



# Passenger Focus' response to Network Rail's Scotland Route Utilisation Strategy Generation Two Draft for Consultation

January 2011

Passenger Focus is the official, independent consumer organisation representing the interests of rail users nationally and bus, coach and tram users across England outside London. Created by the Railways Act 2005, Passenger Focus is the operating name of the Passengers' Council. We are funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and our independence is guaranteed by an act of Parliament.

Our mission is to get the best deal for Britain's passengers. We have two main aims: to influence both long and short term decisions and issues that affect passengers; and to help passengers through advice, advocacy and empowerment.

With a strong emphasis on evidence-based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground. We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of rail passengers and we work with the rail industry, other passenger groups and Government to secure journey improvements.

Our vision is to ensure that operators, funders and regulators of transport systems and Government are always

**'putting passengers first'**

This will be achieved through our mission of

**'getting the best deal for passengers'**

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## Executive summary

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The number of people travelling by rail is increasing, with over 76 million passenger journeys on ScotRail services and over six million passenger journeys on cross-border rail services<sup>1</sup> in 2009/10. Performance on the railways is steadily improving, with the latest Public Performance Measure (PPM) at over 90%<sup>2</sup>. Passenger satisfaction is also rising with overall satisfaction with ScotRail services at 90%<sup>3</sup>.

Passenger Focus expects the programme of Route Utilisation Strategies across the rail network to build on this; specifically, to allow for continued passenger growth, to further improve performance and passenger satisfaction.

The Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) objective is defined as: “*The effective and efficient use and development of the capacity available, consistent with funding that is, or is reasonably likely to become, available during the period of the RUS and with the licence holder’s performance of the duty*<sup>4</sup>”

This RUS is a second generation RUS, building on the first Scotland RUS established in May 2007, and looks in detail to 2024. This is the first second generation RUS by Network Rail and Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to be involved in the process. There are a number of RUSSs and second generation RUSSs which are currently in progress and it is important that the strategies help deliver improved capacity, performance and passenger satisfaction with rail services.

Passenger Focus has a wealth of research on what passengers want and this evidence informs our input to each RUS consultation. Drivers of passenger satisfaction change over time, but punctuality and reliability have been the main drivers of passenger satisfaction since the National Passenger Survey (NPS) began in 1999.

Passengers in Scotland have told us that their top three priorities<sup>5</sup> for improvement are value for money, performance and service frequency. These, coupled with seats/capacity in fourth place, emphasise the importance passengers place on the ‘core product’ and should be a major consideration that influences the final RUS document.

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<sup>1</sup> Transport Series Statistical Bulletin, August 2010

<sup>2</sup> Network Rail and ScotRail Performance Briefing, October 2010

<sup>3</sup> National Passenger Survey, Spring 2010

<sup>4</sup> Extract from Office of Rail Regulation Guidelines on RUSSs, June 2005

<sup>5</sup> Passengers’ priorities for improvements in rail services, March 2010

## 1. Introduction

Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Scotland RUS second generation. Passenger Focus supports the broad objectives behind the RUS process and welcomes both the formal and informal consultative approach adopted by Network Rail.

The table below shows the top 10 passenger priorities for improvement in 2009 compared to those in 2007. It also shows the relative importance of each attribute ranking relative to punctuality – the higher the score, the greater priority passengers assign to that service aspect.

**Table 1: Passengers' priorities for improvement 2007 and 2009**

Passengers' Priorities for Improvement	2007	2009	2009 'Score'
Price of train tickets offer excellent value for money	1	1	1.08
At least 19 out of 20 trains arrive on time	3	2	1
Sufficient train services at times I use the train	2	3	0.98
Passengers are always able to get a seat on the train	4	4	0.86
Company keeps passengers informed of train delays	5	5	0.79
Information on train times/platforms accurate and available	7	6	0.75
Maximum queue time no more than 2 minutes	6	7	0.69
Trains consistently well maintained/excellent condition	8	8	0.69
Seating area on the train is very comfortable	9	9	0.67
Station staff are available whenever required	17	10	0.67

Passengers in Scotland have told us that their top three priorities<sup>6</sup> for improvement are value for money, performance and service frequency. These, coupled with seats/capacity in fourth place, emphasise the importance passengers place on the 'core product' and should be a major consideration that influences the final RUS document.

