

Minutes

Board meeting

Date: Wednesday 16 September 2015

Location: Carlton Hotel, Edinburgh

Time: 10.02 – 12.34

Present

Board Members

Jeff Halliwell (The Chair)	JH
Dr Stewart Burgess CBE	SB
Marian Lauder MBE	ML
Stephen Locke	SL
Theo de Pencier	TdP
Paul Rowen	PR
Professor Paul Salveson MBE	PS
Phillip Mendelsohn	PM
Diane McCrea	DM
Isabel Liu	IL

Executive in attendance

Anthony Smith	AS	Chief Executive
David Sidebottom	DS	Passenger Director
Guy Dangerfield	GD	Road User Director
Sara Nelson	SN	Head of Communications
Jon Carter	JC	Head of Business Services
Mike Hewitson	MH	Head of Policy and Issues
Douglas Dalziel	DD	Head of Business Innovation
Vivienne Carter	VC	Change Manager
Martin Clarke	MC	Business Support Executive
Keith Bailey	KB	Senior Insight Advisor

Guest Speakers

Phil Verster	PV	ScotRail/Network Rail Alliance
Peter Strachan	PSt	Caledonian Sleeper

Apologies

Bob Linnard	BL
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22 members of the public attended the meeting

Part A: Preliminary

1.0 Chair's opening remarks; apologies

JH welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the members of the public for attending today and at the reception held at the Scottish Parliament on 15 September. He hoped they would attend the conference that afternoon. He introduced Transport Focus as a body which was clearly at arms-length from government and one which included members on its Board appointed by the devolved administrations. As the Board was meeting in Edinburgh there was a focus on Scottish affairs with presentations from two guest speakers, but Transport Focus remained a GB-wide body with duties towards the travelling public, albeit in different forms, throughout Great Britain.

Apologies had been received from Bob Linnard (BL).

2.0 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Board **approved** the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July in London, subject to minor corrections.

3.0 Board action matrix

Item	Date	Issue	Action	Owner	Due	Status
BM 249	13/11/14	NRPS retender	Produce deliverable programme for successful retendering in one year's time	IW	Sep 2015	Ongoing
BM 250	12/02/15	Passenger satisfaction with Transport Focus	The Passenger Contact Group should review the 70% satisfaction target, and report its findings back to the Board.	DS	Nov 2015	The Contact Group was yet to conduct a review. The due date was extended to September 2015, with a report back to the Board in November Ongoing
BM 251	12/02/15	Board Membership Code	Update the Board Membership Code to further take into account potential conflicts of interest in relation to our additional remit	JC	Nov 2015	The second version draft had been sent to the DfT for comment. JC would bring the Code back to the Board at the earliest opportunity Ongoing

4.0 Chairman's report

JH reported that he was continuing his induction with stakeholders and ministers. A full update had been provided separately.

Part B: Transport Users' affairs

1.0 ScotRail franchise update (Guest Speaker)

Phil Verster, Managing Director, ScotRail/Network Rail Alliance

PV was welcomed to the meeting by JH. PV said it had been a frenetic start to the franchise alliance as so much had to be put in place, not least the alliance with Network Rail. He was hopeful of an upward shift in passenger satisfaction in the next wave of NRPS results.

PV highlighted the most important issues since the start of the franchise:

