

# SPOKES *The Lothian Cycle Campaign*

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## TRANSPORT SCOTLAND ROLLING STOCK SPECIFICATION STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT – AUGUST 2020

Response from *Spokes – the Lothian Cycle Campaign*.

We welcome this engagement and also its context within the commendable programme to decarbonise Scotland's railways.

We have set out our comments below on issues relevant to passengers travelling with a bicycle and would be very happy to discuss these further at any time.

These comments based on both our specialist knowledge and experience of taking bike on trains, our participation in the *ScotRail Cycle Forum* and our general knowledge and experience of *ScotRail* services.

Q1. We are considering a rationalisation of the fleet so that it reflects different operations and markets. Our initial proposal is for a fleet which comprises no more than, say, four service types:

- *Intercity – long-distance connection between Scotland's cities.*
- *Outer Suburban or Regional – providing intermediate services between Scotland's cities and major towns*
- *Inner Suburban or Local – providing short journey services (not more than, say, about 40 mins) services to the commuter markets of Glasgow, Edinburgh and potentially Aberdeen*
- *Rural or Scenic – operating on lines with low populations and high scenic value*

We would welcome comments on the number of service types, their characteristics and the routes on which they should operate.

### **Comments:**

**1.1 We are unsure about the benefit of differentiating between *Outer Suburban or Regional* and *Inner Suburban or Local*, save perhaps for some train services within Glasgow. The CI 380 and the earlier CI 170 train units are good examples of designs that currently operate successfully on both service types.**

**1.2 Whereas some lines, such as the West Highland, Kyle and Far North are more obviously *Rural or Scenic*, the Borders Railway is also very much a *Regional* service.**

**1.3 Existing *Scenic* line services would definitely be improved by the replacement of the suburban CI 156 and regional CI 158 stock. As well as being very scenic, the West Highland, Kyle and Far North line journeys as also very long journeys, so would benefit from better seating with longer legroom, combined with large window areas.**

**1.4 We comment in Q.8 about the differing type of bike-on-trains journeys.**

**1.5 We note with approval that recently introduced train types have more carriages as standard than their predecessors and encourage the continuation of this.**

*Q2. Passenger growth is likely to be addressed by utilising longer trains rather than increased services. Infrastructure may dictate the length of train able to fully platform at a particular station therefore the use of Automatic Selective Door (ASDO), as used in Ayrshire and Inverclyde, may be an option.*

*We welcome views on the merits or otherwise of ASDO.*

**Comments:**

**2.1 Clearly train designs should aim to ensure that designated cycle space is likely to be on the platform. To achieve this these would be best located centrally within the unit, rather than at the end.**

*Q3. On trains we have tended to have end-doors on trains serving longer distance journeys and doors at 1/3 and 2/3 of the carriage for broadly other services reflecting the need for a higher frequency of stops and to facilitate shorter dwell times.*

*We welcome comments on the positioning of doors for the service types that you have identified.*

**Comments:**

**3.1 Generally, it's faster and easier to load a bicycle onto 1/3 2/3 layouts, but, significantly, that is less to do with door width than vestibule layout. For instance in the current refurbished CI 158 units where a second cycle-zone has been introduced in the other carriage, the pinch point is at the narrow sliding door to the saloon area from the vestibule, not at the external door. This constraint could easily be designed out of new stock.**

*Q4. Some trains have gangways at the cab ends to facilitate passenger distribution and to increase the flexibility of the train movement.*

*We welcome views on the merits or otherwise of gangways on different service types.*

**Comments:**

**4.1 We think that it is attractive to have full access throughout trains, so that all passengers, train staff and catering services can have access to all parts of the train at all times.**

**4.2 We also see a lot of merit in carriage designs where there is clear visibility along the train interior.**

Q5. Currently we operate trains where the seating is presented in bays (i.e. seats facing each other) and in airline mode (seats facing in one direction). In most carriages standard seating is arranged in 2+2 configuration, in others it is 2+3. In some carriages with a business/First class offer seating is 2+1. On some trains we have fixed tables (full or half size) in bay seating areas whereas for airline configurations we have flip-down tables affixed to the back of the seat in front.

We welcome comments on the relative proportion of bay and airline seating on different service types, the proportion of seats in 2+1, 2+2 or 2+3 configuration, the number of spaces for disabled travellers, the type and size of tables and the provision for standing passengers.

**Comments:**

**5.1 We favour continuing a mix of bays of 2+2 at a table and airline style.**

**5.2 Our comments made in Q.8 about flexible-use space are also relevant here.**

Q6. Toilets are an important provision on board our trains.

We welcome comments of the provision and number of toilets (including Accessible Toilets) per different service type.

**Comments:**

**6.1 No specific comments.**

Q7. The safe storage of luggage is a significant issue for travellers and the effective operation of services.

We would welcome comment on the provision of overhead racks and luggage storage areas (including size and location) within each service type.

