

## Transport News 13 July to 10 Oct 2016

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### Highlights

As well as other implications for the economy and well-being, the UK vote for Brexit (but with Scotland, N Ireland and London taking a different view) has raised concerns over negative impacts and an immediate depreciation of sterling. Uncertainty has led the Chancellor to reverse UK government intentions to reduce borrowing but pressures to reduce central and local government recurrent annual spending remain.

While infrastructure spend is often seen as beneficial for the economy, infrastructure is defined to include much more than transport – e.g. energy, water supply, drainage, tele-communications and buildings - with added emphasis on better use of existing networks and a switch in spending priorities towards education, skills development and health. Overall government investment in transport underwritten by taxation is now more likely to fall and be restructured unless new sources of income can be developed. There is particular concern in Scotland and N Ireland that ease of movement within the British Isles may be prejudiced unless safeguarded in the final form of decisions on Brexit.

Due to the delayed UK Statement by Chancellor Hammond, MSPs have asked for more time to consider the draft Scottish Government budget for 2017-18 and beyond. This is essential to allow fuller consideration of options for the level and structure of Scottish Government spending.

The Scottish Government has recognised concerns about the changing nature and value of movement by stating that the forthcoming review of the National Transport Strategy and the associated National Planning Framework will be much wider than originally envisaged. This will include decisions on changes in roads strategy, active travel and in those items found affordable and desirable within the finalised Network Rail Strategy for the five-year periods from 2020 to 2034 and into the early 2040s.

### AVIATION

Ryanair is planning an extra 3,500 jobs in 2017 but will 'pivot' jobs away from UK airports after Brexit vote (H5Oct). It is now expected that UK government will permit an additional Heathrow runway with Scottish Government, Reform Scotland and business interests agreeing that would be the most favourable decision for the Scottish economy – improving world connectivity. The Scottish Government also wishes to see more direct flights from Scotland (aided by phasing out of APD) and accelerated plans for high-speed rail services linking London and other English cities with Scotland. SAPT has doubted the scale of economic benefit for Scotland of Heathrow expansion and favours a retention of APD, apart from a small cut for long-haul services direct from Scotland, with APD proceeds used to aid public transport access to major airports and progress with Anglo-Scottish HSR. Environmental groups also oppose abolition of APD. Edinburgh Airport (linked with Gatwick) continues to support expansion at Gatwick. Herald editorial has called for stronger use of evidence-based policy. 'Political parties of all stripes have a disappointing record on evidence-based policy' (H19 Aug)

Edinburgh Airport is facing opposition to revised plans for amended flight paths aiding a rise in airport capacity and is also working on plans for improved passenger facilities within the airport following strong growth in usage. Edinburgh Airport expects to have direct flights from China within five years if APD is halved. RAC has complained at high parking charges at the airport at Edinburgh and Aberdeen Airports. At Edinburgh anger has been sparked by a new £5 charge to allow passengers to jump passport queues when arriving from outside Britain.

Emirates is planning to introduce 517 seat Airbus 380 planes on its route from Dubai to Glasgow, launched 12 years ago (S12Aug). Glasgow has received its first flight from South Korea. Ryanair has announced 5 extra routes from Edinburgh in 2017, including Porto and Vigo.

Prestwick Airport received a further £21m from the Scottish Government in the year to March 2016 but Audit Scotland has confirmed that this is likely to show a return higher than the current rate of interest charged to the government-owned airport. Plans including further investment in UK spaceport development but with Argyll and Bute Council also making a case for Machrihanish. North Ronaldsay, with 70 inhabitants, has a new air terminal costing £275,000 serving both islanders and a growing number of tourists. The beach airport on Barra has celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

## **FERRIES & SHIPPING**

Shortage of capacity over a busier summer season encouraged by RET and aggravated by technical issues on ships has led to widespread complaints about CalMac ferry links to Mull, Islay, Jura and Arran. Car passengers to Mull are up 40% since RET was introduced.

A technical failure preventing MV Hebrides slowing down on the approach to Lochmaddy has caused £100,000 of damage to harbour pontoons plus a need for ship repairs.

Consultants Peter Brett find that Foula, with just 38 inhabitants, is facing sustainability issues due to the cost of maintaining present restricted ferry and air services. Improved connectivity may be vital for the island's future (H4Oct).

The Scottish Government has announced that fares on ferries to the Northern Isles will again be frozen in 2017 but Liberal Democrats claim a failure to deliver on promises of lower fares. Adoption of RET would actually increase prices on the longer routes to the Northern Isles.

P&O has attracted over 50% of former passengers on its Troon-Larne service to its Cairnryan-Larne services, giving a large improvement in its combined routes to Larne which had been loss-making. Many people still liked the convenience of taking their car with them rather than opting for air travel. Facilities offered on Cairnryan-Larne crossings had also been improved.

