

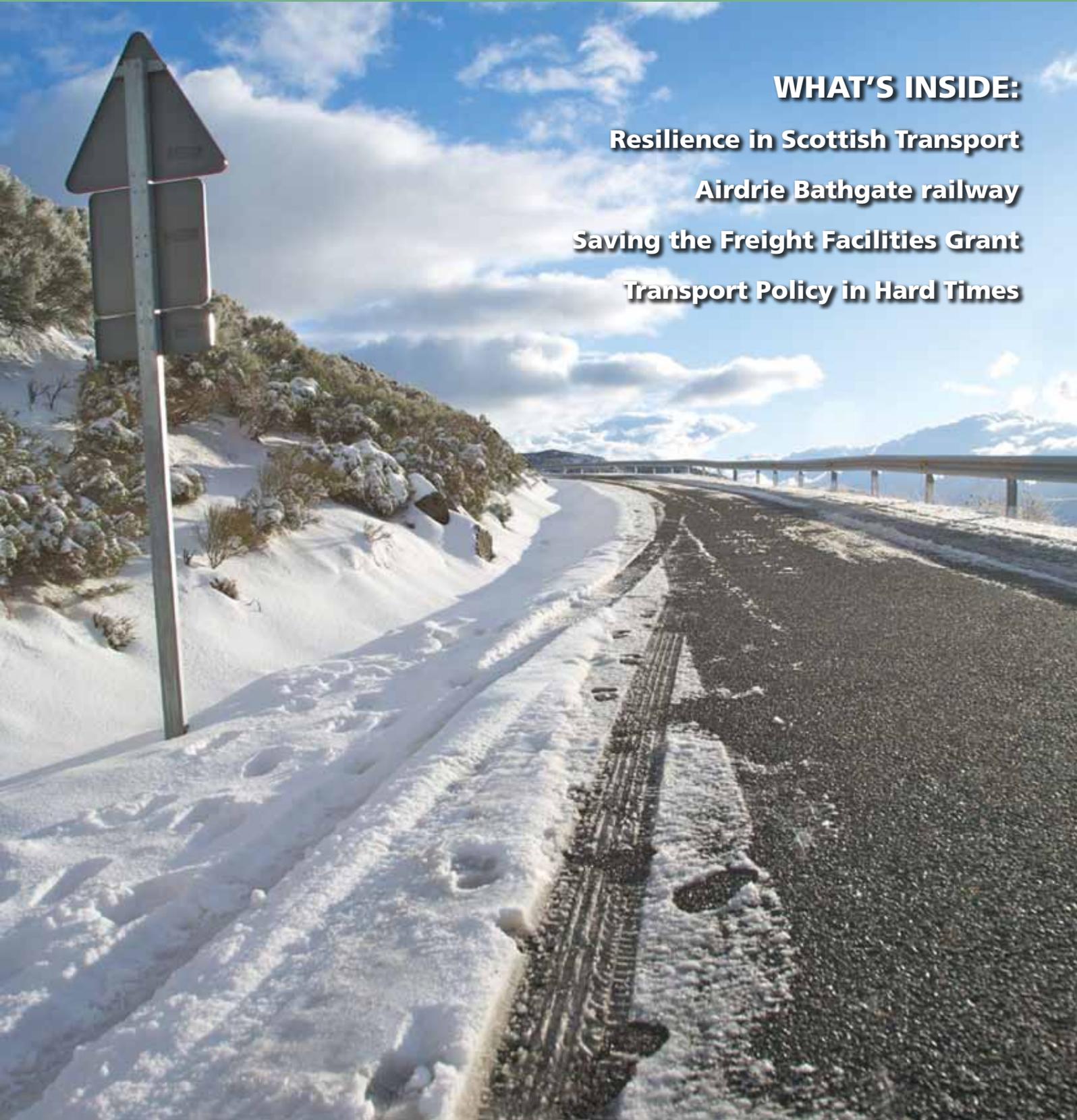
## **WHAT'S INSIDE:**

**Resilience in Scottish Transport**

**Airdrie Bathgate railway**

**Saving the Freight Facilities Grant**

**Transport Policy in Hard Times**



## 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](mailto:editor@stsg.org)

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## The Price and the Value of Resilience

*Derek Halden, STR Editor*

What is it worth to build in more resilience to Scottish transport systems? Recent winter weather, and recurring events like road closures due to landslips, shows the cost to Scotland's economy of not building in resilience. Added to questions about economic uncertainty and climate change in an era of rapid social transformation, building in resilience is one of the most important questions facing transport planning in Scotland.

It is not just the infrastructure questions that are important, like how would we cope if a major bridge like the Forth Crossing in the east or the Kingston Bridge in the west needed to close. As the winter resilience review undertaken for DfT shows, the capabilities of people and businesses to respond to transport change are equally important. Although public authorities have done well at making the most of limited resources available, it is less clear whether the a broad range of investment options for a more resilient transport system have yet been fully explored.

Establishing formal emergency bus and rail timetable options for each part of the country is only one part of the system. Building in

secondary response structures like gritting of routes to public transport is equally important.

Lessons from the English review of winter resilience show that the ability to concentrate on core networks, and action to enable more people and organisations to contribute would help. Investment decisions need to look at ways to build in greater resilience rather than just system capacity.

*"clarify which agency or community volunteers will take responsibility for each task"*

STR's reader survey about the winter weather shows that people think that improvements can be achieved. Planning has not yet adequately involved the public, yet most people found that their social networks were a good source of information when things went wrong. Communication systems that tell people how they can help, e.g. by parking cars appropriately

or choosing suitable transport services, can build in the capacity to respond and manage travel behaviour.

The English review notes that safe walking and cycling routes to schools, GPs, bus stops and railway stations should be priorities for snow clearance. Access planning programmes like safe routes to school, shops and stations can identify these routes with communities and clarify which agency or community volunteers will take responsibility for each task.

Overall the core message is that resilience cannot be planned top down. The national networks for trunk roads and rail faced greater difficulties in tapping into community resources than local authorities when the going got tough. Whatever the problems in the future: flooding, storms, snow, ash clouds or even civil unrest, the professionalism of transport authorities and operators can be matched with better co-ordinated community action. Most STR readers think that lessons have been learned and they are better equipped to respond to the next crisis. Coping is a crisis is one way build resilience capability, but better information and joint planning by agencies, operators and communities would also help.

## Ministerial Resilience

In December 2010 Stewart Stevenson resigned as transport minister. He explained to a meeting of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport that his resilience finally ran out when he faced a vote of no confidence in the Scottish Parliament. He noted that he had learned to treat advice with caution, learn from history, do the maths, and remember details. During his 1304 days in office, he spent only just over 400 nights at home, made 3380 journeys, attended 2769 meetings, answered 4647 Parliamentary Questions, and made 400 speeches.

*"treat advice with caution, learn from history, do the maths, and remember details"*

He suggested that when politicians interfere in professional matters things go horribly wrong as the Glasgow Airport Rail Link scheme illustrated. He was a strong supporter of trams, but just as his ancestor Sir Alexander Stewart Stevenson had found in 1929 with proposals for Edinburgh trams, it was important to get the scheme design right. He had steered the Forth Replacement Crossing scheme through the Scottish Parliament after having succeeded in making a £1.5bn saving in the scheme costs. Sir Alexander Stewart Stevenson had chaired the Forth Road Bridge Promotion Committee in 1935, and Stevenson himself noted that he had queued up to drive across the new Forth Road Bridge on its first day of operation in 1964.

Timing was critical for political success. He felt his bid to stop the Edinburgh Trams might have worked if it had not been that other parties wanted to demonstrate the vulnerability of a new minority SNP government. Similarly the

timing of a bad interview on Newsnight in December 2010 during a week when the Liberal democrats wanted to divert attention from the unpopularity of tuition fees at Westminster was unfortunate.

