

Transport News June 2016 to August 2016

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Highlights

Apart from mainly critical views on the merits of the original HS2 proposals, transport has had a low profile in the debate on the EU referendum and in the media generally. There has been greater concern about a weakening of prospects for world economic growth and a more cautious attitude to claims that transport investment is especially important for growth in economic and social well-being. The UK vote in favour of Brexit contrasted with a strong Scottish preference to remain in the EU. There will now be two years or more of further debate, including discussion of Scotland staying within the EU or a Brexit outcome retaining some EU benefits in a negotiated UK settlement. Meantime, the Chancellor and the Bank of England have sought to ease uncertainty. The target for achieving cuts in total UK debt by 2020 has been dropped.

The Queen's Speech promised a Bill on automated transport, drone and spaceport development and regulation while a Bus Franchising Bill has been introduced applying only in England. ORR (Office of Rail and Road Regulation) has warned of a tougher approach to rail financing and a review of track access charges to ensure better use of track at or near capacity while avoiding track charges holding back rail growth where spare capacity is available. There have also been indications of a revival of interest in reforms in vehicle and road use taxation on principles encouraging better use of existing facilities and specific contributions to road improvements not otherwise fundable. No early decisions are expected but change is needed as the efficiency of oil fuelled road vehicles improves and the share of vehicles powered from other sources continues to rise with resulting falls in income from present levels of road fuel taxation.

The world's longest rail tunnel, the 35.4mile Gotthard Base Tunnel has opened in Switzerland after 17 years of construction at a cost of £8.4bn. It is designed to ease north-south freight movement through the Alps and increase the rail share of freight traffic through Switzerland as well as aiding passenger services. Once in full operation by December, it will take up to 260 freight trains and 65 passenger trains per day.

NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE COMMISSION (NIC)

NIC was established last autumn with Lord Adonis as Chair. It will prepare a National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA) once every Parliament and will report to the Treasury. Views on the process are invited by 5 August. The remit includes transport and energy with the focus being on England though there will be contact with existing devolved administrations. The remit includes funding and demand management as well as selection of trunk infrastructure projects in the rail, road and airport sectors. It is required to accept an imminent government decision on future plans for Heathrow. The initial NIA is due in 2018 with NIC 'endorsed recommendations' becoming UK Government policy within 6 to 12 months.

The aim is better interconnections between infrastructure across economic sectors. A critical interdependency is 'to better understand the impact of future transport provision on the energy sector – in particular the potential implication of large-scale car, lorry and rail electrification' on the total level of demand and on modal share. Electrifying transport and heat could more than double demand for electricity unless demand management can ease peak demand. The 'endorsed recommendations' may require changes in present National Policy Statements as on national road and rail networks (LTT700 24 June).

These issues will also affect decisions by the Scottish Government and possibly a return to former Transport Minister Derek Mackay's view (now in his new role as Cabinet Secretary for Finance) that a fundamental review, rather than a 'refresh' of transport and energy policy is required. While Lord Adonis has been a strong supporter of High Speed Rail, the NIA is likely to include a review of the relationship between HSR, future trunk and local road networks and the development of inter-city and intra-city rail and public

transport. In England, the scale of transport devolution (including funding) to regions is increasing with Transport for the North (of England) assuming responsibility for transport decisions by early 2017.

AVIATION

New London Mayor Sadiq Khan is thought to be more supportive of an early decision on Heathrow expansion allowing growth in both international and domestic routes but the UK government has announced delay in any decision until a new Prime Minister is in post in early autumn. Heathrow Airport has offered to build a supply chain hub in Scotland if expansion of Heathrow is approved.

Scottish opinion is divided on the proposed cut and eventual abolition of APD. Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat leaders in the Scottish Parliament oppose cuts in APD but, after the current consultation, a possible combination of SNP and Unionist votes could ensure early cuts. Liz Cameron, Chief Executive of Scottish Chambers of Commerce sees APD cuts as the best way of growing Scottish connections with the rest of the world.

A Herald Supplement on 8 July celebrated 50 years since the opening of the new Glasgow Airport at Abbotsinch in 1966. Air France has introduced direct flights from Edinburgh to Paris Orly. A new route from Edinburgh to Helsinki has also started.

Low-cost carrier Norwegian has launched a new route from Edinburgh to Barcelona and, in spring 2017, will launch budget flights to Boston and other US cities with return fares as low as £200. Ryanair is also cutting fares by an average of 7% on European flights in order to boost demand. Edinburgh Airport is again consulting on controversial proposals for revised flight paths to allow more traffic to be handled. Direct daily flights from Inverness to Heathrow have resumed after a 20 year gap

Prestwick is continuing efforts to gain a spaceport role, aided by £250,000 of support from Scottish Enterprise and South Ayrshire Council over two years. There is growing pressure to ban alcohol on what have become 'flights from hell' due to hen and stag parties.