- 44-day closure of the Winchburgh Tunnel: this involved redirecting trains through other lines and had added 20 minutes on to a 52 minute journey. Work was delivered on time and on budget. ScotRail kept customer focus at a high level using community messages, web, social media and information at stations to keep the public informed and, as a result, only 39 complaints were received. PV felt that Scotland was connected to the railway at a different emotional level to the rest of the UK and is more understanding of changes being made.
- Club 55: product had been closed and then Club 50 was introduced. Tactically, this should have been done the other way round. PV expected to have 100,000 in Club 50 by the end of October. Club 50 gave 10%-20% discount on tickets and was an ongoing offer.
- Relaunch community rail partnerships: The focus was on a footprint in the local communities and engaging with Government Town Centre Plus schemes and working with Homes for Scotland. Taking cycling as an example, PV was working with Cycling Scotland on a pilot scheme to change or introduce cycle routes into stations to increase the number of people cycling to their nearest station. He was looking at the issue of cyclists and taxis at Edinburgh Waverley station and increasing Bike & Go facilities in stations.
- Smartcards: ScotRail was looking to use ticketing systems that promote multi-modal travel.
- Network: PV said that Scotland covered a vast area and every rail link across the network varied in the contribution it made to the local community e.g. rail use in the Highlands was different to the Strathclyde commuter users.
- A Tourism Manager had been appointed.
- Borders Railway: launched with a spectacular event which included the presence of HM The Queen. The Borders Railway would contribute to the development of the communities along the route. There were 100 development sites across the Borders where ScotRail would, if possible, support tourist attractions. There was a great opportunity for businesses to form and grow in the Borders so that a flow of people from Edinburgh as well as to Edinburgh could be realised.
- Alliance – Network Rail and Abellio: merging teams in both organisations had been largely achieved but more needed to be done to showcase the improvements that had been made.

PV set out five key principles for the alliance:

- Common language
- Customer first
- Improve what we do
- Safe and punctual
- Treat money as if it were our own

In addition, four actions had been agreed to deliver on these principles:

- Lean thinking
- Inspire programme of customer focus/excellence
- Employee engagement
- Leadership visibility

PV concluded that if the behaviour of the organisation and his people was correct then the rest would follow.

JH thanked PV for his presentation and called for questions and discussion.

PM noted that Alliance staff were good with customers but there was a problem with the gatelines at Glasgow Central Station. He wondered whether this might be a plan to maximise the retail opportunities rather than the customer experience. Did ScotRail have enough resources and were they in the right place? It felt like more space was needed on the platform side. PV said the gatelines were used to ensure that ticketless travel was contained. A shift in behaviour in how people buy tickets was also needed; for example he wanted to see a move towards 60% of journeys made by smartcards by 2019 - 50% of travellers buy in cash at ticket offices at present. Many passengers wanted to buy tickets on trains so there was a real challenge. Putting more staff on the gatelines would help, and promoting "buy before you board" would feature in ScotRail's plans.

PS was interested in PV's remarks about economic regeneration in the Borders; he asked how the new railway could contribute to this and how, in particular, stations could become hubs for economic activity. PV said Scottish Borders Council was working closely with him on, for example, Tweedbank Station and how the use of the surrounding area as an industrial park development could be linked to travel. Whilst a commuter station, there was space at Tweedbank for entrepreneurs. Encouraging the communities along the route to say what they want from their stations would be important; minibus services to connect with other towns and developments was one example of what might be asked for.

On freight, PV said the largely single line, albeit with loops, could create operational challenges so no freight traffic was currently planned, although this should not be excluded for the future.

SL asked whether smartcards were planned for commuters only or for all travellers. PV said he would like to see multi-modal products so they can be used for longer train journeys and local bus travel. This would encourage their use.

AS asked about the Alliance and the challenge of mixed behaviours. What would be the difference in Scotland – how would it succeed where other alliances had not? PV said the Alliance was complex – how could it be otherwise? It was like a marriage in that some work and some don't but that did not mean that the institution was flawed.

SB asked PV to elaborate on his view that people were more emotionally engaged in Scotland. PV said that Scots just loved the railway in a way that did not appear to be the case elsewhere.

JH thanked PV for his contribution to the board meeting and welcomed his commitment to putting the passenger first in the new ScotRail franchise. He, too, looked forward to the next NRPS results.

2.0 Caledonian Sleeper franchise update

Peter Strachan, Managing Director, Caledonian Sleeper, was welcomed to the meeting.

PSt said he would discuss his vision for the Sleeper, the first six months of the franchise and what's to come/new rolling stock in 2018.

On vision, the aim was to deliver a flagship service, an iconic brand to be proud of. In this respect, passengers would be regarded as guests, underlying a clear hospitality focus.

Operationally, partnerships had been created with GB Rail Freight to supply motive power and drivers; with the Alstom Group for new rolling stock; and with Abellio in Inverness for level five maintenance. They were also partnering with many Scottish small and medium-sized businesses for various services including the design of the new uniform (the new tartan was registered and the uniforms made from Harris Tweed) and catering. RSF was a start-up venture to service the Sleeper with locally-sourced food, which now employed eight staff and had expanded so that the Sleeper was now only 50% of their business, a great result. The Sleeper would see seasonal menus as many of the guests were regular travellers.