Although Stewart highlighted that he was the oldest minister in the cabinet he clearly enjoyed his time as transport minister and said he would be standing again in the 2011 Scottish Parliament elections.



## Resilience in Scottish Transport - What STR Readers Think

Jamie Cuthbert, DHC

November and December of last year saw Scotland hit by severe winter weather, with temperatures plummeting as low as -20°C and heavy snowfall across the whole country. This weather caused major disruption to our transport network, and many people were left facing major delays, cancellations or were stranded in their cars overnight with major tailbacks on the roads. How well prepared were we for this weather? Do we have resilient transport systems in place which can cope with the severity of the winter that we have witnessed?

In January 2011, Scottish Transport Review undertook a survey of readers to identify what people felt we have learned about the resilience of the transport system, and whether or not the recent adverse weather has changed local communities. Travel plans of nearly all respondents were affected by the weather.

### RAIL

Rail passengers witnessed a substantial number of cancellations, delays and failures on many lines, with delays of up to 15 hours on some journeys as points were frozen, signalling failed and trains broke down causing disruption right across the network in Scotland. Nevertheless some noted that many rail staff had worked hard to do the best they could under difficult circumstances.

The level of information provided at stations and on-board trains did not allow passengers to plan effectively, with staff at train stations unavailable

or unable to answer questions regarding current delays or cancellations. People commented that information did not match what was occurring on the network although many respondents considered that better information could have been made easily available with a little extra effort. Information made available was often incorrect, or too late to be of use, but many people perceived a complete lack of information.

Other respondents commented that the problems were embarrassing for everyone involved with transport. Long queues at main stations saw police brought in to help rail staff. How would all of this have looked to visitors to this country? One respondent said: "Lots of tourists simply could not believe what a complete shambles was presented to them - and quite a few were asking if the rail staff were on strike, rather than simply being affected by the weather."

One respondent simply noted that perhaps the greatest impact was that the weather problems were a lost opportunity "the stage was set for rail to star - rather than roads."

*"parking regulations need to be different in periods of extreme weather"*

### BUS

With the rail services suppressed, many regular rail commuters noted that they had switched to bus. The bus service was seen by some to be more reliable, with fewer cancellations and less lengthy delays. Road conditions meant that cautious driving was necessary, and this was the most common reason for any delays to services.

Particularly in town centres, where the main roads had been treated by Local Authorities, the bus service was seen to operate as it would in normal circumstances. Some services were diverted or ran for only parts of routes and a problem mentioned by many travellers was that badly parked cars made some roads impassable for buses.

Very few respondents noted any major over-crowding or excessively long queues (though waiting for buses was longer than normal).

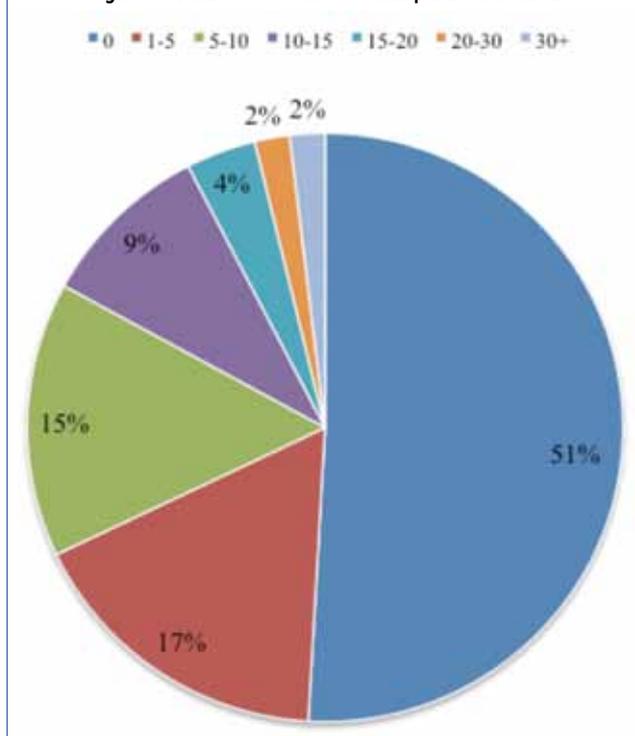
The level on information provided by bus companies was commended by many respondents. In particular Edinburgh respondents highlighted that Bus Tracker display boards at bus stops, and smart phone information provided people with real-time updates on delays, cancellations and expected arrival times at bus stops. Respondents also noted that the Lothian Buses website was also kept up-to-date. Although there were fewer responses specific to other companies the relative lack of negative comments about bus information is interesting.

Overall it seems that expectations of respondents in relation to bus travel were exceeded, although it is often noted in other surveys that expectations of bus travel sometimes start from a lower base.

### ROADS AND PARKING

With minor roads and residential streets left untreated in many areas, many respondents avoided car travel. Where car travel was necessary, delays were highlighted amongst the majority of those surveyed, mainly due to slower driving.

Figure 1. Numbers of hours less than planned worked.



Many respondents described major delays and gridlock on the trunk road network, particularly across the Central Belt and the major routes leading north and south from Edinburgh. Delays of up to 24 hours were reported, particularly during rush hour and experiences of being stranded in cars overnight on the M8 motorway were described, including responses from hauliers.

Many negative comments were made about roads authority responses to the difficulties. The frequency of gritting and the number of snow ploughs on the roads were often criticised. Many respondents highlighted the difficulties roads authorities faced with jack-knifed lorries and major tailbacks delaying snow ploughs, particularly blocking access on to the trunk road network.

Several respondents noted that one of the greatest problems was the management of parking. Winter maintenance policies of Councils in other countries recognise that parking regulations need to be different in periods of extreme weather. Drivers respond to the lack of gritting of residential streets by parking cars on secondary roads rather than local streets. These roads are often busy thoroughfares including bus routes, and the additional demand for car parking on these led to delays and made it difficult for snow-ploughs to keep the roads clear.

In countries more used to snow there are different parking restrictions in winter weather and several respondents suggested that councils should have similar policies in Scotland.

## IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT

With extended travel times or cancellation of journeys, respondents noted that working hours were reduced. Figure 1 shows the number of hours less than planned that respondents worked. Around half of respondents saw a change in the number of hours they had planned to work during the period of severe weather, with a third of people losing upwards of 5 hours planned work.

Figure 2 shows the number of hours that respondents worked from a different location from their normal, or planned, place of work. Of the respondents, 65% made alternative arrangements to from another location.

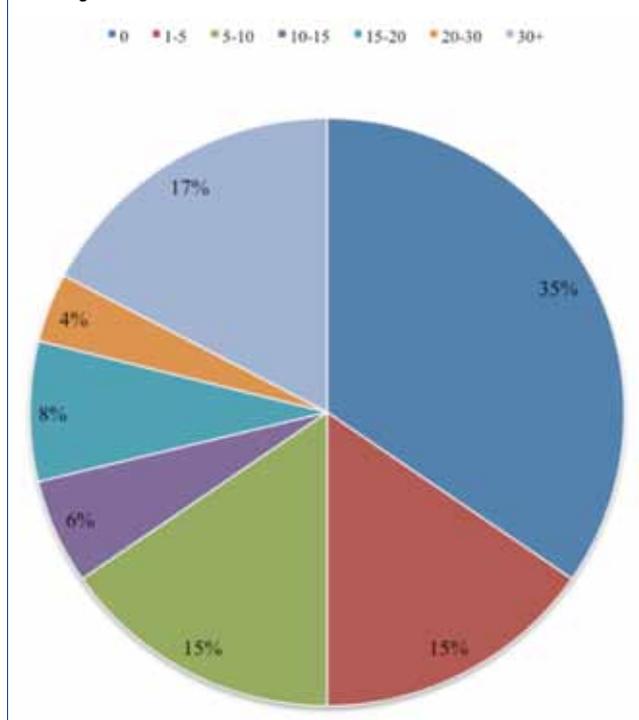
Despite the fact that 65% of respondents were able to work remotely, with 17% carrying out more than 30 hours of work outside their normal working place, 49% of all people surveyed still lost an hour or more in planned working time, and the loss of working time and cancellation of meetings had an effect on respondent's business activities.

