I am pleased to submit the following observations in further support of the response already submitted to Transport Scotland's 'Rail 2014' Public Consultation and in relation to the specific questions now asked:

* The current efficiency and accessibility of the rail network in Scotland

Greater technical efficiency can be achieved by logical 'infill' electrification schemes in Greater Glasgow/SPT area and Greater Edinburgh/Lothians/Fife SESTRAN area: followed by early commitment to main line electrification northward to Dundee - Aberdeen as a continuous investment programme. Some of those projects can be coherently and more economically integrated with the current EGIP works.

Improved operational efficiency and better use of existing track capacity can be achieved by increasing more through- running west-east across central Scotland (e.g., utilising the City Union line /Crossrail - further discussed below). This would keep trains 'on the move' in passenger and revenue earning service, with reduction of unproductive terminal turn-around at Glasgow Central for many separate shorter distance as applies at present. Modest signalling investment in reduced 'headway' spacing between trains, could be achieved feasibly (and safely) to achieve to permit higher track utilisation without necessarily prejudicing reliability.

Restoration of double track on heavily used/high frequency suburban routes e.g. Milingavie line would improve efficiency and reliability from out-of-sequence running at junctions which adversely impacts on the wider network

Improved revenue efficiency can be achieved by higher train occupancy / passenger loading levels which themselves can encourage application of a more flexible and innovative fares policy as outlined in Q20 response to ‘Rail 2014’. Increasing patronage of the main Glasgow - Edinburgh route and Milingavie line is more a direct result 'turn up and go' service with doubling of previous service frequency, and waiting time from 'just missed a train' but without any change [improvement] in the overall journey time over the intervening years. The Cumbernauld line and certain routes serving Fife and Ayrshire might similarly benefit

A particularly significant way of increasing rail accessibility is through a combination of:

More local and easily accessible additional stations on the existing network to improve on the meagre 10% of Scotland's population currently within reasonable walking distance of a rail station.

In response to Q24 of ‘Rail 2014’ we believe a reasonable demand case for upward of 40 new / reopened stations on the current ScotRail passenger network (together with additional stations on new or reopened lines sometimes upgrading existing freight-only lines as further discussed below). Network Rail have themselves confirmed requests for 20 additional stations within the restricted catchment area of the EGIP project

These would exploit obvious areas of new traffic patronage currently on offer from new housing expansion, economic/employment opportunity, social need and relief of urban road congestion. These are vital to broaden the geographic user base of the current ScotRail network which currently suffers from a restricted number of access points [stations]. It is a matter of regret that despite many very successful additional stations created over recent years, there now seems a current hiatus, and lack of any coherent programme achieve those required stations - even in the face of rising rail patronage levels, and full cost funding offers for station construction made from private sector developers.

A more determined pursuit of more adequate car parking at existing and new stations must be collaboratively pursued by Transport Scotland / Network Rail / ScotRail / Local Authorities and private finance sources to maximise improved park and ride accessibility to use rail services: but which is routinely being frustrated by grossly inadequate station parking provision.

An example of the continued absence of fully integrated 'joined up' transport and land-use planning policy is still regretfully evident with the new Edinburgh Gateway (Gogar) interchange. Whilst this provides for
good rail / tram / bus interconnection, it conspicuously squanders the huge park and ride potential availability for the large number of householders who may users who find the car the only convenient or meaningful access to reaching this new ‘hub interchange’. And de facto, will be perversely denied the opportunity of using public transport for a meaningful stage of their onward journey to final destination.

Improved accessibility, including convenient vehicle drop-off points from cars and disabled access into station sites are essential. Yet Glasgow’s Central station is now shamefully deficient in both those, given closure of the tunnel access route into the heart of the station nearly 3 years ago. It is essential that Gordon Street is reopened to private cars, for the sole purpose of offering to offer a safe and convenient ‘drop-off’ point for those arriving by such personal transport. Convenient and accessible drop-off points with notification of enforcement/penalty consequences are satisfactorily applied in other transport terminals elsewhere and must be (re-introduced) at this key Glasgow station via its street level Gordon Street entrance/exit.

Despite improved accessibility to the rail network being recognised as one of the Key Strategic Outcomes (KSO) of Transport Policy, it is felt that this consideration is being unnecessarily sacrificed by excessive and exaggerated importance given to ‘improved journey times, sometimes only by a few minutes and which are perceived to be of negligible importance to the actual or potential passenger. EGIP intentions to achieve a very marginal improvement in the Glasgow - Edinburgh journey (saving only 7-8 minutes) for just two headline ‘express trains’ per hour, against the electrified stopping trains. But with those additional [express] trains imposing considerable infrastructure disruption to existing local suburban line services and incurring very considerable new rolling stock acquisition costs, may be cited as a dubious proposal which merits reconsideration and investment re-allocation into other rail projects, which offer a broader economic or social dividend across Scotland?

