

Draft for consultation

Specification for the new Scotrail Franchise

On-train Cycle Carriage

Recommendations:

Cycles continue to be carried without extra charge to the accompanying passenger(s).

A minimum provision across all train unit classes of an average of 2 cycle spaces per carriage, with additional provision to be specified for lines with leisure/tourist demand.

Flexible-use space to be specified for the use of leisure users, including additional cycles.

Tandem prohibition to be removed.

On-train signage to be improved.

That the franchisee be incentivised to minimise bus substitution, being required to not accept it as a standard default position and require that Network Rail make alternative provision wherever possible. Where closure is absolutely unavoidable, the alternative road services must be "train equivalent" in their ability to carry cycles etc.. When some or all services are operated by road vehicles, booking offices must maintain their published opening hours, with fully functional ticket windows.

Supporting notes:

The current franchise agreement specifies performance levels which the Scotrail franchisee must attain or suffer a penalty. These include minimising the number of passengers having to stand for more than 10 minutes. This penalty structure encourages the franchisee to prefer internal train layouts which maximise number of seats, resulting in trains packed full of fixed formation seating. Unfortunately this is very inflexible for use by other stakeholder groups, such as passengers with cycles, but also other groups such as the elderly with wheeled walking frames and families with pushchairs.

Whilst recognising the importance of encouraging commuting by train in preference to single occupancy cars, the legitimate access rights of these other stakeholder groups to Scotland's rail services is currently being inequitably subordinated. Greater provision of flexible storage spaces, perhaps incorporating tip-up seats would balance these competing access demands and greatly improve matters. From an economic perspective it would also encourage increased off-peak rail usage.

There is no current franchise specification as to the number of cycles which train units should accommodate, just a general requirement to carry cycles.

Some train unit types in the west have no designated cycle spaces and cycles have to be stood with in the vestibules, which is unsatisfactory for anything other than a very short journey. It is also a problem for families with children, who get split up.

Where there are designated zones, the provision across train units of the same class is not uniform. For instance, some CI 370 have 4 designated cycle spaces plus 2 spaces shared use with wheelchair space, whilst others have only 2 designated spaces. Similarly, CI 158s provision is currently, 4, 2 or 1 cycle spaces depending on the unit. As a first step, a minimum ratio of cycle spaces per car be specified, at (say) an average of 2 per car:

ie 3 car train units (such as CI 370) to have 6
2 car train units (such at CI 158) to have 4

This would serve to have the existing fleet all brought up to uniform specification, so that users could more accurately predict the likelihood of a space being available and would give an operator benefit from the faster loading of bicycles.

Consideration should also be given to greater provision on scenic and tourist lines as cycle tourist access is an important economic benefit to areas of the Highlands and the Borders. As well as the obvious Highland, FarNorth and West Highland lines, this will be an important consideration for the new Borders Railway.

Clear signage on-train should also be specified. Some signage is currently ambiguous, a circle containing a bicycle symbol with a diagonal line across means "use the retaining strap" but looks like "cycles prohibited".

Tandems are not carried on Scotrail services (although they are carried on EastCoast). Relatively few passengers will wish to travel with a tandem, but the general prohibition frustrates active travel, as they are popular with families and also where the rear-seat cyclist is visually impaired or has a disability. Tandems could routinely be accommodated if the flexible storage spaces consisted of at least 3 tip up seats.

It is recognised that, as cycle usage grows, it will become impractical to accommodate all on-train carriage demand in the peak. However, in general on-train cycle carriage works well.

We would also like to see consideration given to a partnership with Brompton, as in South West Trains...

<http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk/bromptonbikes.aspx>

Currently there is no provision for alternative road transport to carry cycles (or prams etc), thereby making journeys impossible, particularly at weekends. Single line working and alternative routings were much more common before privatisation and make journeys more comfortable for passengers, even if there is a journey time penalty. Network Rail compensate train operating companies (TOC) for loss of revenue when there is a line closure and there is currently little financial incentive for TOCs to press for less disruption. Indeed, it may even be profitable to them, to the disadvantage of passengers. Additionally, when there is even partial bus substitution, *First Scotrail* has closed the booking office windows early (such as at Haymarket) and used travelling ticket sellers instead, but these

do not have access to the main booking system, so can't make reservations or sell certain types of ticket.

Cycle Access and Parking at Stations

Recommendations:

Cycle storage provision to be provided by appropriate racks or secure lockers located close to the booking office or city-bound platform. At busy stations, secure compounds should be provided.

When lifts are installed or renewed they should be long enough to accommodate bicycles.

Station design should take into consideration cycle access to all platforms.

There should be a requirement to implement access policies and plans for all stations, providing good quality links into the wider catchment area of the station.

Supporting notes:

A great deal of existing cycle parking is underused because it is badly sited or considered to be insecure. Some located are in car parks where they are in danger of impact damage or are such a long way from the platform that cyclists seek out other locations closer to the platforms. In many cases racks on the city-bound platform should be considered. On street racks at, for instance, Edinburgh Haymarket, can not cope with the existing parking demand.

Some lifts are slightly too short for bicycles.

If step-free access can be provided to platforms from adjacent roads or paths it should be made possible, thereby reducing the need to carry bicycles across bridges. This benefits not just cyclists but all passengers. Some accesses appear to have been closed as revenue protection measures.

Access issues such as on Bathgate-Airdrie and at Gogar interchange. For existing stations, partnerships with Sustrans and with the local authority should be developed to ensure the development of high quality walking/cycling connections between stations and nearby centres of population. Sustrans already runs a 'safe routes to stations' project, and the new franchisee should be expected to get involved in this project so as to encourage cycle travel to rail stations.

Bike Hubs

The new franchisee should be required to work with relevant local authorities (and possibly

the Scottish Government Sustainable Transport Team and/or Sustrans) to develop Bike Hubs at city mainline stations – like the new 'CyclePoint' bike hub at Leeds station...
http://www.northernrail.org/pdfs/press/Cyclepoint_Brochure.pdf

Other matters

Recommendation:

That the requirement for a consultative forum be continued and that it involve the new franchisee, Transport Scotland and Network Rail as well as representatives of the cycle interest groups.