FERRIES & SHIPPING

Following the Scottish Parliament election, the Scottish Government announced a decision to award an 8 year contract to CalMac as the present operator of most Clyde and Hebrides ferry services. The franchise is seen as a good deal for island communities and includes commitments to smart ticketing by 2021, extra port and vessel capacity and a 10% rise in passenger/vehicle traffic and 12% in commercial traffic over the period of the franchise. While the re-award of the franchise to CalMac for most Scottish internal ferry services has been widely welcomed, this has been accompanied by more critical views of actual CalMac performance following the extension of RET.

CalMac continues to experience severe criticism for poor community involvement and increased problems for island residents and commerce after the extension of RET for passengers and cars to more routes without sufficient port and vehicle capacity to handle traffic at peaks. Summer and week-end peaks have intensified with particular problems affecting the Mull-Oban, Mallaig-Armadale, Ardrossan-Brodick and Largs-Cumbræ routes. Communities say that frequencies on some routes are still too low to give islands reasonable access and reject the Scottish Government view that EU rules require ferry services to be put out to tender (H20May)

Cumbræ residents complain that Millport has been packed solid with cars, campervans and tourist buses with the local roads becoming more dangerous for children and cyclists, spoiling the special attraction of the small island for visitors.

Transport Scotland has invited tenders for a 12 year contract to operate the Gourock-Dunoon passenger ferry from June 2017. Frequency must be no lower than half-hourly with operators having the commercial option to carry vehicles. Following complaints about the service reliability of the present small vessels on the route, the minimum length of vessel used is being increased from 62 feet to at least 131 feet.

The 80 year old TS Queen Mary II has returned to Greenock after £300,000 of fundraising to bring it back from dereliction in London. A further £2m is needed to restore it to 1930s splendour.

After a break in 2015, the return from Ireland of the MV Renfrew Rose (a passenger ferry at Renfrew until 2010) has allowed restoration of a passenger ferry (with space for 3 cars) between Cromarty and Nigg.

Stirling Council sees waterbus services on the River Forth from Bridge of Allan to Forthside as an important feature of £2m plans for City Development.

RAIL

The original HS2 plans have come under severe criticism as too expensive and offering lower, and longer delayed, benefits than a shift of emphasis towards faster improvements in the capacity of existing rail networks including shorter sections of new route (mainly bypasses and grade-separated junctions) and some quadruple tracking to allow faster passenger trains to overtake freight and regional passenger services. Critics include Malcolm Reed, former head of SPT and then of Transport Scotland, rail commentator Christian Wolmar, Simon Jenkins of the Guardian, Prof Tony May and a report by the high-speed rail lobby group Greengauge 21 (LTT 697, 698 & 699 issued on 13 & 27 May, 10 June, H 6 June)

UK Transport Minister Patrick McLoughlin has criticised speculation on possible cuts in the HS2 programme. Most opinion still favours new route from London to the West Midlands or Crewe by the mid 2020s with Greengauge arguing that accelerated upgrades (mainly on existing route) could still meet the aim of 3 hour trip times to Glasgow and Edinburgh by 2027 at half the cost of HS2 plans for upgrades north from Crewe and Leeds. In Scotland, a priority is likely to be new route through 'urban' Lanarkshire but, south to Crewe, the emphasis would be on shorter sections of new route, raising much existing track to 140mph with revised signalling and greater use of grade-separated junctions. Other economies suggested are fuller use of 'classic' trains (fitting the present British loading gauge), tilting trains, shorter trains (with the proposed splitting of 400m trains at Carstairs replaced by either shorter trains or splitting at Preston), maximum speed on new route limited to 200 or 180 mph and a revision of the location and design of HSR stations to lower immediate costs and improve integration with city transit and regional rail networks.

The volume of rail freight in Britain is now at its lowest level since the 1980s, mainly due to the collapse in coal traffic. Prospects for container and other longer-distance movement remain good with consideration also being given to the introduction of high-speed, 'small container' freight services, possibly using existing passenger stations.

The SERCO Caledonian Sleeper is in talks regarding an extension of Anglo-Scottish sleeper services to Oban and a new service from Caithness to Edinburgh. The latter would require extra Scottish Government support but could aid tourist travel to the Far North and Orkney.

Alastair Dalton, Scotsman Transport Correspondent, argues that compared to his Central Belt experience, the Far North and Kyle lines Line need a new approach to end the chronic unreliability of the infrequent services north of Inverness, Greater community and tourist involvement, more passing places and some improvement in frequency were needed.