Around 20% of people surveyed felt that the severe weather had an obvious effect on their business or income. Many of the respondents felt that their business was unaffected, or only marginally so, and this was due to the fact that a large number of respondents were able to make alternative arrangements to work from home or another location. Others used annual leave or took advantage of flexible working hours.

## LOCAL COMMUNITIES

At home, over half of respondents identified that new arrangements had been set up to help cope with the severe weather. Although a few respondents noted that communities made arrangements with local farmers to clear snow and ice from the roads, most communities had simply worked together to clear their own paths, driveways or roads outside their home.

Figure 2. Number of hours worked from a different location.



Over a quarter of respondents highlighted some barriers to self help. The barriers identified were largely a lack of grit bins (or grit bins being empty), and the lack of equipment or uncertainty about powers to move stranded vehicles.

Respondents also noted that working together in communities to deal with the problems had enabled people to get to know each other better, and a quarter of respondents stated that they now knew the names of more neighbours than prior to the severe weather. 12% of respondents stated that they now knew more than 4 new people in their local community. This may suggest that the community capacity to deal with future extreme events may have been substantially enhanced.

## SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

This was a small sample of just under 100 respondents but gives a good overview of impacts of the severe weather in November and December 2010. Many people faced travel delays, cancellations of meetings and disruption to work plans, and loss of working hours.

Amongst the respondents the fewest negative comments were made about bus travel, with some participants noting that they had migrated from rail and car to travel to bus. Other modes received a mix of both positive and negative responses.

Communities appear to have come together to tackle problems. Overall the findings suggest that the lessons learned could make Scotland more resilient in the future. However better planning by roads and public transport authorities is still needed, particularly where there are obvious gaps in planning, such as emergency parking strategies.

## Winter Resilience in Transport

### *STR summarises recommendations from the 2010 review of winter resilience in England to highlight lessons for Scotland*

The English review took account of the wider UK context including evidence from Scottish Government/Transport Scotland and the findings are intended to be relevant to transport resilience in Scotland.

#### ROADS AND FOOTWAYS

Representatives of small businesses, of road hauliers and bus operators and of road users highlighted that local highway authorities needed to consult more widely at the planning stage on the networks they proposed to treat. There is a need for better consultation and engagement between roads authorities and transport providers about access to passenger facilities and operational sites – whether bus stations and garages, railway stations, depots, and airports. This is not only about including such key access routes within treated highway networks, but to ensure cooperation “whose responsibility is the station forecourt?”

Communication of winter service plans by local authorities to residents, businesses and other stakeholders is highly valued and there was room for improvement in both communication of their plans and real-time updating through broadcast and electronic media. Attention to effective consultation and communication is the best way to manage public expectations of what the winter response will be, especially when there is persistent snow. The public at large take a realistic view of how much it is worth investing to achieve resilience for winter conditions, given the relative infrequency of severe winter weather.

Very few local authorities prioritise the treatment of – or clearance of snow from – footways. Cycleways are also becoming more important as local transport policy focuses on alternatives to private cars. Local authorities should consider whether to treat footways on key access routes to railway stations, bus interchanges and town centres, and pedestrianised areas in town centres, as well as in the vicinity of schools, hospitals and health centres. This is an opportunity to engage local communities, not just supporting them with salt bins but clarifying emergency plans responsibilities.

In other countries, including Germany, Austria and Switzerland, householders and shopkeepers can be required to keep both the pavement and their side of a local road clear of snow and ice; and low-cost public liability insurance is provided to cover for any resulting claims. There is an opportunity for government to publish simple national guidelines for those who want to clear their frontages, which if observed would provide a defence in the event of litigation. These could be made available by local authorities to their householders. The Department for Transport (DfT), have developed and are publishing a simple code of good practice – a ‘Snow Code’ – for members of the public and for business owners, for distribution by local authorities.

#### SALT

The salt supply chain as currently configured is fundamentally vulnerable and lacks resilience. There are supply chains in other sectors of the economy – such as fertilisers and agrochemicals, as well as seasonal foods – which exhibit similar characteristics of unpredictable seasonal demand coupled with highly

constrained, year-round production. What is different about salt is that:

- a) a significant shortage has profound public policy implications; and
- b) the market has failed to organise the provision of adequate buffer stocks (the absence of which would be unusual in other sectors).

The country needs a more resilient solution with throughput/capacity increases at the suppliers, prospective reductions in salt utilisation, new higher targets for pre-season stockholding at highway authorities, and focusing on getting pre-season stocks in place there and at the mines (using imports if necessary).

#### RAILWAYS

Many rail companies have introduced ‘snow timetables’ to thin services in severe weather. Train operating companies are required to prepare contingency timetables but a surprisingly wide range of decisions over the actual use of these timetables in severe weather and the level of service curtailment involved, are haphazard and not always related to the conditions.

Companies that thin out their services in a planned way, rather than ‘soldiering on’, with a steadily deteriorating operation of the standard timetable, tend to provide a more resilient service, whilst still being capable of matching the reduced passenger levels. There appears to be an ‘accountability gap’ surrounding the implementation of contingency timetables. Train companies cannot introduce a reduced timetable without agreeing the reduced timetable with Network Rail. In practice, when severe winter conditions arise, it is Network Rail who formally make the judgement about the availability of the network, and advise operators what reduced services can be run.

There is a need for clarity between public areas owned by the local highway authority and those owned by the rail industry. Often the boundary is unclear, even to the organisations involved – for example, a station forecourt, an access footway, or a cycle parking area. In their preparations for severe weather the railway companies and local authorities should take steps to clarify between themselves the respective responsibilities for such areas, and to arrive at practical arrangements to ensure that the treatments of such areas are carried out in a sensible and coordinated way.

Communication with customers is absolutely critical in times of disruption. Train operators have developed communication channels for keeping customers in touch with service changes and service performance – including email, texting and growing use of social media, as well as the internet. Not only are these very helpful for travellers, but they also provide some counter to the necessarily simplistic media messages about winter conditions and ‘don’t travel unless you have to’ advice.

#### AVIATION

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the economic and safety regulator with responsibility for consumer protection and airspace policy. Airport operators are required to have a ‘Snow Plan’ which formalises the

*“whose responsibility is the station forecourt?”*

procedures and resources necessary to clear an airport of snow and ice. Airlines are responsible for clearing their own aircraft of snow and ice, and this is carried out either directly by the airline's staff or their handling agent at the airport.

The real test of the airline's capability is the speed of recovery to normal operations. One crucial decision is how early to cancel and/or re-schedule flights as opposed to 'soldiering on' with a near-normal schedule whose performance gradually deteriorates – a similar type of decision to that faced by the train operators. There does seem to be some generic evidence that earlier, more decisive cancellations and rescheduling helps to accelerate recovery to normality after the disruption, and this is more helpful for passengers because of the certainty against which they can make their plans.

