to prioritise making their area more quiet and peaceful, improvements to the cleanliness of the streets and improvement to the quality of places for children to play.

The majority of people in Scotland think that their area is either very good or quite good for cycling (58%) with only 17% thinking it was either quite or very bad. A higher proportion, three-quarters, agreed that their local area is nice to walk around in, while 85% feel good about how easy their area is to get around on foot.

Below average levels of satisfaction with people's local area as a place to live were particularly associated with:

- Feeling that an area is not nice to walk around in
- Living in the most deprived 20% of areas
- Having a household income in the lowest 20% of incomes
- Regular experience of graffiti and vandalism in the local area
- Regular experience of noise from neighbours/parties in the local area
- Having a low level of trust in local people
- Feeling bad about the availability of green and pleasant places to walk or sit locally.

Feeling disempowered, unable to do anything about making improvements in the local area, is also linked to feeling dissatisfied with the local area as a place to live. 39% of those who agreed or agreed strongly that it is difficult for them to improve their area were dissatisfied with their area compared with only 15% of those who disagreed or disagreed strongly. Those who feel disempowered to make changes to their local area were more likely to be young or old (rather than middle-aged), to have low levels of trust of others, to be social renters and not to be qualified to degree-level.

ACCESS TO LOCAL GREENSPACE

Previous research has shown that for people to use their greenspace regularly they ideally need to live within a 5 minute walk of such greenspace. SSA 2009 found that there was indeed a strong association between distance to greenspace and how often people use it. It showed that half of those who live less than a 5 minute walk away from their local greenspace visit it more than once a week, compared with only 16% of those who live more than a 10 minute walk away.

SSA 2009 shows that two-thirds of people do live within a 5 minute walk of their local green or open space. However, this varies between different types of areas. In the most deprived areas of Scotland only 53% live within a five minute walk from green or open space compared with 67% of those living in the least deprived areas. And just 53% of people in large urban areas

	1st choice (%)	1st and 2nd choices combined (%)
Availability of good jobs	12	22
Good public transport	10	17
Quality of places for children to play	9	18
Good quality affordable housing	9	18
Pavements/footpaths in good condition	9	17
Low levels of traffic	7	12
Availability of local services and amenities (e.g. GPs, shops)	6	12
Clean streets	6	14
More quiet and peaceful	5	8
More attractive surroundings	4	8
Easy to get around without a car	4	7

Perceptions of what is in most need of improvement in the local area (first choice, and first and second choices combined) live within a 5 minute walk of greenspace compared with 87% of people in remote rural areas.

Just over half of people in Scotland (52%) visit their local greenspace once aweek or more often but 15% never visit their local greenspace at all. Those who never visit their local greenspace were more likely to have no qualifications, live in flats, be social renters and live in the most deprived areas. Over 3 times as many people in the most deprived areas of Scotland never visit their local greenspace compared with people in the least deprived areas (29% compared with 8%).

DOES HAVING ACCESS TO GREENSPACE IMPACT ON QUALITY OF LIFE?

Access to greenspace matters primarily, as it contributes to providing a safe, pleasant, walkable and sociable environment for people. SSA 2009 shows that quality of local greenspace is positively associated with self-reported health, overall life satisfaction, social trust and a sense of community cohesion, even after age, income and area deprivation are taken into account. For example, 43% of people who are very satisfied with their local greenspace say their health is very good compared with 26% of those who are neither satisfied or dissatisfied or fairly or very dissatisfied.