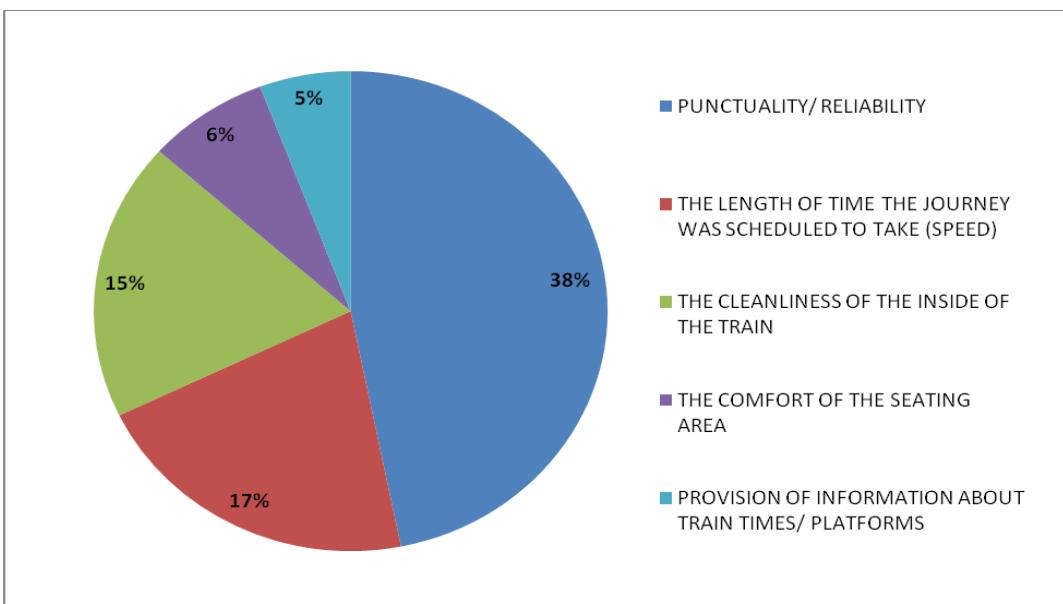
The RUS should address those 'core products' and our response to the various gaps and options are based on passengers' priorities.

Our research into what drives passenger satisfaction<sup>7</sup> shows that for passengers in Scotland, the top driver of satisfaction is punctuality and reliability of train services which accounts for 38% of overall passenger satisfaction. Speed of the journey is the second driver (17%) and cleanliness of the inside of the train is the third highest driver of satisfaction (15%). Data for the top five drivers of satisfaction for passengers in Scotland is shown in Figure 1.

<sup>6</sup> Passengers' priorities for improvements in rail services, March 2010

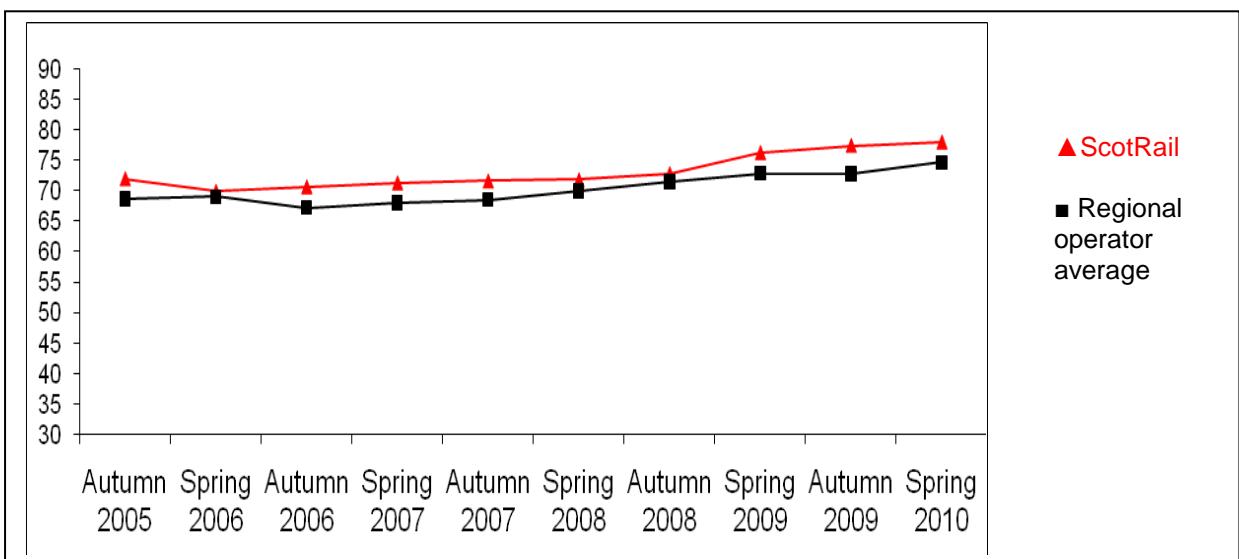
<sup>7</sup> National Passenger Survey, Spring 2010