In a highly controversial move, ABP has offered to invest over £8m in its port at Troon if the Ayrshire terminal for the Arran ferry moved from Ardrossan to Troon

Argyll & Bute Council has started a two-phase plan to make Oban more attractive for cruises and yacht visitors. Scottish Canals, hosting a World Canals Conference in Inverness, has underlined the rising importance of canal tourism and associated walking and cycling. The Kelpies had already provided a further boost for visits to the Forth and Clyde and Union Canals. But heavy summer rain had forced some short closures of the Crinan Canal due to the need to remove excess water.

The inward shipping of wind turbine components for south-west Scotland has given Ayr Harbour its busiest week in 25 years. Pinstripe, writing in H22Aug, has called for an action programme to make the upper Clyde more attractive and introduce fast passenger ferries from the Clyde at Central Station as far as Bute and Arran or even further to Tarbert and Campbeltown

Preliminary funding has been gained to start restoration of the Queen Mary II but with £2m needed to restore the ship as an interactive exhibition and arts and culture centre on the Clyde.

## **RAILWAYS**

### **The Network Rail Scotland Route Study to 2043**

Following the draft published in December, NR published a final version in July as a contribution to decisions by the Scottish Government and ORR on affordable Five Year Plans. A major criticism of the earlier draft was its failure to consider potential network extensions and the scope for additional or relocated halts and stations. NR argue that this was beyond the remit of the study but would be an issue for the Scottish Government as part of a revised National Transport Strategy and Planning Framework.

The principal emphasis remains on the provision of longer trains to meet anticipated strong growth in usage together with station and line improvements such as higher running speeds, extra loops and grade-separated junctions where these were required to ease track and platform capacity issues. Such action aids reliability, resilience and the ability to handle rises in both passenger and freight usage. Extra stations created the risk of slowing trunk services but longer loops could make it easier for faster inter-city passenger services to overtake freight trains. Finalised views on the robustness, and benefits, of passenger and freight growth had still to be reached but track/signalling assets needed to be put in better condition and less liable to adverse impacts from climate change.

*Comment* In September, the Rail Delivery Group endorsed the Network Rail Strategy for Scotland but some variation of priorities seems likely due to funding restrictions and pressures for rail extensions, additional halts and closer attention to rail potential in plans for City Deals around Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness. Closer links are needed between rail and land use planning strategies.

*A surprising feature is that most passenger services in Scotland (apart from the interim use of cascaded Inter-City 125 diesel trains on the routes north to Inverness and Aberdeen) will be operated by vehicles designed for 100mph running over distances up to 100 miles. Separate designs more suited to shorter-distance operation and with higher standing capacity (and no toilets) could prove more effective for shorter trips up to 10 to 12 miles out from the major cities. Modified designs and arrangements for tourist/scenic railways also merit more attention in operational plans.*

*In addition to work on existing track and major stations, the Network Rail strategy does include priority for a 'Dunfermline Bypass' and linked upgrade of the inland route through Fife to give shorter trip times from Edinburgh to Perth and Dundee (and to Levenmouth if the route from Thornton reopens). There are hints that it may be possible to accelerate electrification to Aberdeen and from Perth to Inverness aided by cost reductions, the technical potential of bi-mode operation and multi-modal appraisals of longer-distance trunk corridors in Scotland.*

*Reference is also made to an 'Almond chord' giving direct access from Stirling and Glasgow Queen St HL to the new Edinburgh Gateway station opening in December. On Anglo-Scottish services, clearer proposals are due to emerge for HS2 service strategy in 2017 but NR proposals for Scotland include quadruple tracking of the East Coast main line from east of Musselburgh to Drem plus major improvements to raise capacity and line speed in mid-Lanarkshire and quadrupling of 30 miles of route, possibly including some realignment of tracks, on the West Coast corridor south from Carstairs.*

**HS2** Chris Grayling, the new Transport Minister, has confirmed that construction of Phase 1 of HS2 will start in 2017 with details of further extensions beyond the West Midlands announced in March 2017. There has been increased criticism in England and also by Malcolm Reed, former Transport Scotland Chief Executive, of the balance between spending on high-speed rail and on other upgrades of the national rail network plus increased spend within city regions with devolved powers.

This year has seen celebrations for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the introduction of the **Inter-city 125 High Speed Train**. Some of these trains are due to cascade to improved inter-city services within Scotland from 2018 while the first **Hitachi 800 IEP** sets have arrived to replace present trains on the East Coast and Great Western lines – including a higher proportion built for bi mode operation and potentially aiding electrification of the routes from central Scotland to Aberdeen and to Inverness in the 2030s

Virgin argue that further shifts from domestic air travel can be achieved by cutting Anglo-Scottish London trip times to just over 3 hours 30 minutes with 3 hours coming later in the programme. The advantages of tilting trains on conventional track will be lost if HS2 trains were not capable of tilt when running beyond new HSR route. Calls have been made for greater attention to measures, including some rail 'bypasses', to allow trains to operate up to 140mph on existing route with the worst of present speed restrictions eliminated and capacity raised by some quadruple tracking and more grade-separated junctions

**Scottish Electrification** Work on the Glasgow Queen St HL-Edinburgh line has seen costs rise by £32m with completion delayed until mid 2017. Part of the delay has been attributed to new EU regulations requiring increased clearances for high-voltage electric wiring. Queen St HL has returned to normal operation after an extended closure for major upgrades but some evening and week-end trains are being replaced by buses to facilitate completion of route electrification.