DfT has warned that the ORR decision to allow First Group to compete on Kings Cross-Edinburgh services from 2021 could prejudice HS2 financing. Herald editorial favours the ORR decision as completion of priority trackworks on the ECML will also allow Virgin to increase services in a competition with First on both services and fares of benefit to passengers However, franchise premiums paid by Virgin to the UK government may fall (H13May). DfT is consulting on views on the next WCML franchise (presently a Virgin/Stagecoach venture due to end in spring 2018)

Borders Rail has carried almost 700,000 passengers in the first six months of operation, 22% above forecasts. ScotRail has arranged for steam-hauled services to operate on Sundays in August and September. The Scottish Government is evaluating extension of the line through to Carlisle but groups in Fife are seeking priority for reopening of the Thornton-Levenmouth route..

ScotRail has offered a £20 add-on rail fare for users of Scottish FlyBe services wishing to travel on by rail. The £28m modernisation of Dundee station should be completed by early 2018 but Frank Roach, manager at Hitrans, has criticised the ferry/train/bus interchange at Oban as looking like a 'prison camp'. Talks have started on possible improvements. Disputes between ScotRail and RMT on the extension of services with drivers operating doors have disrupted many services beyond the SPT area where drivers have been responsible for train door openings and closure for more than thirty years. RMT see such extension as a threat to safety and the role of train guards but have also attacked ScotRail for a failure to expand staff to avoid growing numbers of train cancellations due to staff shortage. Phil Verster, MD of the ScotRail Alliance, agrees that ScotRail's overall performance on train operation had to be improved. Passenger satisfaction with ScotRail remains at 87% compared to a British average of 80%.

RMT action has hampered plans for improved rail access to the 'T in the Park' event at its new location close to Gleneagles, However, extra capacity from Glasgow to Troon was provided for the Open Golf Championship – though passengers to Largs had, temporarily, to change trains at Kilwinning.

Vandals have caused £60,000 of damage at the new Edinburgh Gateway rail/tram interchange due to open in December. £6m is being spent to minimise train disruption due to high seas between Saltcoats and Stevenston.

ScotRail has added extra services between Edinburgh and North Berwick (where platform lengthening has been completed) but overcrowding between Edinburgh and Musselburgh will remain until additional rolling stock becomes available. Prospects for a new station at Reston have improved following agreement that this could be served by new Trans-Pennine services from Manchester to Edinburgh rather than extension of a ScotRail 'local' service from Dunbar to Berwick on Tweed

A seven month delay until July 2017 has been announced for completion of Glasgow-Falkirk-Edinburgh electrification. ORR had again expressed concern about an inability to control rail project costs. ScotRail is to trial smartcards from 1 April 2017. They will have daily and weekly caps based on log-ins and log-outs by passengers. A supplier is being sought for relevant equipment and back office functions.

Two retired engineers have proposed a £300m 7.5mile monorail from central Glasgow via the Riverside Museum, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Braehead to Glasgow Airport in 18 minutes. They argue that this would see better usage than the proposed 'tram-train' via Paisley. Much construction would be alongside, or over, the Clyde and Cart. A City Deal spokesman involved in the tramtrain scheme saw the monorail scheme as interesting but not viable while William Forbes stressed the value of integrating airport rail services in the normal Scottish heavy rail network. Decisions on improved public transport airport access were seen as urgent (H 30&31 May, 1,2,3&4June) In a follow-up, a suggested variant has been priority for a monorail link between Paisley rail station and Glasgow Airport but most reaction favoured improved direct services from the airport through to Glasgow city centre.

Noting the low cost of the 5km Scottish Water tunnel being built under south Glasgow, Hamish Scott has suggested improved interchange in Glasgow by providing a 500 metre tunnel walkway/travelator from Glasgow Central to Glasgow Queen St stations – possibly costing only£20m after some allowance for the higher cost and safety requirements of passenger usage (H8July) Other opinion favours either a direct interchange between Central linked with rail link into St Enoch (already having a Subway station) or through surface services across Glasgow using the existing City Union line.

BUS, TRAM & TAXI

Following the lifting y the CMA of restrictions in Scotland on First cutting bus services (in the interests of maintaining bus/rail competition when First operated the ScotRail franchise), First has withdrawn all East

Lothian bus services and reduced services in the Borders – especially between Galashiels and Edinburgh where there is strong competition from the restored rail service. 90 First jobs are threatened but most gaps in East Lothian have been filled by other operators, including Lothian Buses (EN26May,H25&28May) Lothian Buses subsidiary, East Coast Buses has stepped in to buy the First depots at North Berwick and Musselburgh threatened with closure. Newer buses will be acquired and 90 First employees have been given the opportunity to transfer to East Coast.