**Figure 1: Drivers of satisfaction for passengers in Scotland**



The NPS<sup>8</sup> is carried out twice a year and this shows that passengers in Scotland have consistently rated their satisfaction levels higher than the average for regional train operators over the last 10 surveys. In order to maintain this trend it is vital that the 'core products' discussed above are at the centre of all future plans for this RUS.

**Figure 2: NPS satisfaction trend for passengers in Scotland**



<sup>8</sup> National Passenger Survey, Autumn 2005-Spring 2010

## **2. Recommendations**

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Our key recommendations for inclusion in the final RUS are:

- options that provide the maximum amount of capacity to address both current needs and future growth forecasts
- options that can be phased to match demand as it grows
- options that identify potential opportunities for improvements in capacity and line speeds arising from infrastructure renewals
- options that meet passengers' need for greater frequency and more reliable services
- options that drive a real step-change in improved passenger services in terms of journey times
- options that maintain existing connections and increase further connectivity
- options that increase passenger perceptions of value for money

### **3. Analysis of gaps and options**

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Our response to the options in the Scotland RUS follows in the order of the options as presented in the Draft RUS document. Our response is supported by the following research:

- Passengers' priorities for improvements in rail services, 2010
- National Passenger Survey, Spring 2010
- Designing the Future Rolling Stock Design, October 2010

## **2.1 Glasgow conurbation**

### **Option 1.1 – Increase capacity on the Paisley corridor by operating inner and outer-services**

It is a recognised fact that capacity constraints exist on this route. The Draft RUS acknowledges that trains are at full capacity during peak times.

A timetable recast to provide inner and outer-services is supported in principle dependent on future passenger consultation on the detail. This would increase capacity on this route and meet passengers' priorities for improvements in rail services.

Passenger Focus supports the inclusion of option 1.1 in the final RUS.

### **Option 1.2 – Removing Kilwinning stops from Ayrshire services**

It is recognised that capacity constraints exist on this route and with growth expected to continue, as Ayrshire is anticipating a need for between 3500 and 11,400 new homes by 2025<sup>9</sup>; the option proposed needs to address the existing and future crowding problems on this route.

This option proposes better alignment of capacity to demand which as a result, could save rolling stock.

Passengers prioritise service frequency as a 'core product' and as long as service frequency is maintained by introducing additional services for Kilwinning passengers, Passenger Focus can support the inclusion of option 1.2 in the final RUS.

### **Option 1.3 – Train lengthening Argyle line**

### **Option 1.4 – Additional services on the Argyle line**

### **Option 2.1 – Earlier services on the Argyle line**

The three options will deliver the 'core product' of improved frequency and additional capacity, and as such are supported. Providing earlier services in the morning recognises changing economic and work patterns. We recognise that train lengthening will not resolve the anticipated passenger growth.

We note the impact on connectivity for passengers travelling to north-west Glasgow and that timetable planning should provide for a seamless interchange.