**Abellio ScotRail** has come under increased criticism for a failing performance including reduced reliability and severe overcrowding on some services. Scottish Transport Minister, Humza Yousaf, has set requirements for an improved performance with the option of a full review of the franchise in 2020. Part of the weakened performance is due to the Scottish Government's delay in allowing new and additional train sets to be ordered but there have also been problems with the performance of present diesel trains on Scottish inter-city services. Passenger satisfaction remains at the high end of British levels.

Staff shortages plus rolling stock and line problems have also affected the **West Highland and Far North lines** with train cancellations a cause of particular annoyance due to infrequent services and difficulties in arranging alternatives. Severe overcrowding has been reported on the Oban line while deteriorating service quality has affected patronage on the Far North line. This line could again be under threat but H editorial (26Sept) calls for Highlands to have a first-class rail service including the Far North Line and also, in southern Scotland, an extended Borders line. Chris Harvie, a former SNP MSP, has called for innovative approaches to Scottish rail revival led by tourism and tapping into the growing number of cruise ships visiting Scottish ports (H9Sept)

H editorial on 7 Oct again called for all of Scotland to have modern and efficient European-style rail services. 'Pressure must be kept up on politicians and rail operators to deliver just that'. Former SNP Justice Minister, Kenny Macaskill, has called for railways to be run under state control.

Conditions in the Central Belt were worsened by the lengthy dispute with RMT on extending driver control of train doors to all the planned extensions of Central Belt electrification. The dispute was ended by what was seen as a 'fudge' giving drivers the power to open doors but conductor guards retaining the powers to close doors and oversee passenger safety (H20Sept). No major safety issues have arisen from the driver door control already used for 30 years in West Central Scotland but increasing passenger numbers and longer trains have led to queries over drivers being responsible for closing train doors.

The **Borders Rail link** has celebrated over 1m passengers in its first year of operation but this has been clouded by strong attacks on planning the scheme in ways certain to lead to poor reliability and overcrowding until extra trains become available, an excessive reliance on single-track operation and delayed action to improve the junction with the East Coast main line at Portobello. A café and toilets are to be added to the present end of the line at Tweedbank. The Borders Rail Newsletter includes the suggestion that a restored rail link from Edinburgh to Peebles and later extended along the Tweed to Galashiels and Berwick might offer better value than an extension from Hawick to Carlisle. Alan Findlay asks why investment in new roads is being prioritised when many communities actively want extended rail links.

Disputes on the provision of a **rail link to Glasgow Airport** (included in City Deal plans) have intensified with Minister Humza Yousaf awaiting a submission of a feasible business case (H7Sept) and many in the public saying that the present bus access is of good quality. SAPT has argued that with rising use of the airport, congestion on the M8 and worldwide expectations of rail access to major airports, it is possible to adapt the Paisley-Glasgow rail line to carry additional airport services by, or before, 2024 and sharing the extra platforms at Central already included in the Network Rail route study.

Aberdeen City Council is keen on a £20m rail link to the Airport provided that fundraising powers can be gained as part of a resolution of the present dispute on ensuring contributions from property development. A new station is being considered to serve the Inverness Retail Park Development Zone.

Glasgow-Bathgate-Edinburgh rail services have been adjusted to provide more even service intervals but local MSP John Mason has complained that some east Glasgow stations now have fewer stops. MSPs are also seeking a reopening to passengers of the Edinburgh South Side suburban line, now scheduled for electrification to improve freight services on the East Coast line through to West Central Scotland.

The new £41m tram-train interchange at Gogar in west Edinburgh will open in December. More funding has been released for new stations at East Linton, Reston and Robroyston but there is still a shortfall. Respective costs at E Linton and Reston have risen to £11.1m and £10.6m. 900,000 people (1% of annual passengers) are still avoiding paying ScotRail fares. Tickets on Virgin trains can now be booked six months in advance but passengers are objecting to two rises in East Coast main line fares within a year. Many rail fares will rise by 1.9% in January but ScotRail say off-peak passengers will pay only half this increase. Calls have been made for ScotRail staff to take stronger action against unruly and offensive passengers

## **BUS, TRAM & TAXI**

Bus (and lorry) costs are set to rise due to plans for Low Emission Zones in Edinburgh by 2020 and other pressures to reduce the use of diesel engines on busy city streets. Use of hybrid or zero emission vehicles is rising but costs remain greater than for diesel vehicles. The bus (and lorry) sectors are also being affected by difficulties in driver recruitment while costs (partly passed on to local authorities) will rise due to the Scottish Government decision to make seatbelts compulsory on school buses for primary children by 2018 with an extension to secondary pupils in 2021.