Stagecoach is considering cuts in the west of Scotland due to falls in profitability. SWestrans has cut bus support in Dumfries and Galloway, including support for the Stranraer-Port Ryan electric bus. SPT expects that 2017-18 cuts in Scottish Government funding will require real cuts in bus support.

For England, a new Buses Bill has been introduced allowing 9 areas to introduce bus franchising with other areas also able to apply for permission to use such powers. The Bill also prohibits local authorities from setting up new municipal bus companies (LTT698 27May). Operators remain concerned about a potential loss of profits without compensation. In Scotland, a Bus Bill is not presently proposed but SPT has taken the initiative to develop a Strathclyde Bus Alliance of bus operators and local councils to reverse a 22% fall in bus use since 2005. The aim is to arrest the fall in patronage by 2020 and move to 3% annual growth through more reliable, greener and better integrated public transport – including effective bus priorities on principal corridors and smart ticketing (H19May)

The bus industry is making stronger calls for effective demand management, including enforced bus priorities and a review of parking charges. Prof David Begg has expanded on these issues in a report for the Greener Journeys bus lobby group, including action in London and Edinburgh to reverse the threats to bus reliability from expanded cycle lanes as well recent changes in Edinburgh to remove bus priorities outwith peaks. He criticises vocal middle class cyclists for ignoring the needs of a larger number of bus users (LTT69910June) Others see bus lanes as a disgraceful money-making scam (raising funds from penalty fines) 'without a shred of evidence that bus lanes assist traffic through Glasgow city centre'. Unlike Edinburgh, Glasgow City Council has rejected proposals that motorbikes should be allowed in bus lanes.

Evidence from Edinburgh suggests that bus times on Greenways have risen by up to 18 minutes in the past 10 Years. Buses linking south-west Edinburgh to the city centre have experienced further rises in delays with some bus users complaining that Edinburgh City Council is giving too much effort to improved conditions for cycling which were creating problems for bus operation. A similar issue exists in Glasgow.

Glasgow operator City Sprinter Ltd has lost its licence for two years due to unlawful operation, including lack of insurance. Stagecoach has withdrawn the St Andrews open-top tourist bus service due to low usage. Following local road congestion at the 2015 'T in the Park' event, special bus and coach access routes have been introduced for the 2016 event while all camping ticket holders have been given free Citylink travel to and from the event.

Edinburgh trams saw a 9% rise in passengers to 5.38m in the second year of operation. Cyclists have criticised tram chiefs for slow responses to making tram track less slippery at critical points. The Glasgow Subway closed for 4 weeks in July to allow renewal of depot access. SPT has provided alternative bus services which have had timekeeping hit by on-road delays. SPT has experienced pleas for more than two Subway stations to be disabled-friendly but costs of reconstruction in and around stations offers poor value within overall policies helping disabled access.

Transport for Edinburgh has opened a new Travelshop on Clifton Terrace opposite Waverley station Lothian Buses have varied timetables on orbital bus routes 18 and 32 with the former (Gyle to Royal Infirmary) including the unusual feature of a common route number but with some loss-making 'middle of day' services operated by First under contract from Edinburgh City Centre with Lothian bus users unable to use Lothian tickets on such services.

Edinburgh Airport has called in police to crack down on cabbies (including Uber) who pick up fares in the airport drop-off zone, 'poaching' custom from City Cabs as the official airport taxi provider. A debate is developing on the extent to which automated road travel could impact on the present expansion of Uber type weakly regulated taxi operation and on existing taxi and local bus services. Due to the regulatory and

social issues involved in automated on-road operation, a minimal impact is expected by 2020 but later impacts could be dramatic – including a fall in demand for car ownership, especially for use in larger cities.

A Falkirk group supporting cancer patients is seeking to provide car travel as a more convenient and less expensive way to reach hospitals often some distance away

ROADS & PARKING

Opening of the new Queensferry Road Crossing is now expected to be mid-May 2017 due to days lost by weather problems in April and May. The additional £22m Diamond Bridge Don crossing and approach roads has opened in north Aberdeen and options are being studied for an extra Dee Bridge in south Aberdeen.

Continuing work on £500m M8, M73 and M74 improvements in Lanarkshire will involve two months of lane restrictions in July and August. Grants from SPT will ensure more work on Arran roads and an improved Hawkhill roundabout. North Ayrshire Council also plans a £2m scheme to remove five bends on the B714 link from the Three Towns A78 Bypass to the planned A737 Dalry Bypass.