**Comments:**

**7.1 The extent to which luggage is frequently stored in cycle-zones and at wheelchair spaces, suggest that there is insufficient luggage space and perhaps that some passengers prefer to store it as close to the door as possible, rather than manoeuvring it along the aisle to a centrally located rack.**

**7.2 Our comments about flexible-use space in Q.8 are also relevant here, most particularly about items such as push-chairs.**

Q8. *The carriage of bicycles is a significant issue for some travellers.*

*We would welcome comments on the carriage and location and number of cycle spaces (or dedicated carriages if appropriate) within each service type. And any operational observations that you may have.*

**Comments:**

**8.1 This is an important area where we would welcome detailed discussion. Our view is that this should be delivered by a mixture of dedicated cycle spaces, at a rate of at least two spaces per carriage, plus the introduction of significant “flexible-use” space.**

**8.2 This is consistent with the existing “Sprinter” provision per carriage but delivers extra capacity because train units are now longer. Until the 1980s most trains in Scotland had the capacity to convey about 20 bikes, in a “guards van”. Although popular and well used, this capacity was lost with the introduction of 2-car “Sprinter” units, when 2 to 6 cycle spaces per train unit became the norm.**

**8.3 Whilst recognising the competing demands for space on *ScotRail* trains, we consider that overall better use could be made of the space available, addressing the different peak and off-peak demands, by increasing the use of “flexible-use” space. This is a consistent theme by Spokes and is more than a cyclists’ special-pleading issue. Our worksheet on this subject is [here](#). (Although this dates from 2015, but the principles are just as relevant today).**

**8.4 Not all cyclists journeys are of the same type. These journeys roughly match your proposed fleet categories as follows:**

- **"Tourists" on long-distance *Intercity* trains and on *Rural or Scenic* trains. Cycle tourism is a very important contributor to the Scottish economy and we consider that this is likely to increase significantly post Covid. Sustrans estimated that in 2015, the indicative value of leisure cycling and cycle tourism on the National Cycle Network in Scotland was £345 million, with £116 million of this coming from tourists and £229 million from home-based visitors.**

**The importance of cycle-tourism has already been acknowledged by the decision to create the CI 153 cycle trains.**

- **"Leisure" cyclists on off-peak *Outer Suburban or Regional* trains**  
**This category contributes to *Active Nation* objectives, whilst at the same time bringing valuable extra ticket revenue to otherwise lightly loaded services.**
- **"Utility/commuter" cyclists on *Inner Suburban or Local* trains who wish to take their bike on the train with them**  
**Being able to take a bike on these trains is often a vital part of some travellers journey to work and to be in employment, where that is difficult to get to and from entirely by public transport. These are diverse short journeys, spread across the 24-hour working day.**

**8.5 There are potentially some bike security issues that may need addressed in the future, but currently we are unaware of any concerns currently about bikes being stolen**

from trains. There are detailed cycle-zone design issues, such as about bike tethering and visibility from the platform that we will be happy to discuss further.

**8.6** We are aware that there are some operational concerns that loading and unloading cycles can threaten tight dwell times. Overall, we feel that delay attribution to cycles load/unloading is more anecdotal than real. We have done some tests with the *ScotRail Cycling Manager* on this which we are happy to discuss further. What is clear, however, is that larger cycle-zone logos are always helpful.

*Q9. On many of our services catering is available.*

*We welcome comments on the appropriateness and provision of catering (buffet, trolley-service, vending machine) on each service type.*

**Comments:**

**9.1** We would welcome the continuation of catering services as these are much used by cyclists, especially as it is easier to buy a hot drink once on a train, than to have to carry it on whilst pushing a bicycle.

*Q10. The floor furnishings on our current trains are either hard-wearing carpet or linoleum (cushion-flooring).*

*We welcome comments on the type of floor covering for each service type.*

**Comments:**

**10.1** We would welcome the continued use of large floor logos on recently introduced stock to indicate cycle storage area.

*Q11. It is important that we make travel accessible to all.*

*We welcome comments on particular or additional facilities on each service type that ought to be provided to ensure that our trains are accessible to all.*

**Comments:**

**11.1** There are serious equalities issues arising where cycle carriage facilities are of the hanging type. This style is also proving to be problematic across several new train types across the UK.

**11.2** Whilst we are primarily concerned with cycle carriage issues, this has highlighted to us that there is a wider issue of equality of access generally. In our assessment there are many passenger, commercial and operational benefits in providing flexible-use space on trails. Our fact-sheet, [Please Lets Make Our Trains More Family Friendly!](#) dates from 2015, but the principles are just as relevant today.

*Q12. The needs of passengers are changing and we are keen to ensure that we have facilities that make rail travel attractive.*

*We welcome comments on the provision and location of power points and data sockets (USB) as well as any further comments that you might have, for example, on ventilation, air-conditioning, heating, internal carriage design, size and position of windows (and the provision of blinds), lighting, information screens and devices for audio-announcements and location of litter bins for each service type.*

**Comments:**

**12.1 We would like to see the provision of real-time information screens in carriages, showing detailed journey and connection information.**

**12.2 Power points and usb sockets are already very welcome, as is on-train Wi-Fi, but the relevant technology will most likely be change radically over time!**

**12.3 Electric bike charging facilities, as already planned for the special CI 153 dedicated carriages are likely to become increasingly appropriate.**

Ewan Jeffrey  
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11 September 2020