The bus industry has countered these measures by calling for more urgent action to reduce the serious congestion affecting bus schedules and usage in Scotland's larger cities (H15Sept). Other helpful measures could include ticketing reforms shortening bus loading times, car parking policies and steps to accelerate use of low emission vehicles in the areas worst affected by poor air quality. This could include action to re-regulate of local transport – similar measures in the new Buses Bill for England. Rather than a return to increased financial support for bus services, SAPT argues that regulation could help reduce levels of financial support while improving the quality of local public transport networks (S29Aug).

Gavin Booth, Director of Bus Users Scotland, has called for radical action to help bus users by ensuring major cuts in the delays experienced due to congestion affecting many urban services. 8 out of 10 bus trips in Scotland were still run commercially but, without action, bus users faced further cuts in both commercial and supported services as further cuts were applied to funding (S16Sept).

Despite completion of the tram route to the Airport, Lothian Transport operates separate tram and express bus services to the Airport with significant sections of common route. This is happening since the present lack of regulation could mean that another bus operator could step in and prevent a substantial rise in usage and income on a tram route in which £millions of public money has been invested. Alternatively, Ralph Roberts of McGills Buses has argued that early improvement in Scottish local bus services would offer better value than the multiple £millions involved in alternative schemes for tram train, mono-rail and fast riverbus services to the airport (H16Aug). Network Rail has been criticised for refusing to give details of how innovative thinking could improve prospects for tramtrain access to Glasgow Airport (H25Jul)

New longer-term plans for an Edinburgh region with high predicted growth in population envisage tram extensions not only to Newhaven but to Newbridge (possibly extended to Livingston via Broxburn), Granton and to Musselburgh via Edinburgh Royal and Newcraighall. The Edinburgh Tram Inquiry has already cost £3.7m and is under pressure to show how, and when, it will produce results of value for future-decision-taking. Peak frequency on the Edinburgh tram route was increased to every 5 minutes on 25 July

In Glasgow, SPT closure of the Subway as part of the modernisation programme took two weeks longer than the four weeks anticipated but Alastair Dalton of the Scotsman finds the scheme for automated operation with new trains exciting though still five years from completion (S19Aug)

First West Lothian has introduced 19 new double-deckers on the Bathgate-Livingston-Edinburgh corridor. Other investment is planned in hybrid and electric buses. Lothian Buses has introduced EastCoastbuses branding for services from Edinburgh West End and Semple St through to North Berwick and to Haddington plus additional timetabled school services. Lothian Buses has also launched a new student discount card while, in the west, McGills has a new system allowing parents to purchase cards for school children accessed via mobile phones rather than paper tickets. Prentice Coaches has introduced a service from Haddington to Fort Kinnaird Retail Park in Edinburgh. This replaces a service formerly operated by First and providing a direct link from Haddington to Musselburgh.

SPT has been attacked for a one year delay in repairing electronic displays giving real time information at bus stops. After police evidence, taxi licencing chiefs in Glasgow have withdrawn licences from four involved in the taxi and private hire trade. Glasgow's licensing committee is also planning to use mystery passengers to catch private hire drivers who illegally pick up fares on the street. Uber, which uses a mobile app to link drivers with passengers, report rocketing business in Edinburgh during August. It has offered £600 to new recruits to the company on condition that a specified number of trips are completed in the first few weeks. Conventional taxi operators report no significant impact on their business during the Festival period. After many complaints, rail bosses are being urged to rethink taxi access to Waverley. Taxis were banned from the station two years ago creating difficulties for older and disabled people.

## **ROADS & PARKING**

The top item in the media have been continued complaints about poor levels of road maintenance, especially on local authority roads and in Edinburgh. New methods of working have seen some shift to improved levels of renewals but these also lead to temporary disruption of road flows on top of a lack of co-ordination and planning of work on other utilities under roads. Audit Scotland has called for 'urgent' action and the issue is seen as a major one in the local government elections due next May.

Eight Councils, including Argyll, Angus and all councils north except Shetland, have agreed to collaborate on road maintenance and improved delivery.

A new item rising to prominence has been mainly adverse comments on the widening use of 20mph limits on urban roads and especially on the extensive programme being introduced in Edinburgh, though with some major arteries excluded. One issue has been the feasibility and cost of enforcement but the benefits of extensive, rather than selective, 20mph limits have also seen conflicting views.

While the year to date has seen a rise in road deaths, including those involving motor cyclists, the priority for improving road safety has been queried relative to the importance of tackling poor air quality arising from traffic in major urban areas.

Lack of parking at major hospitals and plans to introduce charges for residents in adjacent areas remain controversial but some locations for hospitals and new business parks have come under attack for working against the strategic aim of shifts to public transport and active travel. The Scottish Government Crime Campus has attracted particular criticism from local residents. It has a relatively poor public transport despite a new station being provided at Gartcosh with longish trip times into central Glasgow, a lower service frequency than on many other urban routes and no direct rail link to the Coatbridge interchange.