Enhancing the role of the Third Sector

Think tank Reform Scotland has published a review suggesting how barriers to a greater role for the voluntary sector can be overcome. The report "Voluntary Power" affects community transport and in particular transport for care services and recommends:

- The role of the third sector in the provision of public services is extended by giving local communities and people much greater control over the services they use. This would enable them to choose services that best meet their needs and foster a wider range of providers which are the keys to higher standards.
- The vital independence of the voluntary sector is maintained through clear and robust governance arrangements within third sector organisations, underpinned by transparency about where funding comes from and what it is for.
- Public confidence in,and support for, the third sector is enhanced through the encouragement of greater participation in voluntary activity. This would enable gapyear students, amongst others, to become involved in charity work at home, similar to work they often undertake abroad.
- Scottish Government should seek to extend the take up of direct payments by removing the barriers to greater take up, including bureaucracy and lack of awareness amongst local authority staff.
- Proposed legislation on self-directed support extends eligibility for direct payments, for example by giving local authorities the power to provide payments to carers.

The Scottish Government's proposed Bill on self-directed support should enable Scottish Ministers to bring forward future legislation extending self-directed support beyond social care as well as setting the parameters for combining social and health care plus other budgets into one direct payment or individual budget.

The Scottish Government, in conjunction with councils and voluntary organisations, focuses on developing robust and objective means of measuring outcomes to enable better comparisons to be made of the effectiveness of services provided by local authorities and other bodies.

Statistics Show Fall in Road Casualties

2009 figures show there were 15,013 reported road casualties, (575 or 4% fewer than 2008), the lowest since 1949.

Of which there were:

- 216 **fatalities:** 54 (or 20%) fewer than 2008;
- 2,269 **seriously injured**: 301 (or 12%) fewer than 2008;
- 2,485 **killed or seriously injured:** 355 (or 13%) fewer than 2008;
- 12,528 **slightly injured**: 220 (or 2%) fewer than 2008.
- 1,474 **child casualties**, 215 (13%) fewer than in 2008, including 5 fatalities: 15 fewer deaths than in 2008.

Mode

- 9,559 **car users** injured (1% fewer than 2008); including 116 fatalities (24% fewer than 2008).
- 2,196 **pedestrian** casualties (15% fewer than 2008); including 47 fatalities (22% fewer than 2008).
- 1,017 **motorcyclist** casualties (2% fewer than 2008) ; including 43 fatalities (9 more than 2008).
- 803 **pedal cyclist** casualties (10% more than 2008); including 5 fatalities (4 fewer than 2008).
- 471 **bus and coach** user casualties in 2009 (20 per cent fewer than 2008).

Age & Gender

- **Male** road casualties fell by 5% (to 8,431 in 2009), with fatalities falling by 15 per cent (to 162). Males account for 75 per cent of all reported road fatalities.
- **Female** road casualties fell by 2 per cent (to 6,576) with fatalities falling by 32 per cent (to 54 in 2009).
- 20 per cent (3,074) of all casualties were aged 16–22, of which 1,838 were male (12% of all casualties) and 1,236 were female (8% of all casualties).
- There are currently 3 GB-wide national targets for casualty reductions by 2010– in all cases a larger reduction in casualties has been achieved:
- 2,485 people were killed or seriously injured in 2009, 49 per cent below the 1994-98 baseline average level (target of 40%)
- 257 children were killed or seriously injured in 2009: 69 per cent below the 1994-98 average (target of 50%).
- A 2008 slight casualty rate of 28.67 casualties per 100 million vehicle kilometres (the latest available traffic volume estimate): 38 per cent below the 1994-98 average (target of 10%)

Further information is available from Reported Road Casualties Scotland 2009 at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00871

Lessons For Scottish Railways From Japan

William Murchison and John Yellowlees – FirstScotrail

SUBURBAN AND INTER-CITY SERVICES

With its long slender island-chain, high population density (127M people in 142,000 square miles) and string of big cities that continue to draw people from their rural hinterland, Japan is ideally suited to rail transport. The cities enjoy an intensive mix of suburban railways – including private lines that supplement their farebox income with returns from property investment – subways, trams and in Tokyo monorails, providing a seamless network that in the capital has included threading together underground and suburban lines so as to maximise through journey-opportunities.

'Pushers' to pack commuters into crowded trains seems to be a bit of an urban myth, since they are a feature on only a couple of private networks. Many Tokyo citizens linger after work in town for enforced socialising with colleagues during which the real business can be done. First or Green Class on some suburban lines offers a haven of air-conditioned peace and quiet in double-decker cars.