The first of Edinburgh's 20mph zones across the city will operate from the end of July but other schemes in Edinburgh and Scottish pilots elsewhere are likely to be slowed over the period to the local government elections in 2017

The Federation of Small Businesses in Scotland wants urgent action to tackle weaknesses in local and rural roads (and also on the public transport networks). In 2013 Audit Scotland called on Councils to make efficiency gains allowing better road maintenance. A follow-up report is due in August. Complaints continue about the poor condition of roads in Edinburgh

Despite vocal opposition, Edinburgh is to introduce Sunday parking charges and other 'anti-motorist' measures. Prof David Begg urges consideration of van charging at peaks to encourage off-peak deliveries. A study by Esure has found that residents in Edinburgh are paying more for parking near their homes than residents of several affluent London boroughs. Edinburgh annual fees are now £475 for high emission cars compared to £250 in Glasgow and £190 in Perth.

Glasgow residents wishing to park near their homes close to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are battling plans to charge £50 a year for a residents parking permit with no guarantee space will be available. 4000 objections have been made to Glasgow City Council proposals

Despite record fines for parking violations in Marischal St in Aberdeen city centre, little progress is being made in persuading visitors to the city centre to leave their cars at home or park further out

Road casualties in Scotland are at a record low, down 3% in 2015. Fatalities fell to 162 in 2015, compared to 203 in 2014 while serious injuries fell 6% as did child casualties. But serious injuries to cyclists rose from 159 to 164. (H30Jun)

AA has called for more attention to be given to trimming overgrown road verges and other vegetation obscuring road signs. There are also failures to keep road white line markings in good condition. Motorists, especially older ones, face the largest insurance hike in five years. Annual rises for those over 60 are at 24%

WALKING & CYCLING

Bike and Go is now being offered in Aberdeen, Dundee, Largs and Kilmarnock at a cost of £3.80 per day

For the first time AA has released a dedicated highway code for cyclists plus information on cycle training. There has been criticism of 'thoughtless' behaviour by cyclists riding on pavements

The north-east will gain from a joint venture by Sustrans, Nestrans, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City to provide £1.2m for investment in cycling and walking projects. Five towns across Aberdeenshire will gain plus 11 projects in Aberdeen and work on the Deeside Way around Aboyne.

Edinburgh City Council has revised plans for a 'main road' cycleway at Roseburn as an alternative to the more circuitous existing cycle route west from the city centre but bus operators, business and shopping interests continue to argue that the proposals give too much space to cyclists at a critical point on the road network also needing parking and delivery space.

The umbrella Faculty of Public Health based in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow has called for city and town infrastructure to encourage more walking, cycling and public transport. It recommends more space for pedestrians and cyclists and a major shift away from car use for local trips (H5July).

Broken pavements in Rose St and Picardy Place in Edinburgh have led to the City Council paying out almost £77,000 to injured pedestrians since 2014.

A new medical study had found that a 15 minute brisk walk each day can reduce the risk of death among older people. For younger people, a higher target for brisk activity is recommended.

Hillwalkers are being urged to 'adopt a path' and report on its condition so that volunteers and others can carry out remedial work. Greater use is causing paths to deteriorate but the aim over 5 years is to improve 80 miles of paths while offering over 1,000 days of volunteering opportunities.

PROPERTY & PLANNING

Against the advice of city planners, Edinburgh City Council has approved Sir David Murray's plans for the Garden District on the west side of Edinburgh just south of the Airport Edinburgh International Business Gateway Zone (EIBG). Phase 1 includes 1,350 homes with an eventual build of at least 3,500. Though access routes require some improvement, the site is close to Edinburgh tram stops and also near the Edinburgh Gateway station due to open in December. 23 acres of land in the EIBG zone has also been identified for 525 hotel rooms, office space and 200 houses.

East of Edinburgh, plans for 300 extra houses in Gullane are being opposed by locals though large housing development is proceeding at Shawfair, close to the new station on the reopened Borders railway.

Revised plans to bring a cafe culture to George St in Edinburgh have been unveiled. They have been prepared by Ironside Farrar and include widened pavements and a segregated cycle route. Facelift costs may reach £28m with extra space for street cafes, bikes and festivals. Though George St has great potential, queries have been made about the scale of the costs and the impact on public transport flows and reliability. Others want more car parking in the city centre though some spaces will be provided in the adjacent and redeveloped St James Centre.

Edinburgh City Council is seen as having missed an opportunity by creating new council offices adjacent to Waverley station rather than using this vacant space to create an integrated bus/rail hub.