Locals in Luss, a conservation village with over 750,000 tourist visitors, remain dissatisfied with council proposals to ease parking problems by charges including residents. They seek entry barriers allowing residents access linked with enlarged visitor parking further from the village. Aberdeen City Council has backed away from schemes to impose charges on three popular car parks in Torry, Cults and Bucksburn.

Wardens have confiscated 440 disabled parking badges from those abusing the system but, with ever larger car parks, complaints about excessive speeds within car parks have risen. Motorists are being hit by a hike in car insurance costs and a return to higher fuel prices

Edinburgh Airport is planning to contribute to a new access road to ease congestion, eventually linking direct to the M8 (S26Aug). The first phase of a £15.2m link road near Aberdeen Airport has opened and will later connect with the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route which, when completed in 2017, is expected to create 14,000 jobs in the coming 30 years. NESTRAN is evaluating plans for a dualling of the A90 north from Ellon but is also considering rail reopening from Dyce to Ellon and beyond. Dan Barlow, WWF Head of Policy, says better value comes from priority for active travel and public transport.

Perth & Kinross Council has awarded Balfour Beatty a £35m contract to provide a grade-separated junction on the A9 west of Perth. This should open in 2019

Further delays for drivers will occur in the final phase of £500m improvements on the M8, M74 and M73 east of Glasgow to be completed by spring 2017. This work includes average speed cameras and maximum speeds of 50mph, aiding traffic flow but also producing 4309 fixed penalties in the initial period of operation. West from Glasgow on the M8, David Crawford suggests that peak congestion could be eased by introducing 'carpool' lanes and banning commercial traffic at peaks (H23Aug)

### **WALKING & CYCLING**

Poor pavement condition revealed in a TV appearance of the First Minister outside her official residence in Edinburgh's Charlotte Square has led to a quick repair but also drew attention to the need for an enlarged programme for pavement and cycleway maintenance throughout Scotland.

Parking restrictions close to schools have produced a rise in children walking to school in Edinburgh. More publicity and work on 'pilgrim routes' in Scotland is expected to lead to an explosion in trekking tourism (H20Aug) Glasgow's cycle hire scheme is to be doubled after a huge rise in usage. At present 435 bicycles are available from 43 bike stations. Abellio ScotRail is also expanding cycle hire at stations

Cyclists see dangers in the wider use of 'loose chipping' road coverings in Scotland. These increase skidding risks. A two-mile cycle route from Queen's Park to the Merchant City in Glasgow has won a design contest and £6.5m of funding from Sustrans and government sources. It will open in summer 2018. In Edinburgh, plans for a supercycleway across central Edinburgh costed at £6m have been delayed after many objections to the loss of road and parking space in the Roseburn area (EN31Aug). Further extension of the Bears Way in Bearsden has also led to objections due to loss of road and parking space. In South Ayrshire, an already constructed cycleway in Ayr built without consultation is to be ripped up after a 19-11 council vote following strong local objections. A route close to the River Ayr is preferred (H7Oct).

More doubts have been expressed about the realism of the Scottish Government target for 10% of local trips to be by bike by 2020. Travel data for 2015 suggested a slight fall in cycling from what is still a very low level. Data reliability has been disputed and reference made to higher levels of cycling (from a low base) in cities such as Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness.

A wider range of battery-assisted bikes (pedelecs) is now available along with a specialist magazine. Both Glasgow and Edinburgh City Councils are aiming to arrange new contracts to expand bike hire.

The debate on introducing strict liability for vehicle drivers injuring cyclists continues though with added suggestions for more attention to accidents involving pedestrians, partly due to inconsiderate cyclists as well as motor vehicle drivers. The culture of mutual respect found in parts of continental Europe needed encouragement in Britain.

### **PROPERTY & PLANNING**

Despite Brexit problems City of Edinburgh Chief Executive Andrew Kerr says the city population has exceeded 500,000 for the first time and could reach 620,000 by 2037 with major implications for transport and land use planning in the city and region. Plans include tram extensions, expanded bus park and ride

and improvements on the Edinburgh Bypass and related junctions. Arising issues include impacts on other parts of Scotland and how far extra housing should be in the immediate city area or located further out. Major growth is expected in the Business Gateway Zone close to the Airport. City Deals for Glasgow, Aberdeen and other areas raise similar issues but also queries on how far economic growth concentrated on Edinburgh relates to all-Scottish strategy and devolution within Scotland. The Scottish Government has decided to assume direct control of regional transport and land use strategies in Scotland though with delivery devolved.