The berths now had new linen which was already proving popular. Off-train, research had shown that the website was clunky and it was not designed for the particular needs of the Sleeper. It now had an improved design and 'theatre style' booking so passengers can select the berth of their choice.

In respect of stations, which attracted the lowest customer feedback scores, a new guest lounge had been provided at Inverness, although improvements were needed in Perth, Stirling, Dundee and Leuchars.

The new fleet was obviously an exciting development. CAF were providing 75 new vehicles, with four types of accommodation available. Lockers would be provided for seated passengers; there would also be pod flat-bed seats, standard class and first class berths with ensuite toilet and shower. The new Club Car/lounge car would have an improved galley service and facilities. Currently at the final design stage with the team at CAF, this was a unique opportunity to secure the future for this iconic, Scottish service.

JH thanked PSt for his presentation and asked what he sees as his target market. PSt said this was currently 50/50 leisure/business but varied considerably by route and by season. Whilst current markets were the starting point, there was also a potentially untapped corporate market in industries such as oil and gas at Aberdeen. Another aim was to develop the off-peak leisure business with Fort William tourism providers and, concurrently, the overseas market, since only 4% of travellers were currently from overseas. The overseas markets could be more demanding but the greater number of accommodation options would be central to exploiting this potential.

PS asked about growing the market through stopping at more stations. Whilst the service was contracted to deliver the current stops and routes, the company was looking at other options in the West Midlands, North West and indeed Scotland. Stopping times at night in new locations were an obvious concern. Future thoughts included a service to Southampton (for the cruise market) and the possibility of making connections with international services at King's Cross and / or St Pancras.

IL wondered about the tourism market and, thinking about airline models, would entry-level offers be available? PSt said that sleeper fares were unregulated but it was important to maintain a range of options, hence the retention of the seated carriages. In this respect, Megabus services were an obvious competitor. The Sleeper also now offered a 12 month booking horizon and, whilst 'bargain berths' were no longer offered, there would be many special offers. The prices of the various accommodation options were still the subject of some discussion. AS felt that prices had crept up a bit and felt that the Sleeper risked being seen as expensive. This particularly might be an issue with the HS2 disruption at Euston. PSt said current and future prices would be kept under review; in fact some fares were lower than under the previous operator. He agreed Euston was a challenge for all operators and he was discussing platform options with Network Rail and HS2.

JH thanked PSt for his contribution to the meeting. He reminded everyone that Anglo-Scottish services in all their forms remained an important area of work for Transport Focus and he looked forward to working with all service providers to ensure passengers priorities were at the forefront of service developments.

3.0 Extreme Weather Report

KB presented the findings of the Extreme Weather research and reminded the board that interpretations of extreme weather can vary. Prolonged snowfall, for example, may not be regarded as extreme in Scotland, and there was a feeling that services should be able to operate in most conditions. Weather related delays were not seen as the same as delays due to signalling problems.

Passengers expectations were interesting; the research suggested that trains were seen as a more reliable option (over roads) so in fact needed to be able to carry more people. Passengers generally appeared not to understand the impact of extreme weather on train operations – for example, getting to the depot, fallen trees over lines – there was probably a need to educate people in this respect, although it might be considered that in anticipation of bad weather, extra activities such as line patrols would be the norm rather than the exception. This was linked to the fact that passengers generally wanted a frequent service, *enhanced* when the weather is bad, and punctual. Getting a seat when more people were travelling meant a desire for longer trains. Passengers were asked to consider two options for timetabling when extreme weather is forecast: a full timetable runs with extended journey times but with few if any disruptions or a reduced timetable runs with less likelihood of disruption but with potential for crowding. The first option was much preferred as overcrowding puts people off travelling.

One of the main issues was trust - or lack of it. Passengers wanted the TOCs to have their best interests at heart rather than just be avoiding penalties. Safety was less of an issue for passengers. They were more concerned about their personal safety, rather than train accidents. In addition, passengers wanted the information given to be accurate, consistent, informative, clear, up-to-date, timely, tailored, accessible and believable.