Some form of localised decentralised policy planning units by Transport Scotland might also offer an administrative improvement which could more adequately identify and pursue localised railway needs and opportunities. It is welcome to see an embryonic recognition of this requirement in the Scottish Government’s December 2011 Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) under ‘Sector Plans’ (page 45) which notes. ‘The emerging consensus is that a more joined up approach to delivering services, with key decision making being taken locally, is the best way to ensure that rail services become more efficient and attuned to local needs’ (quote).

Such a structure, with local knowledge and understanding, had it been in place, might have obviated the rather unfortunate and misinformed use of an arbitrary 1mile yardstick to infer that some stations were ‘too close’ and potentially closure candidates. This unsurprisingly generated considerable public apprehension, entailing two Parliamentary debates to secure ‘clarification’ over the negative inferences outlined in Section 7.10 / 7.11 of ‘Rail 2014’. Such reassurance [against station closures] eventually culminated with the 5 March 2012 unequivocal public confirmation from Transport Minister that there will be no closure of any of the 14 theoretically/hypothetically ‘closure threatened’ stations in Scotland ‘within 1 mile of each other’!

* Developments which could be made to improve the network and rolling stock for passengers;

Improving the network:

Pursuit of the EGIP project must include restoration of the previously intended Garngad Chord and north electric turn-back at Finnieston or Queen St Low Level which were identified as key ingredients in achieving improved journey times benefitting all EGIP line users with improved connectivity/ higher track capacity for future growth/ tackling urban congestion/ modal shift on to rail and reduction of emissions.

The outline case for electrification and upgrading of the Glasgow City Union Line as offering a cross-Scotland route with new interchange station opportunities at West Street (with the Subway) and Glasgow Cross (with the Argyle Line) were more fully outlined in our response to Q16 of ‘Rail 2014’ This pragmatic use of existing infrastructure would have comprehensively satisfied the full range of KSOs required and was also backed by a strong business case/notionally high STAG appraisal. It should logically be undertaken as a coherent and cost effective adjunct to the EGIP project, which has more potential to achieve modal shift and competitively boost public transport than any other single transport
intervention project across Scotland.

Crossrail's full carrying potential should be further exploited, in conjunction with the logical short (1 mile) link directly into Glasgow Airport. This link is identified as a key infrastructure project of 'national significance' with National Planning Framework (NPF2) status. Its Transport Scotland supplied capital cost 'estimates' have now been re-assessed (by an independent professional civil engineering analyst), and found to be potentially achievable at a very significantly lesser figure than those previously quoted, and which were the direct cause of its peremptory 2009 cancellation by the Scottish Government.

Restoring passenger services to Edinburgh South Suburban line, Alloa-Dunfermline, Falkirk-Grangemouth, as short line 'feeder routes' should be pursued on the basis of utilising the synergy benefits (equipment / material and labour) associated with the geographically adjoining and operationally inter-related 'core lines' of the main EGIP project.

Short length rail extensions e.g. Thornton-Levenmouth and Leuchars-St Andrews also have significant 'multiplier potential' building on the interconnectivity achieved by the above projects to both improve accessibility, journey times, and [particularly] offer a meaningful and competitive alternative to otherwise insatiably increasing demand for car usage.

We believe that the recognised need, by Transport Scotland, for infrastructure upgrading (restoration of double tracking/passing loops) on Perth-Inverness line merits full implementation long before 2025 (now suggested as a 'deferred' completion date in the 2011 (IIP). And similarly, a stronger commitment to early delivery of double tracking/passing loops on the Aberdeen-Inverness line, which themselves should logically be undertaken as components of the planned Aberdeen Crossrail, to achieve a meaningful modal shift on to sustainable public transport improvement across this expanding urban area.

The previous ScotRail intention to achieve a direct rail crossing of the Dornoch Firth (with a 45 minutes / 26 mile shortening of the circuitous inland route) merits further perusal, as the key ingredient in reducing the 4.0 hour average Caithness-Inverness journey time to under 2.5 hours. This is an accepted target time towards a significant reduction in 'regional peripherally' which continues to frustrate potential economic growth opportunity areas of East Sutherland / Caithness and Orkney. Investing in a more economic/efficient, lower cost rail route, generating more passengers and revenue is the only meaningful long alternative to uncertain retention of a high cost poorly used service competing against an ever improving A9 road link north of Inverness.

As a further points in support of further investment in Scotland's rail infrastructure I would ask your Committee to note:
* The actual user response to investment new / reopened lines and stations is invariably is far higher than the previously pessimistic 'forecasts' normally used. And offers further confirmation of a suppressed demand for the range of user and non-user benefits associated with the range of KSO delivered.