A related issue is greenbelt conservation, supported by many around Edinburgh, but policy is inclining to sustainable corridors and some development on the edge of cities in place of rigid greenbelts. In practice, more people are opting for longer commutes justified by much lower house prices than in Edinburgh. Parts of Lanarkshire are seeing increased commuting to Edinburgh while Greenock and Arbroath house prices are attracting those commuting to Glasgow and Aberdeen (H26 Sept)

A 'call-in' by the Scottish Government has delayed a decision on development of the Garden District on the edge of west Edinburgh but, in addition to 3000 houses at Winchburgh, plans have been announced for 1200 homes at Hatton Mains west of Edinburgh plus plans eastward for 4000 houses at Shawfair (on Borders Rail) 1300 homes between Edinburgh and Musselburgh plus another 10,000 homes in East Lothian mainly at a new Blindwells development close to the East Coast Main Line. Bus park and ride will also see further expansion. Within Edinburgh, 900 homes at Granton Harbour have planning permission. In Glasgow, Persimmon has permission for 500 homes adjacent to Silverburn Shopping Centre while sites are becoming available in Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire and Lanarkshire. On the Borders rail route, property transactions have risen 15% though with only a modest rise in prices

Work has started on a further £24m office development in Edinburgh's West End Financial District with most future development expected at the new Gateway Business District close to the Airport. Edinburgh is also seeing further retail expansion on the fringe of city sites at Fort Kinnaird, Straiton and Hermiston Gait. In contrast, Dundee City Council has rejected Next plans for a megastore on Kingsway West and continues to favour city centre development, minimising the risk of losing the Next store in the city centre, and growth in the adjacent waterfront development zone.

Closure of BHS shops has left gaps in many larger Scottish towns. The Edinburgh store has reopened as Scottish Home Stores while the central Glasgow site has been earmarked for a controversial 12 storey development seen as helping a revival of depressed Sauchiehall St. Glasgow City Council has announced a 10 year £115m plan for city centre regeneration focused on the Broomielaw, Blythswood, Central and St Enoch districts. 350,000 sq ft of new office space is planned for the Skypark campus close to the SECC in west Glasgow along with a new business zone, Magenta, south-east from Bridgeton

Trading interests in central Aberdeen are concerned that completion of the Western Peripheral Route may encourage further development close to the route, leading to decline in Aberdeen city centre unless there is concerted action to make the city centre more attractive and accessible, including high quality park and ride from sites close to the Peripheral Route. Aberdeenshire Council is to move its headquarters from Aberdeen to Inverurie.

In Kilmarnock, the revamped Johnnie Walker site beside the rail station and town centre now contains the relocated Kilmarnock College with the remainder of the site earmarked for a mix of homes, offices and a leisure/conference centre with funding aided through the Ayrshire Growth Deal.

The Court of Session has condemned the Scottish Government's decision to approve PD Stirling's application for a major freight hub contrary to the recommendation of the Inquiry Reporter, who feared adverse impacts on greenbelt and the operation of existing rail freight hubs in the Coatbridge/Eurocentral area. A Scottish Government response is awaited but there is concern at delay in approving a plan allowing operation of longer rail freight trains. Lidl is to create 100 further jobs by opening a regional distribution Centre at the adjacent Eurocentral Business Park. Lidl's present warehouse in Livingston will be close

## RESEARCH & STATISTICS

Scottish Government has web published **Transport and Travel in Scotland: 2015 (TATIS)**. This is derived mainly from the Scottish Household Survey and has ongoing issues related to sample sizes and some lack of correlation with data from other sources. With 2005 taken as a 100 base,

**cycling** shows the highest growth to 141 but with the index slightly down on 2014

**passenger rail trips** are up to 134 but with only a marginal rise on 2014

**air** is up to 107 with an earlier fall now overtaken by high growth

**car** distances are up to 104 with **motorcycles** and **ferries** both down to 94 and bus down to **84**

Total **road vehicle kilometres** are up 1% on 2014. **Car occupancy** is below the level reached in 2008. Since 2005 men with **driving licences** are down from 75.7% to 73.4% but women are up from 56.4% to 63.1%.

As a percentage of '**main mode**' trips, walking is up from 14.1% in 2005 to 25.9% in 2014 with an interim 2015 share of 22.8% (the rise in share is due mainly to a former under-counting of walk trips but the 'main mode' basis excludes walking to, from and between main trips – also issues relating to the definition of a trip). The share of rail in 'main mode' trips has varied between 1.7% and 2.1% of total trips, much lower than the bus share between 11% and 8.5%. Both shares have been depressed by the rise in the walking share but, if compared with other information on total rail and bus passenger kilometres, the rail performance has been much stronger than that of buses. In 2015 65% of walking trips were under 1km, as were 26% of car trips but most bus trips were between 1 and 15km with the rail share rising for trips above 5km and particularly above 15km.

**Aviation** Glasgow Airport has had its busiest September since it opened. International passengers are up 4.3% on the previous September with domestic passengers also up 4.2%. The airport has now handled more than 900,000 passengers in each of four successive months. At Edinburgh, international passengers were up 21.5% but domestic passengers fell 2.5%. September passengers totalled 1.19m. Aberdeen passengers fell 15.1%, reflecting the oil and gas downturn.