### **Option 1.5 – Additional capacity on the Whifflet line**

It is recognised that during the period covered within the RUS passengers on the Whifflet line will experience overcrowding. We therefore support the option of

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<sup>9</sup> Scotland Planning Assessment Part 1 Report Volume 2. Scottish Executive (October 2005)

examining the potential of electrification of the line to run electric units and thereby providing additional capacity.

### **Option 3.1 – Further electrification of the Glasgow conurbation network**

This option is in line with the Strategic Transport Projects Review<sup>10</sup> (STPR) Project Six, electrification of the rail network. This option is supported as it will improve capacity and reduce journey times.

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<sup>10</sup> Strategic Transport Projects Review, 2008

## **3.2 Edinburgh conurbation**

### **Option 1.1 Fife train lengthening**

### **Option 1.2 Additional stop in Fife services**

Train lengthening will deliver additional capacity and revision of the stopping pattern shall improve connectivity and opportunities to travel, and as such is supported.

### **Option 1.3 Extension of Prestonpans service to Drem**

### **Option 1.4 North Berwick as three or six-car operation**

Both the above options are supported as they shall relieve capacity constraints for passengers on the North Berwick line.

### **3.3 Strategic gaps - Interurban**

**Option 1.1 Third high-peak train Stirling to Edinburgh**

**Option 1.2 Weekend train lengthening**

**Option 1.3 Stirling to Glasgow**

The above options combined shall deal with the recognised capacity constraints between Stirling and Scotland's two principal cities. The options recognise the potential provided by the STPR Edinburgh to Glasgow rail improvements project and as such are supported for inclusion in the final RUS.

**Option 2.1 Additional evening-peak service between Inverness and Dingwall**

This option addresses passenger priorities for improved frequency and capacity. We note that this option does not produce adequate benefits to be recommended as part of the final RUS but passenger growth will not be delivered unless the anticipated capacity issues are resolved. Passenger Focus recommends that this option should be carefully reconsidered as part of the RUS process.

**Option 2.2 Train lengthening of Aberdeen services**

**Option 2.4 Additional service between Stonehaven and Aberdeen**

We note that option 2.2 is not recommended. Providing an additional service which is supported should relieve capacity constraints. The STPR of rail improvements between Aberdeen and Central Belt would also bring benefits to passengers. Although noting the constraints that the RUS has identified, careful monitoring of crowding is required with a view to providing a long-term solution.

**Option 2.3 Additional services between Dyce and Aberdeen**

We recognise that the ongoing assessment of improvements between Aberdeen and Inverness should as a consequence provide improved journey opportunities and address capacity constraints.

**Option 2.5 Create Aberdeen North Bay platform**

This option should lead to improved performance and is therefore supported.

### **Option 3.1 Improved journey times and frequency between Aberdeen and Inverness**

We note that over the years, various studies and reports have recommended improvements to this line. Improved journeys times and frequency of service would benefit existing passengers and be a driver for modal change. The Tier three workstream should identify proposals to make these long-held aspirations deliverable.

### **Option 3.2 Recasting Aberdeen to central belt as express services**

### **Option 3.3 Recasting the Aberdeen to central belt timetable on improved infrastructure**

### **Option 3.4 Review of Line-speeds**

The above options have a direct correlation to STPR Project 23 to make rail improvements between Aberdeen and the central belt. To provide a faster journey between Aberdeen and the central belt, which also serves intermediate stations, will require significant infrastructure work.

### **Option 3.5 All day frequency between Glasgow and Dundee**

Providing an all day frequent service between Glasgow and Dundee should also consider the Tay Estuary Rail Study (TERS), which has aspirations for a local Perth to Arbroath service. We note and support the need for further assessment of this option.

### **Option 3.6 Journey times and frequencies Inverness-Central Belt**

This option should be taken forward in Tier 3 and also consider, where possible, the implications of the STPR for this route.

## **3.4 Strategic gaps – rural**

**Option 1.1 Saturday crowding on the Glasgow to Carlisle via Dumfries route**

**Option 1.2 Improved Sunday service on the Glasgow to Carlisle via Dumfries route**

By lengthening the trains and providing an improved frequency of service; this should relieve the projected capacity constraints on this route.

