

The Highland Council
Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee

16 November 2016

Agenda Item	6
Report No	BSAC/ 22/16

Rail Services and Fares

Report by Director of Development and Infrastructure

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the background to the Scotrail Franchise and to provide information on the current Fare structure and the various Stakeholder engagement groups.

1. Background

1.1 Under the Railways Act 2005 the Scottish Government and the UK Government agreed that Scottish Ministers would take greater responsibility for rail powers in Scotland, including:

- transfer of the Strategic Rail Authority's powers to manage and monitor the performance of ScotRail services;
- sole responsibility for securing future ScotRail franchises;
- power to take long term, strategic decisions about future investment; and
- power to fund and specify where resources are targeted by Network Rail on track maintenance and investment in Scotland.

1.2 The ScotRail franchise operates over 2,270 train services each day, delivering 86 million passenger journeys per year and is the single biggest contract let by Scottish Ministers, worth a total value of over £7 billion over 10 years.

1.3 The ScotRail passenger rail franchise was awarded in October 2014 and new operations commenced on the 1 April 2015.

1.4 The ScotRail franchise covers all services apart from services that operate across the Anglo-Scottish border by other operators (Virgin, East Coast, TransPennine, Cross Country and the Caledonian Sleeper).

2. ScotRail Franchise Agreement

2.1 The Franchise Agreement is a working document between the Scottish Ministers and the franchisee (Abellio). It includes Schedules on:

- passenger Service Obligations;
- maintaining and Enhancing Stations, Depots and Trains;
- fares;
- Train Operating Performance / KPI's and Journey Time Metric; and

- franchise management

2.2 Relevant franchise commitments specifically relating to the Badenoch & Strathspey (and wider Highland Council) area are:

- transformation of the quality of inter-city services by introducing a fully refurbished fleet of High Speed Trains by December 2018 to connect the seven cities. The refurbishment will deliver:
 - high quality on-board service, buffet and at seat catering;
 - a proper First Class offer for business travellers;
 - more toilets, luggage space and bike accommodation; and
 - improved journey times and connectivity between the key cities;
- working with partners to attract international attention to the scenic beauty of Scotland's railways with major upgrades to Scotland's scenic trains to enhance the tourist experience:
 - specially refurbished trains to align seats with windows;
 - more luggage, cycle and ski storage;
 - a Tourist Ambassador and improved on board catering that showcases local Scottish produce; and
 - special events in the low season to attract customers.
- a standard class fare between any two Scottish cities starting at £5
 - a new first class advance fare of £7.50 on the same routes;
 - a new carnet to allow customers to choose where they want to travel, how many tickets they want to buy and how long they need them to be valid; and
 - launch of Club50, a significantly improved version of Club55.

3. Passenger Levels

3.1 Passenger figures obtained from stations within the Badenoch and Strathspey area are attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.2 The table shows a steady increase in passenger numbers culminating in an overall increase of approximately 97% when comparing 2014/15 figures with 2004/05.

4. Fares

4.1 As mentioned in Section 2.2, there are a range of lower fares exists for "savvy travellers who can plan ahead to snap up the best deals". These lower fares allow savings of up to a level of 75% off when booked in advance. Advance Single tickets are available from 12 weeks before travel and like airline tickets the cheapest fares are available at quieter times.

4.2 Discount tickets are also available through the following Railcard schemes:

- Two Together Railcard - With a Two Together Railcard you get savings of 1/3 on fares across Britain, for any two named people aged 16 or over who travel together;
- Disabled Persons Railcard – If eligible you can save 1/3 on fares across Britain for you and a companion with a Disabled Persons Railcard;
- 16-25 Railcard – If you're aged 16-25 or are studying full time, you can get 1/3 off all train travel for £30 a year;
- Friends & Family Railcard – For £30 a year, you can get 1/3 off train travel for up to four adults and 60% off for up to four kids;
- Senior Railcard – If you're over 60 you can save 1/3 on your train fares;
- Young Scot National Entitlement Card (YSNEC) – If you're aged 16-18 and have a YSNEC, you can get discounts on your train travel in Scotland. This includes 1/3 off most rail fares and 50% off weekly and monthly tickets;
- Highland Railcard – A Highland Railcard can save 50% on selected routes. When it is used, up to two kids can travel for a flat fare of only £2 return each;
- Under 25 Advance – The Under 25 Advance Purchase discount entitles you to 10% off Advance fares on ScotRail services, for Standard Class travel on a range of longer distance routes. It is available to anyone under the age of 25, exclusively on Smartcard;
- Club 50 – Club 50 is ScotRail's exclusive club for people 50 or over and membership costs £15 per person for a year. As a member you'll get a year-round 20% discount on Off-Peak and Advance tickets purchased online. Throughout the year you'll also benefit from other exclusive offers and deals such as free on-board refreshments;
- Kids go Free – With a Kids Go Free ticket, travel off-peak any day of the week and up to two children aged 5-15 can travel free with each adult; and
- Friends Fare – Travelling as a group of three or four saves money on all your tickets.