Airline performance information is important and valuable to travellers, the market and the public at large. Given the challenges of obtaining this from what is a highly competitive, commercial market, the best approach would be to build on the monthly reports that the CAA make of operations at airports, and develop a clearer summary and interpretation for the benefit of consumers and the public at large. Generally airlines make full use of electronic media – email, texts, and increasingly social networks – for direct communication with passengers about their flights, supported by comprehensive and constantly updated website information. Some airlines take more care than others to ensure such messages are received, for example by passengers at their destination waiting to return home who may not have easy access to the internet or their email.

*“There is an opportunity to engage more systematically with local communities about gritting and snow clearance”*

## THE ECONOMICS OF WINTER RESILIENCE

The social and economic effects of limited or no transport accessibility for some or all of a severe winter period cover a wide range – from the direct economic costs of lost output if people cannot get to work, to the personal time lost from travel delays and lost journeys, additional road vehicle collisions, the personal and health service costs of slips, trips and falls causing personal injury, and so on. Some elements have a 'hard' economic value to the economy – for example lost output, increased vehicle collisions, increased costs to the National Health Service – and others economists call a 'welfare' cost, that is effects which are deleterious or inconvenient for individuals and can be valued on an estimated 'willingness to pay to avoid' basis, but have no direct impact on the economy.

Further analysis is needed to develop a generic case for greater investment in winter resilience but on the basis of the figures available for the review a nominal increase of 50% in roads authorities' expenditure should deliver good value for money if spent on treating a significantly higher proportion of local road networks, extensive treatment of footways, pedestrian areas and cycleways, and deployment of more snow ploughs to clear snow more quickly from roads (for example more farm contracts in rural areas).

However, carefully targeted additional activity will generate significant benefits. For example, more extensive clearance capability in areas of significant travel demand which are particularly subject to snow and adverse conditions could be good value for money, as could more treatment of key footway routes where pedestrian flows are high – even given the low probability of severe winters.

## OVERALL FINDINGS

The benefits of embedding winter planning in a wider resilience within wider Council planning processes, with the process and disciplines this brings, are increasingly recognised. There is an opportunity to engage more systematically with local communities about gritting and snow clearance, particularly for footways and cycleways about which public expectations are rising. A 'Snow Code' to give the public and shopkeepers more confidence about clearing their own frontages and guard them against negligence claims will also help.

Both the rail and aviation sectors now demonstrate a high degree of competence and professionalism in managing the impacts of severe winter weather, and the different players in the industry work well and effectively together, learning from past experience. Both sectors attach considerable importance to communicating with their travellers.

Residents and public transport customers have growing expectations about the quality and timeliness of real-time information about transport networks and services during severe winter disruption, and the means of receiving it. Given the rapid proliferation of communication technologies and channels available, local authorities and transport operators should ask themselves whether there is room for further development in the real-time services they currently provide.

Decisive implementation of emergency schedules rather than soldiering on with steadily deteriorating reliability not only ensures better post-event recovery but gives certainty to passengers for them to make their own plans.

A constant theme was the need for 'joining up' the treatment plans of different modes of transport, to ensure that travellers can benefit through their whole journey and not just on parts of it. Authorities and providers of all modes need to ensure that pedestrian routes to public transport and access roads to interchanges, depots and airports are part of the 'treated' networks, and that there is clear accountability for who salts which parts of the bus station or pedestrian route to the rail station.



## Scottish Transport in the News

*Some of the stories as reported in the media summarised by Tom Hart*

### TRANSPORT & WEATHER

The biggest news item in December was the worst weather-related transport problems in more than twenty years. Local authorities report that up to £100m is needed to remedy road damage in the severe weather in December. The Scottish Government is considering additional aid of £15m and also reports encouraging results from trials of a new de-icing spray which is effective up to -20C.

Severe weather also led some companies to suspend on-line deliveries to Scotland. Facing heavy criticism of his comment on a 'first-class' response. Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson was compelled to resign after a lengthy 48 hour closure of most of the M8 between Edinburgh and Glasgow plus severe delays and stranded travellers on the M80 and on the A9 north of Dunblane. His successor Keith Brown announced emergency measures to improve the situation, staying overnight at one of the control centres.

Edinburgh airport faced closures and on the trains action has included heated kilts to prevent heavy accumulation of snow, attention to points clearance and measures to ensure more rapid closure of roads so that gritting and snow clearance can proceed without the obstacles of long queues of stationary traffic and many jack-knifed lorries. Provision of reliable and quicker information has also been seen as an important issue.

### BUDGETS & TRANSPORT

The UK Comprehensive Spending Review put pressure on revenue account transport spending though capital spending on transport infrastructure is scheduled to fall by only 11%.

Rail schemes, apart from delay with some electrification projects, remained largely intact but to assist with rail investment, regulated rail fares will rise by more than the previous 1% above inflation in the 3 years from 2012.

Rises in road fuel taxation plus VAT are to continue with a January 2011 rise following on from the earlier autumn 2010 rise.

The local government settlement gives a cut of 2.6% in local authority revenue spend.

On the capital side, direct funding for trunk road and rail improvements, will be taken up by the Forth Crossing, though with the promise of over £2bn becoming available in coming years for schemes such as Borders Rail, M8 completion and the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route through the Scottish Futures Trust.

Proposals have been made for the introduction of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for suitable projects – including the funding required to complete the Edinburgh tram route through to Leith waterfront.

### AVIATION

BMI is to axe flights from Glasgow to Heathrow, leaving BA as the only operator on this route.

Airlines have attacked the unfairness and economic damage of the steeper taxes on longer-haul flights imposed from November.

Amanda McMillan, Glasgow Airport MD, claims that a surge in long-haul and charter flights is helping recovery from a period of serious traffic loss. Passengers to Florida are up 37% and new charter flights by Jet2 will start in 2011.

Due to disputes with Frankfurt Hahn airport and new tourist taxes in Germany, Ryanair is reducing flights from Edinburgh to Hahn.

A £1 'kiss and fly' charge is now in force at Edinburgh but there is still a free drop-off area at long-stay parking with a 10 minute shuttle bus to the airport.

Western Isles Council is considering ending the £211,000 annual subsidy for flights from Barra to Benbecula connecting with services to Inverness and Stornoway

### FERRIES & SHIPPING

Kintyre Express, a subsidiary of West Coast Motors, has announced plans for 12 seat fast passenger ferries linking Campbeltown

with Ballycastle and with Troon from May on different days of the week in 90 minutes and 75 minutes respectively. It is hoped that this could provide the base for a restored vehicle ferry.

The UK government plans to cut the present 5 coastguard bases in Scotland to one 24 hour base at Aberdeen and a daylight hours base at either Stornoway or Shetland.

The Great Glen Shipping Company is involved in a pilot project to move timber via canal from Lochaber to Inverness, replacing lorry movement on the A82.

To safeguard their long-term future as through cruising routes, the Scottish Government is proposing to designate all of the present Scottish Central Belt canals as cruising waterways under the Transport Act, 1968.

Environment Minister Roseanna Cunningham in pursuing plans for summer waterbus services on Loch Lomond inter-linking Balloch with various stops as far north as Inversnaid.

### RAIL

Network Rail Scotland has published a draft Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS2) outlining plans to ease capacity constraints. Anglo-Scottish High Speed Rail plans are expected to require substantial additional terminal capacity in both Glasgow and Edinburgh by 2030.

UK Transport Secretary Philip Hammond has confirmed a modified London-Birmingham/Lichfield route HSR alignment for completion by 2025. Scottish interests continue to seek an earlier start to work in Scotland and an extension of the route from Manchester to Preston for access to both Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The interim McNulty Report to the UK Government on rail value for money has noted the need for action on the high level of subsidy (31.1p per passenger mile) on regional rail services but is studying issues of Network Rail track cost and overheads allocation as well as changes in operating practices.



Rail electrification from Edinburgh through to Airdrie, and the associated reopening of the Airdrie-Bathgate line, was introduced on 12 December.