**Rail Passengers** Data issued by SPT shows a slowing of rail growth around Glasgow, influenced by trade union and other service issues affecting usage. ORR data for the first quarter of 2016/17 shows ScotRail passenger km down 1.6% and passenger trips down 0.3%, influenced by service disruption. Virgin East Coast saw a 1.4% rise in passenger km and a 4.3% rise in passenger trips. Across Britain, passenger kms were up 2.2% and passenger trips 1.6%

**Anglo-Scottish sleepers** ORR reports usage down 1.9% in first quarter of 2016/17 but the new £150m trains (aided by a £60m Scottish Government grant) on order for Serco's Anglo-Scottish sleeper franchise will offer more varied accommodation including premium facilities expected to increase usage and income

**Scottish New Car Sales** were down from 43,554 in September 2015 to 43,448 this September but GB sales saw an upturn of 1.74%

**Scottish Buses** The number of routes has fallen 20% since 2005 with bus trips down 15% on 2007/08. The average fare (excluding concession travel) is now £1.53 – up 18% over the past five years of low overall inflation. Citizens Advice Scotland claims that fares vary between 7p and £1.80 per mile though operators say fares are still lower than the British average (S29Aug)

**Car Taxation** Revenue from UK VED fell by £93m in the year that the paper tax disc was abolished. Returns from fuel tax have also been affected by modest growth in traffic and a failure to increase tax rates. But annual sales of personalised number plates (first put on sale by the Treasury in 1989) have exceeded £100m for the first time

The number of motorists caught using mobiles at the wheel has almost halved in the past four years but Scotland remains one of the worst areas for offenders. A YouGov poll has found that Glasgow has the worst level of road rage in Britain. 35% reported feeling angry at the wheel compared to a low of 16% in Liverpool

Edinburgh expects a one third rise in tourists over the next four years – visitors were already up from 3.27m in 2010 to 3.85m in 2015. Depreciation of the pound is offering a further boost.

The huge rise in the use of contactless cards is both encouraging people to spend and creating issues over the lack of control of personal data held by government and private firms. But such data also offers opportunities for marketing and analysis. Credit cards may be overtaken by wearable payment technology within five years according to Mark Sievwright at the World Credit Union Conference in Belfast. IPA has found that British adults spend half their waking hours consuming social media at home and on the move.

According to AXA Insurance almost one third of Britons would like to own a driverless car yet 49% would not feel safe in the driver's seat even though the technology could improve overall road safety. Insurance issues would have to include a legal right for insurers to recover costs from manufacturers when a defect in a driverless car caused a crash.

New data from the A9 Safety Group shows that the number of accidents and deaths are continuing to fall after the introduction of average speed cameras. Fatal and serious collisions are down 45% (H31Aug)

CBI's Carolyn Fairbairn speaking at CBI Scotland annual dinner has called for more infrastructure projects to boost the economy, especially works on the A9, A82 and A96 'Good transport infrastructure in particular lies at the heart of high productivity. Analysis had found that bringing 1.4m people within 30 minutes of Edinburgh would increase productivity by two percentage points'

### **Wider Aspects of Transport Governance, Research and Appraisal**

A striking feature of 2016 has been growing dissatisfaction with conventional transport modelling and analysis together with adverse public reactions to 'professional experts' and conventional politicians. Though reserving the power to provide some funding towards national projects, government in England has moved towards a larger element of regional devolution and related fundraising responsibilities. With George Osborne no longer Chancellor and more intense problems relating to funding and the economy, there is also a shift away from 'big' transport infrastructure projects towards smaller schemes and management/pricing changes securing better value from present networks, higher levels of public support and better funding prospects. The advances of electronic technology and changing lifestyles have also raised new issues of how transport and access might be provided and funded in future years. The UK government has already decided that the newly created National Infrastructure Commission will not be given a statutory role though utilised for advisory purposes

The Scottish Government is still tending towards greater centralisation in planning and funding for sectors such as transport and education linked with enhanced public and headteacher roles in localised decisions – there is stress on 'community empowerment' at a more localised level than in present local authorities but also progress on some city regional and rural 'deals' across Scotland.

Successive recent issues of the fortnightly **Local Transport Today** have drawn attention to the changing UK scene, to be further developed at a major conference in November. Emerging issues are summarised below. Though Scotland has withdrawn from the National Travel Survey, the latest results show that the average distance travelled by British residents in Britain is now 7% below the level in 2002 with this ascribed to homeworking, online retail and social media reducing visits to friends. The main upward pressure on passenger movement now comes from rises in population, especially in regions around the larger cities, but with further decline in car use expected as households move towards fewer cars, some shifts to scheduled public transport, walking and cycling plus substantial shifts to reliance on the MaaS approach (mobility as a service) – including expansion of organised demand responsive transport and self-driving rented cars.