STATIONS

Tokyo suburban stations may appear functional and cluttered, but their slightly unloved ambience is made more endearing by each station's theme-tune jingle that is played over the loudspeakers by guards to announce a train's arrival to his passengers. Stations also echo to the playing of recorded birdsong, though it was unclear whether the purpose might be to recreate rural arcadia or to drive the birds away! Japanese generally seem more tolerant than are most Europeans of smoking but more vigilant about mobile phone use in public places.

DIESEL OR ELECTRIC

Starting with early steam locomotives supplied by overseas builders, Japanese railways have become largely electrified, with rural areas retaining pockets of Sprinter-type diesel operation. On the northern island of Hokkaido, the pattern is however reversed, with Sapporo at the centre of a network of rural routes worked by comfortable diesels and only the suburban core electrified. Sleeper services are provided on the longest routes linking Hokkaido with Tokyo and Osaka, and there is significant freight.

Almost the entire network was built to the narrow gauge of 3'6", making journey times increasingly uncompetitive with road and air. Therefore when the Japanese Government came to consider a high-speed network as part of the country's post-war reconstruction, they had no option but to push the new standard-gauge lines right through the heart of the cities.

HIGH SPEED RAIL

The first Shinkansen or bullet-train line was the New Tokaido, built for the 1964 Olympics, which provided 210 kph running, reducing the journey-time between Tokyo and Osaka from 6.5 initially to 4 hours, then the following year to 3 hours 10 minutes and carrying 300M passengers by 1970.

maybe we should make the audio environment of our stations more interesting

The iconic bull-nose has been replaced by ever more sleekly-elongated front ends. Ample luggage-space has been provided, and restrooms incorporate toilets in both the Japanese and Western styles. Airline-style seats can be swung round to face direction of travel. On the original New Tokaido Line operation is supremely slick, with the eight-each-way-hourly timetable having the fastest Nozomi trains overtaking slower Hikaris and Kodamas with such smoothness that customers in the latter notice scarcely any delay. Tokyo benefits from having a single central station, with Shinkansen calling also at several suburban hubs for ease of interchange.

ADMINISTRATION, ECONOMICS AND CULTURE

Japanese Railways have been restructured into six regional operations. Shinkansen trains now bear the traits of modern commercial pressures, the buffet cars having given way to trolleys offering tasty eki-ben tray meals, and the high-backed 2 + 3 seating unaligned with windows that can be found on some trains in Economy Class prioritises safety and capacity over any relaxed enjoyment of the passing scenery.

Despite these extensions at the periphery, journey times are once again perceived as uncompetitive with air, and a maglev is under development that promises a Tokyo-Osaka journey time of just one hour. Journeys against the flow of the Shinkansen network can be slow, and closures of little-used rural lines have begun as Japan copes with the greatest economic decline in its post-war history – Japan Airways recently filed for bankruptcy and China has overtaken Japan as the world's second-largest economy.

The private despair of many citizens in this land of the fastest-falling birth-rate is reflected in a high suicide rate that takes its toll on rail operations. The face-masks worn by many Japanese as a guard against swine flu seem to bear testimony to their loss of faith in the twenty-first century.

Japan remains both a visual delight and a world leader in the excellence of its universal customer service and traditional courtesy, with on-train staff turning round delightfully to bow as they head out of each carriage. The Japanese Rail Pass valid on all mainline trains except Nozomis can be bought before entering the country in 7, 14 or 21-day variants including a Green Card that gives a week's travel in First Class.

CONCLUSIONS

Possible lessons from Japan for Scottish railways

- The quest for ever higher speed is unrelenting
- Interchange must be made easy between high-speed and local networks
- Britain has no monopoly on claustrophobic train interiors
- Maybe we should make the audio environment of our stations more interesting
- Disruption from events like suicides can be a threat to rail operations