From this research, the following recommendations have been made:

- Increase the rail network's resilience to extreme weather.
- Publicly commit to run the full timetable unless safety would be compromised;
- Develop means of 'route proving' lines as delaying the start of service until 11am attracts strong negative reaction from passengers.
- Communication improvements are needed to help passengers understand why actions have been taken. TOCs need to be transparent about the reasons for their actions.
- Temporary timetables should be provided as far in advance as possible and ideally 24 hours in advance.
- TOCs should make the latest route by route information available prominently for both the current service and a forward view. There is a need to give a clear indication about what service will run later and tomorrow.

PV welcomed the research as he had worked on 'both sides' of the railway, and was clear that safety always comes first. Commercial considerations were rarely, if ever, taken into account in these circumstances. KB suggested passengers think differently; there

was also a perception that ScotRail was too cautious and perhaps too quick to suspend services when bad weather looms.

The need for more information, and to improve the levels of trust between train operators and passengers, were seen as the policy priorities. If passengers don't believe what the TOCs are saying – and they see them as hiding behind extreme weather as an excuse – they may not trust any information provided, however accurate and helpful it is.

JH thanked KB for his presentation and thanked PV and PSt for responding to the research and the questions it raised.

Part C: Workplan report

1.0 Making a difference for transport users: how are we doing so far this year?

AS had provided an updated Workplan report for 2015/16 and the Board discussed the key objectives contained within it.

Objective 1.1 – Bus Punctuality Project. DS looked at case studies and causes of delays and how to improve punctuality. Six workshops had been held and were well attended. The Traffic Commissioners appreciated the chance to discuss issues and reinvigorate working partnerships. A summary was being prepared and best practice would be shared. On the Buses Bill, DfT was consulting with stakeholders and holding seminars.

Objective 1.2 – road users priorities. GD reported that the research was complete but priorities for HGV drivers would be published in the Autumn. The top priority appeared to be the quality of the road surface; users want it to be improved. The existing road users' satisfaction survey was an on-going tracker survey which may or may not continue – this depended, among other issues, on cost; Transport Focus was currently piloting the New-Road User Satisfaction Survey, hoped to be a step change in the way the survey is delivered and used. Discussions were on-going with DVLA in this respect.

Objective 2.1 – strengthening the passenger voice in rail franchise replacement and monitoring. MH said the invitation to tender for East Anglia would be issued soon, and would feature deeper NRPS ties than in other franchises. Transport Focus and London Travel Watch were involved with the 'South East Quadrant' emotional tracking.

Monitoring of social media activity weekly on London Bridge issues in particular was ongoing and had thrown up some interesting challenges, such as how to filter out irrelevant information and how to record sarcasm correctly.

Objective 3.1 – Bus Passenger Survey (BPS). DS said it was a smaller sample size this year in Scotland and Manchester which needed to be addressed in next year's survey.

Manchester operators were clearly concerned about road works as part of Metrolink's second city crossing, which was likely to generate a dip in performance. Scotland was more complicated. In both these and other cases the local authority cash squeeze was impacting on sample size and whilst online surveys helped reduce costs, the savings needed to be larger than they currently were. SL noted no work was completed in Wales for the BPS in 2015 and we needed to keep the pressure up for 2016. DM reported that the industry said it did its own research but no-one had seen the results.

Objective 4.1 – Handling cases where companies and passengers are deadlocked following a complaint. DS said performance was currently good with 300 active cases or 60 cases per adviser. 73% of passengers were satisfied. There were no significant issues with ScotRail and the Caledonian Sleeper. TdP spoke about London Bridge, the South East quadrant and Operation Stack and the need to react to issues and how this will put more pressure on Transport Focus. AS said we need a rapid reaction capability for issues such as Operation Stack, which would be considered later in the meeting.

IL spoke about complaints and passenger contact - were we now the lead Alternative Dispute Resolution body? DS said the DfT hadn't yet gone down this route. SL said the ADR issue was dormant at the moment, allowing Transport Focus to carry on as normal, but it would be up to the TOCs to buy into the dispute resolution system in future, and Transport Focus should be prepared for that. JH noted this as a risk and suggested it be an item for discussion at the October Members' Event. AS said we should seek more clarification from the Department for Transport (DfT).