Shopping and leisure development in Scotland faces a threat from Brexit turmoil and the prospect of a second independence referendum. In Scotland, 9 of the 27 main shopping centres have experienced deteriorating rents with the gravitational pull of Glasgow having particular adverse impacts on Ayr, Cumbernauld, Greenock, Hamilton and Irvine (H29June). But flagship projects in City Deals for Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow could provide a catalyst for additional private sector funding.

Tesco has ceased 24 hour operation at 3 of its major stores in Scotland, reflecting the impact of a shift to online shopping and use of convenience stores

The final report from a government-appointed panel has urged reformed governance (and funding) to address the gap in transport infrastructure delivery to support new housing and economic development. It recommends replacing the strategic development plans that cover Scotland's four largest conurbations (Glasgow/Clyde Valley, the north east, Perth/Angus/north Fife and Edinburgh/South-east) with an enhanced National Planning Framework (NPF). City Deals had worsened, rather than aided, integrated planning and funding reform. The revised NPF should set regional housing targets and be more integrated with other Government policies, including the National Transport Strategy. A National Infrastructure

Agency is recommended with Section 75 agreements streamlined and a Regional Infrastructure Levy investigated along with a bolder approach to infrastructure investment (LTT700 24 June plus *Barriers to housebuilding and how we can overcome them* by Mike Stephen, partner in Real Estate team at Brodies LLP, Herald Business Magazine 23 June)

The Chief Executive of Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce has called for faster action on plans announced last year for a revival of Aberdeen city centre as a pivotal feature of the region, including a pedestrianisation of the main city centre street, Union St, as part of a masterplan for a more vital and attractive city core. Aberdeen Football Club has announced that its football ground just north of the city centre is to move to a new location close to the about to open Western Peripheral Road by 2019-20.

The Duke of Fife is involved in a legal dispute with Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Councils over proposals that he contribute £7.5m as a landowner contribution arising from his plans for Scotland's largest new town at Chapelton of Elsick with an eventual 8,000 homes. He argues that part of the proposed contribution will be used for purposes not related to the new town, including a new bridge over the River Dee and a train station at Kintore. The Court of Session has already slashed the proposed charge but the Councils involved are appealing to the Supreme Court in London. The crucial issue is the nature of strategic infrastructure funding in the north-east and the division of funding between developers, Councils and the Scottish Government (H28May).

Glasgow City Council is pursuing plans to cover over part of the M8 near Charing Cross to create more green space and reduce intrusion of traffic noise.

South Lanarkshire has changed its Local Development Plan to permit a new location for the Lanarkshire campus of the University of the West of Scotland on the edge of Hamilton rather than a location at Eurocentral in North Lanarkshire.

Edinburgh City Council wants improved rail services and more development along the Shotts rail line

RESEARCH & STATISTICS

Statistics

Scotland's population has risen to a record 5.3m, aided by net immigration. East Lothian, up 11.1%, has had the sharpest growth since 2005 with the largest falls being in Inverclyde and Argyll & Bute.

New data shows that by 2014 Scotland had achieved a 45.8% cut in greenhouse gas emissions, ahead of the interim target to deliver a 42% cut by 2020. The 2014 outcome was influenced by a less cold winter and emissions from the transport sector continue to rise, especially if air travel is included. Revised targets are being considered.

Glasgow Airport had its busiest ever May with 828,544 passengers, a 5.5% rise on the previous year with domestic growth, aided by new Flybe routes to Newquay, Exeter and Cardiff, almost as high as international passengers. Aberdeen passengers in May were down 10.4% but Edinburgh saw 8.5% growth to 1.11m passengers with international passengers up 15.7% but domestic passengers down 0.5%. The 11 HIAL airports handled 1.48m passengers in 2015/16, only 6,000 up on the previous year due to downturns in oil and gas activity. Barra and Tiree passengers were up more than 10% with Inverness up 2%

In 2015 Glasgow attracted more international conference delegates than New York, Washington on Beijing. Glasgow has risen to 28th position in international attendance at conferences with Edinburgh ranked at 66 and Manchester at 123. Despite more Scots travelling abroad and a slight dip in international visitors, the Scottish economy gained from more Scots holidaying in Scotland plus more visitors from other parts of the UK (H21May)

GB road traffic reached an all-time high in 2015. It is now 1% above the previous 2007 peak but road movement per head is down due to population growth. Compared to 2014, car traffic is up 1.1% but with zero growth in most urban areas and steeper falls in London. Bus miles continue to fall while van and HGV

traffic is 4.2% and 3.7% up on 2014. By region, East England (excluding London) saw the highest growth in traffic – up 7% since 2002/03 with Scotland following at 6% (despite a lower rate of population growth). Transport Scotland will publish revised growth forecasts and scenario testing for road and rail later in 2016. Rail passenger kilometre growth continues but rail freight has contracted (LTT698 27May)

Both the Scottish and Welsh Government have withdrawn from the National Travel Survey, saying it offers poor value and uncertain outcomes due to defects in sampling and gaining representative views.