* Surveys tend to confirm a higher and more successful modal shift, away from private car usage on to new / improved rail links (at typically 20%) compared to new / improved bus based projects (with typically only 5% transfer).

* Our disappointment that the projected Scottish Government investment in rail infrastructure improvements / network extensions is intended to decrease from 2014 to 2014 even after scrapping several previously planned infrastructure projects e.g. Edinburgh and Glasgow Airport rail links, and Aberdeen Crossrail. And now followed by the current EGIP desire to make a £52 m retrenchment saving by scrapping the previously intended Garmgad Chord. No justification has been advanced in the IIP explaining why several desirable rail projects with apparently good KSO credentials are not now being pursued and/or unacceptably 'deferred' compared to IIP intimation of certain new major road projects e.g. unconditional commitment to full dualling of the A9 and A96 (up to £3.5 bn). Even although they may not have been fully justified through the established KSO procedures but seem to have been 'subjectively ranked ahead of', or to the 'exclusion of' several rail projects.
Such selective expenditure squeeze on required rail infrastructure and massive switching of capital funding into major road projects continuing in the in the years after the distorting effect of the up to £1.6 bn Forth Replacement Crossing is disturbing and difficult to accept in terms of even greater patronage projected on the rail network, and unique borrowing/funding opportunity available from Network Rail's Regulatory Base (RAB).
See the two separate ATTACHMENTS (B) and (C)

The lack of long-term vision and commitment to sustain even the average levels of rail capital investment achieved over the 2007-2012 period seems somewhat inconsistent / contradictory when viewed against the Scottish Government's ambitions elsewhere to achieve a more sustainable and energy efficient lifestyle and supported by renewables which are particularly applicable to rail passenger (and freight) systems.

**Improving the rolling stock:**
A comprehensive outline of the required improvements to new (and refurbished) rolling stock was given in Railfuture Scotland's Response to Q31 /Q32 of 'Rail 2014' to which I would respectfully draw to your attention.

* The potential cost associated with such an upgrade and the current provider’s ability to cope with and provide for the growing demands on the rail service
The costs of many of the required costs associated with various infrastructure projects and rolling stock upgrades etc. are already well documented in various reports and studies undertaken by Transport Scotland / Network Rail / ScotRail / Local Authorities / Regional Transport Partnerships together with privately commissioned professional estimates of the likely funding requirements.

As above, and discussed in response to Q25 of 'Rail 2014', we believe there is further considerable scope for collaborative and mutually beneficial funding of new stations and lines as joint investment ventures between the public and private sector to achieve this betterment of Scotland's rail system.

It is disappointing and frustrating that offers of private sector funding for additional rail infrastructure ‘to cope with growing demands for rail service provision’ e.g. new stations at Robroyston (Glasgow) and Winchburgh (West Lothian) are apparently being ‘resisted’ by Transport Scotland for reasons which seem neither coherent or convincing. Even more so, with their recent 2012 irrational thwarting of a wholly private sector funded offer to construct a Glasgow Airport Rail route link for public benefit entirely from equity sources and at no cost/ no risk to public sector finance (which would be highly consistent with both the Key Outcome Objectives of Transport Policy and the general fiscal policy strategy of the Scottish and UK Governments. This aims to encourage greater private sector funding opportunity and initiative.

Sensitive, flexible, and innovative use of fares policy, as discussed above and amplified in our response to can be utilised to spread-out peak overloading of rolling stock and make better use of [limited] track capacity.

* The importance of and further potential for, the integration of Scotland’s rail network with the rest of the UK
From a passenger / customer viewpoint, for business and leisure travel, the provision of direct / through rail services is a highly valued commodity and retention of the existing (no change needed) London - Edinburgh - Dundee - Aberdeen / Perth - Inverness services must be a non-negotiable condition of the post-2014 ScotRail franchise renewal. In response to Q29 of 'Rail 2014' it was noted that around 25-30% loss of rail patronage usually accompanies withdrawal of direct / through services, when they are substituted by a requirement to change of train (or station) en route.

There is also a requirement for a meaningful provision of direct (though) rail services on Cross Country routes from Glasgow / Aberdeen - Edinburgh to major centres of the East Midlands and South / South
West England is also highly as a convenient, and attractive/competitive alternative to long distance motoring and air travel.

Railfuture Scotland would urge introduction of an experimental direct Glasgow/Edinburgh - Paris / Brussels service via the Channel Tunnel in the belief that an element of market demand currently exists, should be pursued and that previously evidenced 'difficulties' involving customs inspection etc. can be resolved / overcome.

Efforts by the Scottish Government to accelerate construction of a High Speed Rail link into central Scotland, integrally constructed with the English section/s and in operational service sooner than originally envisaged by the UK Government, are much to be welcomed. As is the requirement to identify and safeguard appropriate High Speed rail terminal station sites in Glasgow and Edinburgh.