BM 252	16/10/15	Alternative dispute resolution	Clarify latest position with DfT in relation to Alternative Dispute Resolution for the Rail industry	MH	Nov 2015	
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2.0 Finance report

AS reported that there was a slight underspend on road user representation, but that other cost centres were currently on-track. TdP asked if quarterly reporting was necessary. JC said July should have been included in this report. The report for the Audit Committee in October would include figures for August.

Part D: Corporate Affairs

1.0 To receive and endorse draft Version 3 minutes of meetings

1.1 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (15 July 2015)

ML highlighted page four of the minutes – Project management process – and said new mechanisms had been introduced and the new system would be much improved and allowed for greater analysis. There remained a need however to improve on evaluation and completions. This would improve the record of projects.

PM said the visibility of projects and timelines was very important. We weren't thinking enough about how we get projects completed and how they interact. JH agreed a more joined-up approach was needed in this area.

The Triennial Review action matrix had been included on the ARAC agenda, and included interactions between Transport Focus and London Travel Watch. Discussions between the organisations were ongoing.

2.0 Update from Statistics Governance Group (8 September 2015)

SL said the minutes were currently being prepared but there were five main items of business discussed:

- Bus Passenger Survey – areas of gaps i.e. Manchester and Wales where there was no obvious solution.
- NRPS Consultation – event held on 16 July with lots of interest shown. Responses were coming in and staff would analyse in due course. Board to see initial analysis on 15 October. Need invitation to tender (ITT) and could start writing it now. Project Plan in place to June 2017. Flagship project.
- Tram Passenger Survey – doing well. Online survey recruitment being developed.
- Road Users' Satisfaction Survey – taking shape. Online panel of drivers from DVLA.
- Maximising number of tenders received for tracker surveys – numbers dropping recently. Need to generate interest and get smaller companies to bid or bid in part for projects. Need open briefing date to explain upcoming ITT or split projects in to smaller lots. Publish a generic notice of all our research.

3.0 Project brief for decision on the Road Users' Satisfaction Survey

DD introduced the project brief which set out the online panel approach for the survey, which had many advantages, including speed of reporting and emotional and behavioural factors which can be recorded. The majority of the work would take place between October 2015

and March 2016. As the project price was over £75,000 it had come to the board for approval. The board **approved** the project brief.

Public questions

John Fleming, Cockburn Association, asked about the 75 new vehicles ordered for the Caledonian Sleeper services. Could more be bought? PSt said he is contracted to deliver 75 only but there was a window of opportunity to purchase more during the production period so he was looking at different routes and what that would mean for stock. The main focus was, however, on the 75 contracted vehicles.

Bob Barnes-Watts, Friends of the Far North Line, commented on emergency bad weather timetabling. When should we institute it? More information from ScotRail was needed in advance.

Allison Cosgrove, RailFuture Scotland said the railway needed to educate the public about the opportunities the Borders Railway presented, for example the useability of the Young Persons Railcard. Many passengers in the Borders were quite new to the railway and didn't know what was available. More information was needed at new stations. PV said teams were visiting stations and more information was being displayed on station noticeboards and on trains.

Barrie Forrest, Rail Action Group, East of Scotland asked who clears snow at unmanned stations? PV said this was ScotRail's job. Mr Forrest also asked if any progress had been made within franchise for local services between Edinburgh and Berwick to stop at more stations, for example East Linton. PV reminded him that on the East Coast Mainline ScotRail had to apply for paths and needed to make a business case for any new stations stops. He was aware of the issue and was working with local RTPs on this.

JH thanked PSt and PV for their time and for responding to questions. JH thanked members of the public for attending and hoped they could come to the afternoon's conference.

The board then **RESOLVED** that, further to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public should be excluded from the meeting. The motion was proposed by Marian Lauder and seconded by Stephen Locke. Members of the public and guests were asked to leave the room.

[This discussion related to authorising funding for the Bus Passenger Survey and is recorded on a separate minute.]

Signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting:

Jeff Halliwell, Chair

Date