RAC Fuel Watch data shows that the average cost of filling a family car is up £5 since February. Petrol and diesel costs per litre have risen to the 109/111p range

A9 Safety Group report that KSIs are down 60% since the introduction of continuous speed cameras. SPOKES report record levels of commuter cycling in Edinburgh – with cycles now 22.7% of total vehicles on Lothian Road in Edinburgh between 8 and 9am. The number of cars has fallen 20% since the first SPOKES survey in 2007.

Data for the first six months of Borders Rail operation shows passenger trips 22% above forecasts but considerable variations for trips from individual stations as shown below

| | <u>Above</u> | Forecast | Actual | | <u>Below</u> | Forecast | Actual |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| Tweedbank | | 19 | 184 | Edinburgh Waverley | | 228 | 205 |
| Galashiels | | 21 | 105 | Eskbank | | 115 | 66 |
| Stow | | 5 | 24 | Gorebridge | | 79 | 39 |
| Newtongrange | | 46 | 50 | Shawfair | | 54 | 9 |
| Brunstane/Newcraighall | | 1 | 11 | | | | |
| | <u>Total Forecast</u> | | 568 thousand | <u>Actual usage</u> | | | 694 thousand |

Details of trip destinations have not been published but actual usage has eased back, as expected, from very high initial usage. Transport Scotland appears to have under-estimated levels of initial usage and a continuing rise in tourist leisure and social uses of the line while over-estimating, notably in the case of Shawfair but also with respect to Eskbank and Gorebridge, a rise in shorter distance commuting into Edinburgh which will be more dependent on further housing development and integrated bus/rail services and ticketing. Newcraighall has gained from being a park and ride site for trips to the Borders, avoiding the need to start trips from Waverley while Newtongrange has the benefit of being close to the Scottish Mining Museum and other sporting facilities. Stow and Tweedbank appear to have gained, not only from initial and continuing tourist trips but also from local trips into Galashiels as well as trips to Midlothian and Edinburgh. Tweedbank has the added benefit of much larger park and ride space than at Galashiels, pulling in Borders car users for a higher proportion of trips to Edinburgh. A fuller assessment is likely to be published after a full year of usage and for continuing years. As well as shifts from car use, many bus users between the Melrose/Selkirk/Galashiels and Edinburgh/Midlothian have shifted to rail use.

In addition to a 9% rise in Edinburgh tram passengers to 5.38m in 2015-16, Lothian Buses carried 121m passengers in 2015, up 2m on 2014

Research

Frontier Economics, in a report commissioned by Heathrow Airport, has concluded that a third runway at Heathrow would bring £890m of extra trade to Scotland and a £1.7m annual benefit for the UK as a whole

The UK government is intensifying research and legislation to assist the growth in driverless cars and related employment in what could be a high growth sector. The first known fatal accident involving a self-driving vehicle has taken place in Florida. The vehicle occupant was killed due to the vehicle's failure to detect a white-sided vehicle crossing in front. A survey by IAM RoadSmart (formerly the Institute of Advanced Motorists) of British drivers found that 65% want to see human drivers at the wheel. Options for appropriate speed limits for autonomous road vehicles are considered by Phil Goodwin in LTT700 24 June.

Research for AA finds that education and information on running costs is likely to see half-a-million electric road vehicles in use in Britain by 2020. UK sales of plug-in cars are showing a 22.7% annual rise with around 10% of sales in Scotland but total UK sales in the past year were 10,496.

ESP Group research has found that, out of 33 cities in the UK, Edinburgh was the easiest city to travel around in with Glasgow ranked at Number 5. People over 60 were found to retain a stronger preference for car use.

A survey by Network Rail has found that almost one in four of disabled rail passengers did not find their trips 'easy'. NR Chief Executive Mark Carne has committed to further change to make sure that 'inclusivity is deeply embedded in our culture'

A new report from Citizens Advice Scotland, *Round the Bend*, has collated information on over 1,200 trips from 133 home locations with a focus on travel times and costs to workplaces, supermarkets, GP surgery, hospital, jobcentre, college, banks and post offices. Bus fares varied widely from zero for concession card holders, a minimum average of 7p per mile for other users and a maximum of £1.80 with costs high and service frequency poor in many rural areas. Those on jobseekers allowance could find 15% of their income taken up in a jobcentre return trip. Total SPT and local authority annual support for bus services was £48m plus Scottish Government support of almost £200m for free bus travel by concession card holders.