4.3 The Highland Railcard is only available on selected routes for people living in selected postcodes.

4.4 The Highland Railcard is available to anyone aged 16 or over, permanently living in the following postcode areas:

- All IV except: IV12, IV30, IV31, IV32, IV36
- All KW
- All HS
- PA20 to PA38, PA41 to PA49, PA60 to PA78
- PH16, PH17, PH30 to PH44, PH49, PH50
- FK20, FK21
- G83

4.5 The Highland Railcard is only available on the following routes:

- Mallaig / Fort William / Oban to/from Glasgow;
- Wick / Thurso to/from Inverness; and
- Kyle of Lochalsh to/from Inverness.

5. Rail Stakeholder Engagement

5.1 Highland Mainline Community Rail Partnership (HMCRP) is a partnership designed to form a bridge between the railway and local communities, and works with community groups, businesses and organisations in the area as well as the rail industry to encourage more locals and visitors to use trains.

5.2 The HMCRP embraces the rail route from Dunkeld and Birnam to Carrbridge, taking in Pitlochry, Blair Atholl, Dalwhinnie, Newtonmore, Kingussie, and Aviemore.

5.3 HITRANS is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland which were established through the 2005 Transport (Scotland) Act.

5.4 Regional Transport Partnerships were established to strengthen the planning and delivery of regional transport so that it better serves the needs of people and businesses. HITRANS brings together local authorities and other key stakeholders to take a strategic approach to transport in their area. HITRANS is, of course, only one of a number of organisations which determine transport provision in our area.

5.5 In terms of Rail engagement HITRANS runs three tiers of Rail Forums:

- the **Rail Advisory Group (RAG)** is the working group consisting of representatives from HITRANS, Network Rail, First ScotRail, Passenger Focus, Transport Scotland and local authority transport officers. This body meets 3 or 4 times per year and directly informs HITRANS policy and workstreams;
- the **Rail Stakeholder Group (RSG)** acts as the umbrella group for wider industry, public sector, voluntary and heritage interests and features formal presentations from leading industry figures in a conference style format; and
- the **Rail Users Group (RUG)** covers the voluntary rail user groups for the rural North Highland and West Highland Lines. This forum enables the views of the members of the groups to engage with HITRANS in twice yearly meetings.

6. Resource, Legal, Equality, Climate Change/CARBON CLEVER, Risk, Gaelic and Rural Implications

6.1 No implications are expected from this report.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:

- note the report including fare structure / railcards;
- note the opportunities to provide feedback through the various stakeholder groups; and
- write to the Scottish Government seeking fair and equitable fares for the rural parts of the Highland and Islands HITRANS area, including Badenoch and Strathspey.

Designation: Director of Development & Infrastructure

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APPENDIX 1 – Passenger figures per year between 04/05 and 14/15

YEAR/PAX FIGURES											
STATION	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
AVIEMORE	74999	91368	101880	115542	121386	125088	132450	132337	136740	141300	151235
CARRBRIDGE	1879	2995	3956	5437	3798	4503	5117	5660	4495	5567	6277
DALWHINNIE	1575	2009	1776	1975	2298	2214	1894	2008	2210	2490	2522
KINGUSSIE	23653	30045	32274	33427	38110	35852	38564	40381	41051	41421	42668
NEWTONMORE	5415	6854	6644	7062	7451	7992	9494	9436	9003	8348	8710
TOTAL	107521	133271	146530	163443	173043	175649	187519	189822	193499	199127	211412