With the new rolling stock for the Ayrshire and Inverclyde lines fully available early in 2011, the planned Bathgate line service of 4 trains per hour is expected from spring 2011. There is an urgent need for new rolling stock orders to cope with rising rail usage in Scotland.

Though Network Rail and Transport Scotland see little immediate scope for extra stations, local campaigns continue to push the case for halts at Greenhill/Bonnybridge, Robroyston, Bannockburn, Kintore, Conon Bridge and other locations. In the medium term, reopening of the Leven branch has also been proposed as well as the extension of services from Alloa through to Longannet, Dunfermline and Edinburgh – allowing a new service from Edinburgh to Alloa or Stirling.

Within 2 years of opening, Alloa has entered (at 99) the list of top 100 Scottish rail stations. It had 336 thousand passengers in 2008-09, overtaking Dumfries at 335 thousand. Larkhall, opened in 2005, just missed the top 100 with 334 thousand passengers.

Though otherwise performing well, ScotRail remains under attack from Passenger Focus for poor information systems, including responses to emergencies.

In November, Glasgow celebrated 50 years of the 'Blue Trains', the new electric services introduced in 1960.

Mull's 'little railway' from Craignure to Torosay, opened in 1981, has closed since the new owner of the estate did not wish to have a terminus in the castle grounds. Without an obvious destination, the operator claimed that the line would lose passengers, become liable for VAT and cease to be viable.

## BUS, TRAM & TAXI

The tram saga in Edinburgh continues with little construction in progress and major delays in completing the Gogar depot. No settlement has been reached with contractor Bilfinger Berger, and plans for a merger of the tram and bus companies have been put on hold.

'Staycationers' have helped Scottish Citylink (part owned by Stagecoach) increase yearly profits by almost 26% to £4.4m. Revenue rose to £28.2m with Anglo-Scottish Megabus doing especially well.

First is to replace existing Scotland-London Nightflyer services with Greyhound branding and fares starting at £1 plus 50p booking fee. Average fares are likely to be around £18.

NHS Forth Valley is providing a 15minute shuttle link from Larbert to the new Stirling/Falkirk Hospital. Travel is free for rail ticket holders.

Lothian Buses have upgraded night services. On New Year's Day, special services ran until 4am.

Pothole repairs on Edinburgh's roads have been re-prioritised to favour bus routes. A seventh bus park and ride site has been identified on Gilmerton Road near the City Bypass. Other sites may follow at Lothianburn and South Queensferry.

SPT is to give a greater role to community groups if they can operate lifeline services more effectively than present subsidies paid to private firms operating 'social' routes.

Civil servants and visitors to Victoria Quay have been asked to make more use of the frequent 22 bus service rather than build up taxi expenses.

The free bus travel concession across Scotland is seen by some as both unfair and financially unsustainable. In a TV interview, First Minister Alex Salmond agreed that the present system could not be guaranteed but it remained desirable. Age Scotland has called for the scheme to be restricted to those of stage pension age, the eligibility for commuting travel removed and some of the savings used to extend concessions to all types of DRT and community transport.

Six bus companies in Scotland are to benefit from £4.4m grants to introduce 50 low carbon buses. Under a statutory agreement applying from May, new regulations will force almost 1500 buses in Glasgow to meet higher air quality standards within three years.

Justice Secretary Kenny MacAskill is planning a register of reputable taxi and private hire companies in a bid to prevent criminal activity.

Glasgow City Council fears Scottish Government funding for a Bus Fastlink may be limited, leading to an initial phase running only from the city centre to the Southern General Hospital with a short spur to the new Transport Museum. Extensions into the East End and to Braehead may come after the 2014 Commonwealth Games

## ROADS & PARKING

The Scotland Bill proposes to transfer car speed limit powers to the Scottish Government but speed limits for other road traffic will remain a UK reserved power. Qualified borrowing powers will become available for trunk road schemes.



The FTA has attacked EU proposals to reduce the maximum height of road vehicles to 4 metres. Research by Prof. Alan McKinnon has shown that a lowering of the present British maximum would increase CO2 emissions and total lorry miles.

Car running costs have risen by more than twice the rate of inflation though with some signs of moderation in parking charges.

Evidence from the Office for National Statistics shows that action to reduce speeds has saved some 20 lives a year on Scottish roads.

Reported Road Casualties show a fall in road deaths from 348 in 2001 to 216 in 2009. Serious injuries were also well down but there is concern about the behaviour of young drivers and the impact of drink and drugs. Measured by deaths per head of population, Scotland has the third safest roads in the world, after England and Sweden.

Parliament has approved the Forth Road Crossing Bill with only the two Green MSPs and LibDem Margaret Smith voting against. Funding has still to be agreed but it is planned to have contracts approved by April 2011 with work starting both on the bridge and approach roads in 2011 with completion in 2016-17.

Due to increased accidents, a £2.8m overtaking lane on the A9 at Moy has been closed until remedial measures are put in place. This has also been used as an argument for accelerated dualling of the entire A9 from Perth to Inverness.

Perth and Kinross Council is consulting on a new £100m Tay road crossing to the north of Perth connecting with the A94 north of Scone.

A rural car club has been established on Bute with eight others planned with government funding to help cut rural reliance on cars. Other locations include the Inner Hebrides, Findhorn, Badenoch, Fintry, Dunbar, Cupar and Aberdeen City.

The M80 extension from Hornhill to Mollinsburn is scheduled to open in February with the remainder of the A80 to Haggs converted to motorway later this year.

## WALKING & CYCLING

Cyclists in Glasgow have complained of parking bays encroaching on cycle lanes. Prestige streetscape improvements in the Merchant City have been criticised as lavish when pavements elsewhere in Glasgow were in terrible condition.

Sustrans is planning a £2.6m foot and cycle bridge across the Tay at the North Inch in Perth.

Edinburgh is planning a new cycle route from George IV Bridge to Edinburgh University's King's Buildings plus a larger 20mph zone.

Following pressure from Duddingston village, Edinburgh is considering a ban on motorised traffic in Holyrood Park.

Bishopbriggs in East Dunbartonshire has been able to raise the use of cycles to nearly 8% in primary schools and 4% in secondaries. Volunteers and parents have become heavily involved.

SNP MSP Jamie Hepburn is planning a bill to make streets safer for children to play in.

Glasgow City Council has announced plans for two additional 'bus gates' adjacent to George Square with the east side of the square closed to traffic and an overall reduction in car traffic through the square, improving conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and buses.

## PLANNING & PROPERTY

The first residents have moved into an 850 housing zone at Ravenscraig forming part of an eventual 3000 houses. Work has also started on a regional sports facility and a new £70m campus for Motherwell College.

The Main Issues Report on the new Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Plan has been

published as a consultation paper. It envisages little change in the area's population over the next 20 to 25 years but some rise in the number of households. No new major roads are proposed.

Network Rail is to redevelop Queen St station as part of plans for integrated expansion of shopping at Buchanan Galleries and multi-storey car parking adjacent to the station. Access to the station will be improved with leasing arrangements finalised by June 2011.

Leading architect Richard Murphy has called for a more imaginative approach to plans for expanding Haymarket station to cope with 9m passengers by 2030 - compared to the 4m a year users at present.

A waterfront site in Dundee close to the rail station and Discovery centre and been selected for a £47m museum and gallery development.

## BUSINESS & PERSONNEL

Douglas Sinclair, Chair of Consumer Focus Scotland, has called for consumers to have a greater voice on all public transport issues in Scotland.

Fitch, the credit profiling company, expects bus companies to weather any adverse impacts from the UK Spending Review by bottom-line fare and service management with revenue aided by the rise in car running costs. The Spending Review had also safeguarded most proposed rail capital spending.

