



Scottish Rail Priorities for CP6 2019-2024

By the end of 2019, most of the rail network in the central lowlands will have been electrified. A new EGIP electric train fleet will have been delivered. The Borders rail link will have re-opened. The Highland Main Line should be supporting an hourly frequency between Perth and Inverness, and the first phase of the long awaited Aberdeen-Inverness upgrade (Aberdeen-Inverurie doubling, and Forres station) should be complete.

The programme for Control Period 6 (2019-2024) should focus on transforming rail's competitiveness on the Scottish InterCity network, particularly on the relatively underinvested routes north of the Central Belt. The Scottish National Planning Framework (NPF3) objective 5.17 is **"to make rail travel between cities quicker than by car, and to complete electrification of the railway lines between cities"**. To complement Transport Scotland's £6 billion commitment to dual the A9 and A96 Inverness-Perth/Aberdeen roads, a programme of InterCity rail upgrades and electrification is needed. **The statement of funds available (SOFA) to Network Rail needs to match this aspiration.** Otherwise rail will lose modal share and road traffic and CO₂ will increase.

Priority projects for CP6 should therefore be:

- **InterCity improvement and electrification programme** for the **Aberdeen-Edinburgh/Glasgow** routes
- **Inverness-Perth** and **Inverness-Aberdeen InterCity** infrastructure upgrades (with electrification in CP7)
- **Glasgow Airport Rail Link** using the "City Deal" funding
- Completion of Glasgow suburban electrification to **East Kilbride, Maryhill and Barrhead**
- Rail re-opening assessment:
 - Routes where track exists, eg Grangemouth, Levenmouth, Alloa-Dunfermline, Glasgow Crossrail
 - Former local routes with potential, eg Banchory-Aberdeen-Peterhead/Fraserburgh, St.Andrews
 - Stations as agreed by Councils and Regional Transport Partnerships

Investment in InterCity infrastructure will increase rail's modal share and revenue and should be funded by a direct grant from the Scottish Government 's £6 billion A9/A96 corridor budget, with additional capital possibly funded through a facility charge on ScotRail franchise operators spread across 30 years.

1 Faster Aberdeen-Glasgow/Edinburgh InterCity Trains

Analysis confirms that Scottish inter-city average speeds have stagnated over the last 20 years, while English inter-city journey times on many lines have been cut, with 125 mph now the norm on main lines from London

The new ScotRail franchisee will hopefully start to address this by introducing trains with faster acceleration and top speed, and better hill-climbing capability than Class 170 Turbostars. Journey time targets should be:

<i>Rail route</i>	<i>Current best time</i>	<i>Target CP6 journey time</i>
Edinburgh-Aberdeen	2 hours 22 mins	Under 2 hours
Glasgow-Aberdeen	2 hours 33 mins	Under 2 hours 15 minutes

Infrastructure upgrades are needed in CP6 if a step change in journey time is to be achieved:

- 1.1 **Upgrading maximum speed to 125 mph** where this is practical, including on the E&G line. The benefits of tilt technology on routes to Aberdeen and Inverness should also be appraised.
- 1.2 **Eliminating single track bottlenecks** at Usan (Montrose) and Perth on the Aberdeen-Glasgow line. Alternative inland routes for the difficult section at Montrose include the former Kinnaber via Bridge of Dun and Friockheim to St. Vigean (Arbroath) route. This would allow a third hourly train south from Aberdeen, serving intermediate stations. It would also increase capacity for freight trains.
- 1.3 **Bypassing slow alignments on the Fife coastal route** on the Edinburgh-Dundee line. An initiative for CP6 would be a new alignment from **Inverkeithing to Halbeath** (STPR 28), together with upgrading the line from Halbeath through Cowdenbeath to Thornton. This should cut Edinburgh-Aberdeen/Inverness rail journeys by 7 minutes. Extension of the Inverkeithing-Halbeath route as a high speed line to Perth is a longer term aspiration of Transform Scotland's "InterCity Express" project which SAPT supports.
- 1.4 **InterCity Electrification.** If the CP5 annual rate of 100 single track km electrification continues in CP6, Dunblane-Aberdeen (around 380 single track km) and Haymarket-Dundee (around 185 single track km) can be electrified in CP6, bringing **Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth and Fife** into the electrified network.