Other relevant factors include both a rise in tourist travel within Britain and greater use of foreign travel (mainly by air) by British residents raising their total annual travel well above the 7,000 or so miles per year travelled within Britain. In the longer term, the present sharp rise in longer-haul aviation may slacken and reverse. Similarly, the present growth in world trade may change to more localised trade and recycling. Interest in improved accessibility is not the same as a desire for ever-rising total movement - see Alistair

Kirkbride's article in LTT 208 14Oct which includes Derek Halden's graph on the slowing of UK road traffic growth since 1990 with future prospects now varying between +48% or -52% by 2040 depending on the scenarios chosen. In the scenario of road vehicle decline, rises are expected in the share of active travel, scheduled public transport (partly automated) and a marked growth in self-driving car and lorry use. These issues are also explored in the new book by David Metz *Travel Fast or Smart? – A Manifesto for an Intelligent Transport Policy*.

For the immediate future, the more likely outcomes are likely to be a shift away from major schemes for new roads and new trunk railways (apart from the initial section of HS2) to increased emphasis on packages of smaller schemes and pricing/fiscal funding changes deliverable quickly and with early benefits nationally and regionally. Time-savings face reduced valuations in appraisals unless linked with evidence of a willingness to pay for shorter trip times while scheme appraisals will require to contain more detailed consideration of localised economic and social benefits – present methods are seen as too dependent on narrow economic appraisals, poorly linked with desires for transport schemes to provide associated social, health and equality benefits. Disciplined five-year programmes linked with consultation and better use of design and delivery skills need to demonstrate benefits which could lead into more radical medium to longer-term rolling programmes.

## **BUSINESS & PERSONNEL**

**First Group** anticipate a more challenging time following Brexit. Bus revenue is already down 1.4%, being hit by lower High St footfall, lower fuel prices encouraging car use and rising urban congestion. First rail business had seen lower passenger growth and revenue growth of only 2.3%

**Scottish Citylink Coaches** report 23% rise in profits to £4.9m but income was down 9% to £40.8m

Family owned logistics operator **WH Malcolm** continues to favour long-distance freight shifts to rail due to lower costs and difficulties in recruiting lorry drivers. It is involved in a pilot scheme for 50foot long road trailers. The company won the 2016 Haulier of the Year and is also involved in community support.

**Stagecoach** expects a revamped website and mobile app will boost its popularity with younger transport users (following the earlier example of Lothian Buses). In the year to April, profits were down 37% but turnover had risen by 21% to £3.87bn, aided by the new Virgin East Coast trains franchise. The company hoped to retain the South-west trains franchise in England. Trading conditions worsened in the period to September due to increased congestion, further drops in car petrol costs, depressed economic conditions in Scotland and the North of England and rises in urban congestion. Bus revenues outside London were down 1.9%. Bus revenue in North America was down 3.3%. Revenue growth in joint franchises with Virgin had slowed to 1.7% on the East Coast route but ran at 4.7% on the West Coast.

**ScotRail** operator Abellio reports a £9.5m profit on a turnover of £486m in the first 9 months since taking on the ScotRail franchise. Operating costs were £473m and the largest contribution to sales was £240m from fares followed by a franchise payment from the Scottish Government. £2.5m had been paid in tax and no dividends were proposed. Profits at car dealer **Arnold Clark** have topped £110m, aided by exceptional growth in used vehicle sales. New car sales were down by 8.4% **Alexander Dennis** of Falkirk have gained a £7.3m award for the further development of green buses and should be a £1bn turnover business by 2020 compared to £600m in 2015.

The **Kelpies**, built over a new section of the Forth and Clyde Canal, have won a major award at the World Canals Conference in Inverness. They have boosted the local economy by £1.5m in their first year.

## **Personnel**

Scottish Parliament Committees have been re-arranged to align with new ministerial portfolios. Transport now comes under the **Rural Affairs and Connectivity Committee**, a rather surprising change in view of the importance of overseas air travel, external shipping links, Inter-city travel and the increased emphasis on more sustainable and attractive public transport and active travel within cities and their surrounding areas.

DfT has advertised for a **Deputy Traffic Commissioner** to assist the present Commissioner in Scotland

**Ronnie Park** Head of Bus Operations at SPT, has left his post with no explanation given. **Mark Whitelock** has moved from being Operations Director at Stagecoach East Scotland to be MD at Stagecoach North Scotland. **Fiona Kerr**, MD of First Bus Scotland, has left the industry after being in post less than six months.

**Lesley Hinds** has taken over from Russell Imrie as SESTRAN Chair. **Douglas Kirkpatrick** has succeeded Steven Herriot as lead officer for SWestrans

**Stephen Rennie** joins APT Controls as business manager for Evolt electric charging points in Scotland

**Publications** *Transport and Travel in Scotland 2015* (TATIS) – available on Transport Scotland website  
*Scotland Route Study* (July 2016) – available on Network Rail website  
*Highland Survivor – the story of the Far North Line*, David Spaven September 2016  
(available from Kessock Books – info@kessockbooks.com)