Stagecoach has announced consistently solid revenue rises over the past six months. Stagecoach UK bus revenues were up 2.3% in the half-year to mid-October with UK rail up 6.5% and revenue in the Virgin Rail partnership up 15.2% (including gains from air travel disruption by volcanic dust)

David MacKay has resigned abruptly as Chair of tie and Lothian Buses. Ron Hewitt of Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce has become interim Chair of Lothian Buses with Brian Cox (formerly of Stagecoach) taking the Chair's position at tie.

James King has been reappointed Scottish representative on the Passenger Focus board.

## Social Impact Bonds to Fund Public Services

Rapidly rising demand for services and unprecedented pressures on public finances means that we will have to find new ways of delivering public services. At a seminar attended by over 100 people from the public, private and voluntary sectors, representatives from both the Tomorrow Project and Social Finance set out the background to social impact bonds.

Rapidly rising demand for services and unprecedented pressures on public finances means that we will have to find new ways of delivering public services. SIBs transfer the risk of failure of early intervention away from the public sector and allow investment in intervention without impacting on acute services budgets until outcomes are achieved.

Currently, finding adequate funding outwith the public sector for early intervention services is problematic. There is often a working capital gap and a lack of accessible funding for the voluntary sector organisations to cover the gap. In addition to this is the problem of attribution.

Outcomes are rarely achieved through the efforts of one service. It is sometimes difficult to build a contract based on outcomes with individual organisations. SIBs solve this problem by bringing in separate investors to fund voluntary sector service providers upfront and allow service providers to be commissioned as a group.

SIB investments also have the potential to provide a more rational, long term income stream for the voluntary sector because:

- The focus is linked to social outcomes rather than outputs
- Organisations compete on the basis of value delivered rather than cost of service provision
- The income stream is longer term providing the organisation with more certainty and stability
- There is a greater incentive to innovate as programmes that can deliver better outcomes have a long term funding stream

Social issues with the following attributes are most likely to be potential applications for SIBs:

- Clearly defined target group and outcome metrics – stakeholders need to trust that there is an objective mechanism for assessing and agreeing on the extent to which outcomes are achieved
- Controls to mitigate external factors – outcomes must be attributable to the success of the agreed interventions and not be dependent on external factors
- Reward schedule that avoids perverse incentives – the schedule should encourage service providers to work with everyone in the target population and not just the potential 'quick wins'
- Value rather than cost-based reward payments – this encourages the development of more cost-effective outcome delivery models
- Engagement with a public sector commissioner that is comfortable paying out a share of cost savings if pre-agreed social outcomes are achieved

Perhaps underfunded cross-sectoral transport programmes such as promotion of walking could benefit from a measurable, fundable, investible programme.



## Traveline for iPhone

A new location-aware travel information service is available from Traveline with live and scheduled bus times, road traffic updates from Traffic Scotland, ferry departures and Glasgow Subway information.

i-phone users can identify bus stops, stations and ferry terminals, view them on an interactive map, or alternatively search by street, town and postcode.

The application is free to download from the travel section of iTunes - search for Traveline Scotland or go directly to <http://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/traveline-scotland/id401685994?mt=8>



## Transport, environment and public policy in hard times

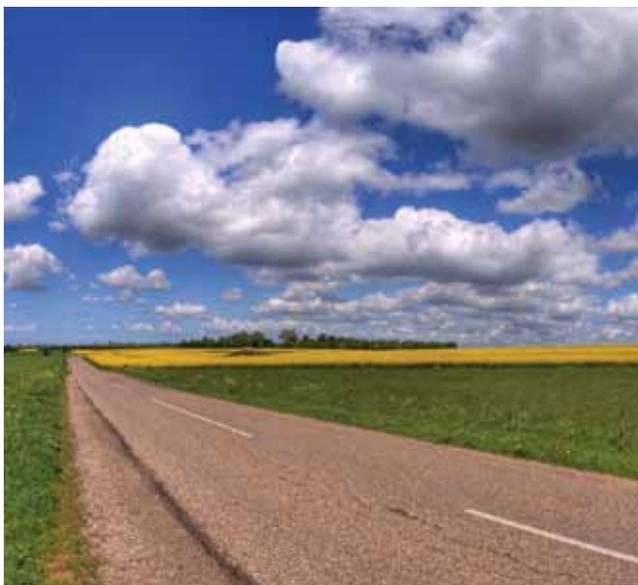
*Eric Britton, World Streets*

### A MENTAL ARCHITECTURE PROBLEM

*"When it is dark you can see the stars"*

Perhaps the main reason we are doing so poorly in transport is that we are making three fundamental errors in what we are looking at, the manner in which we are looking at it, and what we are doing with it:

- (a) "Too important to be left to the generals" - Clemenceau's classic comment on war finds its echo in transport. The process is more often than not dominated by competent technical experts doing their assigned specialized jobs, but not nearly enough common sense broad based questioning and thinking. We need to have excellent technical planning, engineering, operations and financial skills, but there is more to it than that. Transportation after all is not about concrete and steel; it is about people. If we don't have anthropologists, community workers, police, doctors, sociologists, and behavioural psychologists on our team we are going to have a pretty mediocre project at best.
- (b) End-state thinking – The dominant mind set in the sector works something like this. We have a problem, which requires a solution so we will build or invest to achieve the solution. This approach is often called the Edifice Complex, i.e. wherever you spot a problem you build something. However, in a complex dynamic system like transport nothing stands still for long enough to solve it. You simply cannot solve an organic problem with a mechanical solution. We see this in spades when that a brand new ring road fills up with traffic, causing us to scramble around to find more money to build yet another ring road. We need to see things less in terms of end-state solutions, than as ongoing ever-evolving processes to be understood, analysed, foreseen, and laden with 21st century logistics and feedback mechanisms so that we can understand, modify and fine tune as we go along. This is of course a very complex and demanding task but the bad news is that we have no choice.
- (c) Social and gender balance - For our 21st century fundamental system change, it should be designed to accommodate specifically women, of



all ages and conditions. Do that and we serve everybody far better, women and men, old and young, handicapped and unfettered, poor and less poor. And for that to happen we need to have a major leadership shift toward women.

### THE RIGHT TO TRAVEL

This is a profound moral issue. Rights come with obligations, but the bottom line is that no matter how a government is constrained, they still need to find a way to permit their citizens to get around and have a full and active life. This should not be interpreted that I have the right to take my car anywhere I want to in any place and at any time of day. But citizens should be able to get to school, to work, to the hospital, to buy food and basics, and access to a certain amount of safe social space.

The other half of the "right to travel" conundrum is to know who has what rights. And this turns out to be a bit different from the traditional views of transport and its priorities. Many people are not owner/drivers of cars and have a range of complex travel needs. Policy makers and the general public often forget the rights of:

1. Everyone who does not have a car.
2. 100% of our children and an increasing proportion of our elderly parents.
3. Everyone who does not have a license and cannot drive.
4. Everyone who cannot afford to own and operate a car of their own (And remember that car ownership costs a major slice of after-tax income)
5. Everyone who should not drive (for reasons of a variety of impairments such as limitations associated with age, psychological state, )
6. Everyone who lives in a large city and for reasons of density, public health and quality of city life needs to have fair access to a non-car mobility system
7. All those who would in fact prefer to get around by walking, cycling or some form of shared transport who cannot safely or readily do so, because all the money is being spent on the car-based system
8. Everyone who suffers from some form of impairment that makes driving or even access to traditional public transit difficult or impossible.
9. Everyone who cannot responsibly take the wheel at any given time (fatigue, distraction, texting, cigarettes, gadgets, nervousness, some form of intoxication. . . )
10. All those who are today isolated and unable to participate in the life of our communities fully because they simply do not have a decent way to get around.