**Option 1.3 Service specifications on the Stanraer route**

We are aware of the work being undertaken by ScotRail and Transport Scotland on recasting the timetable on this route. We are liaising with stakeholders, including the Regional Transport Partnership for South West Scotland to identify the best possible timetable to meet passengers' needs.

**Option 2.1 Upgrade Bunchrew AOCL**

Passengers on rural routes welcome shorter journey times and this option would result in a one minute reduction for passengers travelling between Inverness and Beauly. The analysis shows that the costs outweigh the benefits for this option to be included in the final RUS and Passenger Focus recommends that further analysis be carried out to improve journey times on such rural routes as part of future renewal works.

## **3.5 Strategic gaps – network availability**

### **Option 1.2 Overnight service between Edinburgh-Glasgow**

We note that passenger demand does not exist at present for such a service but we support the desire for earlier-morning services. Providing earlier services recognises changing economic and work patterns.

### **Option 1.3 Earlier West Coast Main Line services on Sunday mornings**

This is an option that should be taken forward for consideration during the re-letting process of the West Coast franchise in 2011.

## **3.6 Strategic gaps - freight**

Passengers will not accept having the number of passenger trains reduced to accommodate the demands of freight operators; therefore Passenger Focus welcomes the additional capacity recommended by the Draft RUS to accommodate freight traffic.

## **3.7 Terminal capacity**

We support the interventions proposed at Glasgow Queen Street, Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Waverley to deal with passenger and service growth.

## 4. Summary table of Passenger Focus's responses to RUS options

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Gap	Option	RUS conclusion	Passenger Focus opinion
Glasgow conurbation	1.1	New timetable being developed	Support
	1.2	New timetable being developed	Support in principle
	1.3	Not recommended	Support
	1.4	Recommended subject to analysis confirmation	Support
	1.5	To be considered by Tier three work stream	Support
	2.1	Recommended	Support
	3.1	To be considered by Tier three work stream	Support
Edinburgh conurbation	1.1	Recommended	Support
	1.2	Recommended	Support
	1.3	Recommended	Support
	1.4	For long-term review	Support
Strategic gaps – Interurban	1.1	Incorporated into the base EGIP timetable	Support
	1.2	Recommended	Support
	1.3	Under review	Support
	2.1	Not recommended	Reconsider for inclusion in final RUS
	2.2	Not recommended	Monitoring of crowding required to provide long-term solution
	2.3	Not recommended	Support
	2.4	Recommended	Support
	2.5	Recommended	Support
	3.1	To be considered by Tier three work stream	Support
	3.2	Not recommended	Support
	3.3	Not recommended	Support
	3.4	For future consideration	Support
	3.5	Further assessment required	Support
	3.6	To be considered by Tier three work stream	Support
Strategic gaps - rural	1.1	Recommended	Support
	1.2	Recommended	Support
	1.3	Final RUS to report	Support

<b>Gap</b>	<b>Option</b>	<b>RUS conclusion</b>	<b>Passenger Focus opinion</b>
	2.1	Not recommended	Further analysis to be done
Strategic gaps – network availability	1.2	Recommended	Support
	1.3	Further work to be done	Franchise issue

## **Appendix A: List of consultees**

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A meeting was held with Rail User Groups and local stakeholders in December, in conjunction with Network Rail, as part of the formal consultation period. This gave the opportunity for interested parties to have their say and share thoughts on the draft RUS proposals.

We also invited comment on the draft for consultation, reminding groups that comments should be sent directly to Network Rail and/or copied into Passenger Focus.

This is a list of all groups and individuals who we consulted with as part of this RUS process.

Organisation
Capital Rail Action Group
COBRA
Cumbernauld Commuters' Association
Dornoch Rail Link Action Group
Friends of the Far North Line
Friends of the Far North Line
Friends Of The West Highland Lines
Friends Of The West Highland Lines
Friends Of The West Highland Lines
Scottish Association for Public Transport
Stranraer to Ayr Line Support Association (SAYLSA)
TRANSform Scotland
Nith Valley Line Promotion Group
SRPS Railtours
Railfuture Scotland
Rail Action Group East of Scotland

## Appendix B: Bibliography

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