Scottish Enterprise has awarded Route Monkey of Livingston £285,000 to develop software enabling drivers of battery powered vehicles to plan the best routes and avoid 'range anxiety'

Government is planning to raise penalty points and fines for motorists using mobile phones but RAC had found that most drivers think this will have little impact on driver behaviour. The main impact on change was likely to be effective enforcement of existing law alongside some rise in penalties.

Napier TRI research has found that both Scottish rail infrastructure costs and Glasgow Fastlink bus infrastructure costs considerably above norms in mainland Europe

Research at the University of Glasgow, led by Dr Jonathan Olsen, has concluded that opening of the controversial urban M74 has failed to reduce accidents in the surrounding local area. Accidents had fallen since 1997 but there was no clear evidence of any link with the urban M74. Other factors were the principal reasons for the fall in road accidents.

World Health Organisation has placed Glasgow on the list of cities breaching safe limits for air pollution contributing to strokes, heart attacks, kidney damage and eye problems

BUSINESS & PERSONNEL

Derek Mackay is promoted from Minister for Transport to Cabinet Secretary for Finance while Keith Brown, former Infrastructure Secretary, takes on wider responsibilities for the Economy

Fergus Ewing becomes Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Connectivity (including transport)

Humza Yousaf becomes Minister for Transport and Islands. Angela Constance takes on responsibility for Communities, Equalities and Local Government Reform with Kevin Stewart becoming Minister for Local Government and Housing (These changes leave some confusion of responsibility for the future role of transport in the economy and society but suggest that the prime interest in investment may be on inter-regional and international transport with cities left to develop their own views on transport within limited funding plus some City Deal supplements)

Jonathan Hinkles is returning to Loganair as managing director after four years with Virgin Atlantic A Macaulay has retired as SESTRAN director and is replaced by George Eckton but remains as Chair of HSR Scotland. Ron Smith has moved from CHC Helicopters to be Chief Executive at Prestwick Airport.

Alexander Dennis of Falkirk has won a £50m order for 200 buses for First Group. Over the last three years, First has invested £52m in 310 new buses for use in Scotland.

JHP Transport has relocated from Shotts to a new distribution complex at Sandilands close to M74. Malcolm Logistics, based in Paisley, has been named Haulier of the Year at the 31st Motor Transport Awards in London

At the Scottish Transport Awards, Lothian Buses was Public Transport Operator of the Year with Lothian Country Buses also gaining the Best Bus Service Award. Johnstone rail station Park & Ride won Integrated Project of the Year with Borders Rail selected as the Most Innovative Scheme

Stagecoach report a more challenging year for rail and the sale of the retail element of megabus Europe to German coach operator FlixBus

After losing the ScotRail franchise in 2015, First Group has allied with Hong Kong MTR to bid for Stagecoach's franchise from London to the 'inner'south-west of England. First and Stagecoach are short-listed for the next franchise

Glasgow-based Allied Vehicles have sold more than half of all wheelchair-accessible vehicles sold in the UK under the Motability scheme. Founded in 1993, Allied now has 39% of revenue from motability sales

Publications

TRI at Napier University has published its report for 2015. Set up in 1996, the TRI is now incorporated in the School of Engineering and Built Environment. It introduced an electric vehicle showcase event in 2015 and will be repeating this on 16 October 2016. TRI is looking for further grant opportunities. It has substantial EU grants which may be affected by Brexit. Research themes include Sustainable Transport and Energy, international comparisons of public transport, prospects for timber by rail in Scotland, international container and North Sea developments and national and EU freight prospects. PhDs completed in 2015 included Sarah Borthwick's thesis on '*The Potential for 'Green' fiscal measures to influence Individuals*'
TRI is based at the Merchiston Campus, 10 Colinton Rd, Edinburgh EH10 5DT email tri@napier.ac.uk

The Impact of Congestion on Bus Passengers, written by Prof David Begg for Greener Journeys the bus lobby group (see LTT699 10 June)

Linking north to south : A review of the HS2 Report, Greengauge, (see LTT699 10 June)

Round the Bend, Report from Citizens Advice Scotland on travel times, distances and costs to essential services, June 2016

The National Infrastructure Assessment – process and methodology, a consultation (responses sought by 5 August)

Empowering planning to deliver great places Final Report of government-appointed panel reviewing Scotland's spatial planning system . Members:-

Crawford Beveridge, Chair of Scottish Government's Council of Economic Advisors

Petra Biberbach, Chief Executive of PAS (formerly Planning Aid Scotland)

John Hamilton, Chief Executive of Winchburgh Developments Ltd