## GETTING MORE FOR LESS

*"If you are broke AND stupid you are really out of luck" - Mark Twain*

No matter how we may feel about cutting back public spending, in terms of any projects or programs that may be dear to our hearts, most professionals realise that there are excellent reasons for taking on this challenge now.

The call to "do more for less" is often linked with negative language such as: austerity, crisis, need sacrifices. However the fine art of frugality is quite different: practicing economy; living without waste, thrifty, not costly; meagre. If 'getting more for less' means that we put waste behind us, we can all stand up and cheer.

A frugal transport policy is probably the only way to really get more for less starting with putting the most important things first. This means understanding the full range of people and activities that transport needs to serve. From an international perspective, there are ten things to consider:

- **Climate Destabilization:** The world is failing utterly in terms of combating climate destabilization. By all honest performance indicators (global emissions, fossil fuel consumption, etc.) we are going backward in almost all cases.
- **Locked in:** What is worse is that the evidence shows clearly that we are locked into concepts and processes that most visibly do not, and will not ever, get the job done. While we sit around and talk, confer, argue, negotiate, or for various reasons wait/hope for solutions to appear on their things are degrading severely every single day.
- **Transport is roughly 20% of the problem:** Enough for us to give it all our attention. Moreover, transport is of all the areas of human daily activity and choices, the easiest to get control of – despite what the transport 'experts' say.
- **Rationale:** If the climate argument is not a viable lever for change then think of it not as the final destination but as a starting point. Whatever we do to cut back GHG emissions is going to serve as a proxy for everything else we should be trying to achieve in the transport sector. Corresponding fossil fuel reductions, economic savings, local environmental improvements, thinning out traffic, safer streets, public health improvements, stronger communities, etc.
- **Sharing:** The only way to get these GHG reductions without sacrificing the economy or quality of life, is to find ways to get more people and goods efficiently into fewer vehicles. (Let's call it "sharing", without for now getting into the important detail of the mechanisms needed to make this work. that being the next step in this series and process.)
- **A dynamic agenda:** More and better sharing in transport opens up opportunities for more and better mobility services for all, new sources of energy and entrepreneurship in society, and requires the

*"a strong consistent strategy,  
a deeply democratic platform,  
proven concepts, and an  
understanding that transportation  
starts and ends with people"*



integration of a very wide range of planning, economic measures, on-road innovations, new service development, and state-of-the-art logistics and ICT technology capabilities to make it work.

- **Leadership:** Those responsible for planning, developing, maintaining and financing the sector need clear guidelines as to where the priorities lie. This shifts emphasis from expensive transport infrastructure, to using the technological and other tools now available to us to manage all aspects of the sector far better.
- **New mobility priorities:** Since everybody walks or otherwise uses those precious public spaces for their mobility needs, it makes sense to give priority to anything that makes walking safer and more agreeable for all. We are seeing a return to cycling, after a long fast period, public money can get terrific leverage if spent strategically to encourage and support safe cycling. Traditional public transport has even higher priority now in this new mobility configuration, with the emphasis on priority and greater flexibility of service to match. First class BRT is one excellent example of the kind of approach that is appropriate in this new age. Our future "green cars" need above all to be made smarter, so that more people can use them in more and different ways and so that they can plug into the city in ways that are economically, spatially, temporally and environmentally efficient. Full cost pricing for cars both as they move and when parked will be a key component of this 'hard times' strategy.

This is a new agenda, which will at first have few powerful and rich friends who are vested in old mobility. But we can work with a strong consistent strategy, a deeply democratic platform, proven concepts to work with from the leading edge worldwide, and an understanding that the transportation starts and ends with people.

## The Story of the Airdrie to Bathgate Railway

*John Yellowlees reviews Ann Glen's new book*

Transport Scotland's £300M reinstatement of passenger services on the 15 miles between Airdrie and Bathgate represents the longest addition to the British domestic mainline network with stations since the Great Western Railway opened its Bicester Cutoff in 1910, and is the third revival of a disused railway since the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 - the others being the Larkhall/Milngavie project in 2005 and the Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway in 2008.

Completed in 1871 but only double-tracked in 1904, the Airdrie-Edinburgh railway was an early victim of bus competition along the A8, and closed to regular passenger services in January 1956 - shortly before Livingston's designation as a New Town to house Glasgow overspill and electrification of the route westward from Airdrie through Glasgow Queen Street Low Level to Milngavie, Balloch and Helensburgh in 1960.

Introduction of the British Leyland truck plant at Bathgate to replace jobs lost with the demise of the oil shale industry did not deliver a sustainable economic future for West Lothian, and with the decline also of coal-mining the Airdrie-Bathgate stretch closed to all traffic in 1982 and was leased to Sustrans for use as a long-distance cycle-route with provision that it might revert to the rail network should such a demand materialise - which at that time was assumed more likely to be for freight.

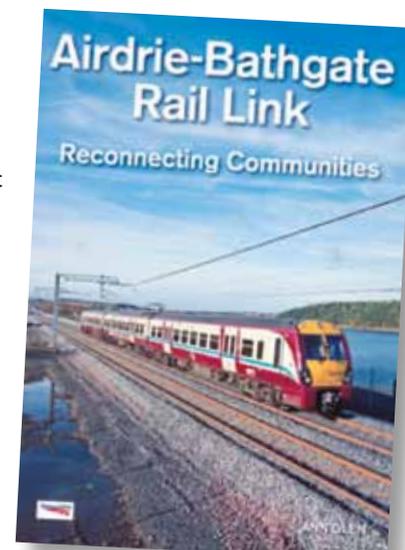
Rail's revival in West Lothian was already beginning with a new station at Livingston South on the parallel Edinburgh-Glasgow Central via Shotts line when the truck-plant closed in 1984, and a working party recommended that to ease the impact of the consequent job-losses in the local economy a passenger service should be reinstated between Edinburgh and Bathgate, which was quickly achieved on 24 March 1986 by singling seven miles to accommodate one-platform stations at Uphall and Livingston North - the first significant reopening of an interurban line anywhere in Britain since the Beeching era. Demand soon far outstripped forecasts as it was realised that in addition to linking West Lothian into the Edinburgh employment area the new service would be attractive also to people having to commute out from the city when financial services jobs relocated to business parks in Livingston, and within a couple of years the initial hourly daytime-only service on weekdays had expanded to provide trains in the late evenings and on

Sundays. Then in 1998 it went half-hourly, and five years later a new station at Edinburgh Park opened up new destinations on the city's west side.

Meanwhile the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive had funded reopening and electrification of a one-mile single line from Airdrie to Drumgelloch in 1989, but as usage grew the limitations of single-line operation began to manifest themselves. In particular late-running trains from Edinburgh to Bathgate became subject to frequent turnrounds at Livingston North to make up lost time, with a permanent poster even put on display to advise Bathgate-bound travellers on which bus their rail ticket would be valid.

An M8 Corridor Study identified the line's potential as a through route to attract traffic for which, being between intermediate places, the fast train service between Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh via Falkirk offered no alternative. An Act passed in the 2003-7 Parliament became one of the final pieces of traditional private legislation before introduction of the new Transport & Works Act orders, providing for reprovision of the cycleway alongside, and in 2008 Network Rail tackled conversion of the Edinburgh-Bathgate railway into a double-track line with two-platform intermediate stations and a double-lead junction at Newbridge. During 2009 attention turned to the disused stretch, with reprovision of facilities for the Airdrie & District Angling Club at Hillend Loch along whose shore the track now runs, and in May 2010 the single-track Drumgelloch stub closed for redoubling and relocation of Drumgelloch Station eastwards to where it could become a two-platform affair with carparking.