2 Aberdeen-Inverness and Perth-Inverness InterCity Upgrades

- 2.1 An **hourly Aberdeen-Inverness Inter-city train service** is long overdue. This is a top priority for CP6. The GRIP assessment of options should take into account the potential for co-ordinating buses with trains in north-east Scotland, an area which lost most local rail routes. Co-ordinating bus services would be more efficient if trains cross at interchange nodes. This suggests that in CP6 a timetable with hourly Inverness-Aberdeen trains crossing at **Dalcross, Elgin, Huntly and Inverurie** would facilitate bus/rail integration. To improve reliability, CP6 should restore double track from Inverness to Dalcross.
- 2.2 **Faster, more reliable Edinburgh/Glasgow-Perth-Inverness train times** are needed if rail is to maintain or increase market share against the dualled A9, requiring more line speed upgrades and double track sections in CP6. The target is for **2 hour 45 minute Inverness-Glasgow/Edinburgh** journey times.
- 2.3 The National Planning Framework NPF3 aspiration for **electrification** of the InterCity network can be completed in **CP7** (2024-2029) with the Inverness-Perth and Inverness-Aberdeen lines, based on an essential extension of the 100 km/ year electrification commitment through CP6 and CP7.

3 Glasgow Airport Rail Link: International travellers arriving by air in advanced European countries now expect to be able to join the national rail network seamlessly from the airport. We therefore welcome the recent announcement of funding for a rail or light rail link to Glasgow Airport. The first GARL appraisal showed fairly low usage for a limited shuttle from Glasgow Airport to Glasgow Central. Connections to other parts of Scotland, including Edinburgh, are needed.

The Tram-Train route subsequently mooted, joining the railway at Paisley St.James, would only make sense if developed as a more extensive Light Rail route through Glasgow. Options for evaluation are:

- 3.1 Heavy rail Glasgow Airport-Paisley-Glasgow Central (reverse)- Lanarkshire-Edinburgh service
- 3.2 Heavy rail Glasgow Airport-Paisley-West St-Glasgow Cross-Bathgate-Edinburgh service
- 3.3 Tram-train route extended via Ibrox, BBC, "Squinty Bridge", SECC, Glasgow Central to Queen Street.

4 Completion of Glasgow Suburban Electrification: By the end of CP5, all suburban lines around Glasgow will be electrified except Maryhill, Barrhead and East Kilbride. East Kilbride, a busy and steeply graded line, would particularly benefit from electric operation. Usage and efficiency of the Maryhill service would be improved if Glasgow Queen Street-Maryhill-Anniesland trains could continue onwards to Partick, Glasgow Central LL and Lanarkshire. Electrification beyond Barrhead to Kilmarnock may depend on future plans for electrifying the Kilmarnock-Dumfries-Gretna(-Carlisle) line.

5 Rail Re-openings: With the majority of the Scottish population living outwith easy walking distance of stations, development of safe cycling routes, local P+R , and bus feeder services is needed to increase access to the national rail network. Nevertheless, there is potential to re-open stations and railway lines, particularly in view of the success of recent station and line re-openings.

Re-introducing passenger trains to existing track is cheaper than building new lines, so **Grangemouth, Levenmouth , Alloa-Dunfermline** and **Glasgow Crossrail** are highest priorities for appraisal. The **Edinburgh Suburban Circle** has potential to be part of a Tram-Train route linking Edinburgh Tram from Princes Street via Cameron Toll to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, avoiding most on-street track laying.

Economic development in the Aberdeen area justifies new stations on the **Stonehaven-Aberdeen-Inverurie** line. Re-introducing trains or LRT to **Banchory and Peterhead/Fraserburgh** should also be investigated as a longer term option. **In 1964, the 08.09 Banchory-Aberdeen train took 30 minutes. 50 years later, the 08.05 bus takes 1 hour 12 minutes!** The availability of disused rail routes would reduce the capital cost of providing a cross-city rail or light rail route for Aberdeen. A fast commuter rail or tram/train service to the city centre can relieve pressure on city roads and counter the danger of out-of-town peripheral developments attracted by the Western Peripheral Road. Design of the Aberdeen-Inverurie upgrade in CP5 should make passive provision for this longer term possibility.

St.Andrews-Leuchars should also be appraised for inclusion in a strategic rail re-opening programme.

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Contact: John McCormick email: sapt@btinternet.com

Phone: 07760 381729