Electrification of the Edinburgh-Bathgate route became only the second such investment (the other is a West Coast diversionary route from Crew to Kidsgrove) to be committed since rail privatisation. With the new through route to be worked by ten-year-old Class 334 electric trains to be released by introduction of new higher-capacity Class 380s in Ayrshire and Inverclyde, additional depot facilities were created at Bathgate where the station relocated onto the through line and opened on 18 October 2010 with the first new booking office on ScotRail since the opening of the Argyle Line in 1979. Thus was Bathgate transformed as a railway centre from a town which once had a depot for steam locomotives through an era with no railway employment to its new status with drivers, ticket examiners, railcare and station staff accounting for 74 of the 130 jobs that the new route has created. Meanwhile another railway facility Balfour Beatty's Edgar Allan's switches and crossings plant at Bathgate found its road access impeded by restoration of a railway overbridge for the new line, but was able to relocate elsewhere in West Lothian releasing its site for redevelopment as a superstore.



New stations envisaged for the disused stretch at Armadale (where there is to be a mixed development called Armadale Station) and at Caldercruix were joined by a third location at Blackridge in response to prospects for housing development. Achievement of the line's opening on cost and on time with the start of the winter timetable on 12 December 2010 was made all the more noteworthy since it occurred during the second coldest month on record, whose frozen ground -conditions meant that Blackridge would be initially the only intermediate call between Airdrie and Bathgate – and delayed acceptance into service of the new Class 380 trains due to software and other issues resulted in the introductory timetable of through coast-to-coast Edinburgh-Helensburgh trains being only hourly during the day but half-hourly on Saturdays and Sunday afternoons, with additional trains providing a frequency of two or three trains an hour in the peak, four on Saturdays between Bathgate and Edinburgh.

With milder temperatures through January and hoped-for progress on Class 380 acceptance, it is anticipated that Armadale, Caldercruix and Drumgelloch Stations will come on stream during February and the train frequency can move towards the full timetable by the summer. Then in addition to a half-hourly Helensburgh-Edinburgh train running all stations east of Glasgow, a Mondays-Saturdays direct daytime Milngavie-Edinburgh service every half-hour will run limited-stop between Glasgow and Bathgate - so the journey time from Queen Street Low Level to Waverley becomes typically 64 minutes on a limited-stop (9 stops), 75 minutes on a stopping (19 stops) service. Weekday departures from Queen Street Low Level for Edinburgh will start at 0558, becoming 24 and 54 fast and 28 and 58 minutes past the hour until 1828 thence half-hourly stopping until last train at 2230 for Edinburgh, 2300 and 2330 for Bathgate. Westbound the service out of Edinburgh will start at 0608, continuing every quarter-hour alternately fast to Milngavie and stopping to Helensburgh until going down after 1837 to half-hourly until last trains at 2219 to Helensburgh, 2251 to Garscadden and 2307 to Airdrie.



Offering a fourth route between Glasgow and Edinburgh that will link a swathe of intermediate communities and provide a direct service between the capital and places on North Clydeside and in Dunbartonshire, the Airdrie-Bathgate route is a key element in Transport Scotland's Edinburgh Glasgow improvement Programme under which the number of trains between the two cities is set to reach 13 an hour by 2016. Then the main line via Falkirk will also be electrified, with grade-separated junctions and a new curve allowing running via an interchange at Gogar for the Edinburgh Trams line to Edinburgh Airport. The fastest journey-time between Waverley and Queen Street will become 37 minutes, and a full range of opportunities will be in place ranging from fast centre-to-centre travel to links from suburban locations to both communities, completing the enlargement of the central Scotland travel to work area and thus helping build stable communities where a change for one wage-earner's place of work need not require relocation of the entire household.

For further reading please see Dr Ann Glen's excellent new book "Airdrie Bathgate Rail Link Reconnecting Communities" available for £18.75 from Lily Publications tel : 01624-898446.



## Lessons from the Debate about Freight Facilities Grants

*David Spaven, Deltix Transport Consulting*

When the Scottish Government announced its draft budget for 2011-12 on 17<sup>th</sup> November, there was little or no media coverage of the planned demise of one small but successful capital grant scheme. Freight Facilities Grants were established by a Conservative government at Westminster in 1974, and have enjoyed cross-party support in London and Edinburgh ever since – until now.

The Draft Budget statement indicated that the Support for the Freight Industry budget will reduce from £10.3m in 2010-11 to £2.9m in 2011-12. That small remaining budget will fund the two revenue grants which are essential to keep key flows of existing freight on rail and water (Mode Shift Revenue Support and Waterborne Freight Grant). However, the proposal was that FFG – which can fund up to 75% of the capital cost of facilities required to secure mode switch to rail or water – “will be closed with immediate effect to applications for projects which will incur expenditure after 31 March 2011”.

This proposal caused considerable concern. The vast majority of the switch from road to rail in the (non-coal) market in Scotland in recent decades has been achieved with FFG assistance, which has also secured a significant shift from road to sea for west coast timber movements. Since 1997 alone 37 awards, totalling £68.9 million, have been made to projects in Scotland – taking over 33m lorry miles off Scottish roads annually

Scrapping FFG appeared to be divorced from policy objectives for climate change, sustainable economic development, environmental protection and road safety. Rail freight is substantially more energy-efficient than road haulage, and switching freight from road to rail typically achieves a higher unit return in terms of carbon reduction than switching passenger traffic from road to rail. A related point is that rail freight (both through its greater energy efficiency and its ability to use electrified railways) offers considerably greater resilience than road haulage in the face of ‘Peak Oil’, the anticipated peaking of global oil production and its inexorable decline thereafter. UK oil production peaked in 1999, and the country has been a net importer of oil since 2004. Fortunately the Scottish Government now has a strategic rail electrification programme.

It is not clear that the proposal to scrap FFG was the outcome of an evidence-based decision-making process and budget debate has led to a re-appraisal and a reversal of the proposal. Given the wide range of benefits secured, and the modest sums of money involved by the standards of the transport budget, FFG was a relatively attractive programme.

If FFG had been abandoned it would have seriously impacted on rail freight’s ability to capture more traffic from road and could have led to existing rail traffics reverting to road haulage. For example four road-to-rail schemes – in the Blackford, Girvan, Barrhill and Fort William areas – which have been developing over recent years and would not have happened. A debate about the costs and benefits revised the budget proposal.

In part due to the relatively lengthy process involved in preparing and submitting FFG applications to the Scottish Government, the FFG budget of around £7m annually has been underspent each year since 2001 (when the Rosyth ferry terminal was funded). The average annual spend since then has been around £2.5m, across rail and water schemes, and this has allowed some 17m lorry miles annually to be taken off Scottish roads.

In Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> December, Labour’s Transport spokesman Charlie Gordon commented to Cabinet Secretary John Swinney: “I will put to you what some members of the Freight Transport Association put to me about the budget at a recent meeting. There is no lack of aspiration or, indeed, applications to draw down money from the freight facilities grant, but members of the FTA find that, when they get into the detail, the grant criteria are drawn up in such a way that they sometimes find it difficult to qualify, even though they felt initially that they could. As far as the industry is concerned, there is no lack of aspiration to shift freight off the road but there may be bureaucracy that is drawn rather too tightly.”

There are strong arguments for improving and relaunching the FFG scheme, with a concerted promotional drive to Scottish manufacturers, processors and logistics companies, in order to achieve higher levels of modal shift to rail and water. In order to deliver this re-launch, the lobby of business and environmental interests involved in reversing the Government decision now need to help promote the scheme.

*“It is not clear that the proposal to scrap FFG was the outcome of an evidence-based decision-making process and budget debate has led to a re-appraisal”*