RURAL ECONOMY AND CONNECTIVITY COMMITTEE

PROPOSED NATIONAL ISLANDS PLAN

SUBMISSION FROM TRANSPORT FOCUS

1. Transport Focus is the independent public body set up by Government to protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, England’s bus and tram passengers outside London, and coach passengers in England on scheduled domestic services. Since March 2015 we have also represented the interests of users of the strategic road network in England. We are an independent body funded by the Department for Transport (DfT). We have developed working relationships with Transport Scotland, Regional Transport Partnerships (RTPs) and transport operators that has allowed us to extend our reach to bus, tram and ferry passengers in Scotland.

2. Our mission for rail is to get the best deal for passengers. With a strong emphasis on evidence based campaigning and research, we ensure we know what is happening on the ground. We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of passengers and we work with the industry, passenger groups, governments and devolved transport authorities to secure journey improvements.

3. The National Islands Plan (NIP) has 13 Strategic Objectives designed to meet the needs of island communities, however, Transport Focus submission will concentrate on Strategic Objective 3: Transport – To improve transport services.

4. The NIP recognises that the cost of transport on islands is much higher, relative to income, than in the rest of Scotland. Journey times are often long and can require multiple interchanges, including an overnight stay, adding further costs. In addition, integrated ticketing is not always available, meaning that multiple tickets are required, further adding to price and complexity.

5. Transport Focus runs both the National Rail Passenger Survey\(^1\) (NRPS) a measure of passenger satisfaction with their ScotRail journey and the Guest Satisfaction Survey\(^2\) (GSS) a measure of passenger satisfaction with their Caledonian Sleeper journey. The surveys are part of each operator’s franchise agreement with passenger satisfaction targets.

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\(^1\) NRPS at a glance (ScotRail) - 2019
\(^2\) Caledonian guest satisfaction survey - 2019
6. The expertise developed on NRPS was put to good use in setting up a national Bus Passenger Survey (BPS), now covering nearly 30,000 journeys in Scotland and a Tram Passenger Survey (TPS), which has covered over 3,000 journeys on the Edinburgh Tram and Glasgow Subway.

7. In line with the above surveys we developed the Ferry Passenger Survey³ (FPS) was designed to sample individual journeys; as such, island residents, non-island residents, living on mainland/peninsular and tourists. This allowed us to build an even bigger multi-modal picture of transport user satisfaction Scotland.

8. To ensure that existing and future transport related policies, strategies (National Transport Strategy, Strategic Transport Projects Review, Ferries Plan) and services meet the needs of users’ and island communities, consideration should be given to increase the accountability and participation by benchmarking satisfaction against delivery plans.

9. Our research⁴ indicates the need to improve links between transport modes in Scotland, to help make public transport a more attractive option for those travelling for work, business and for leisure. multi-modal journey allows passengers to move from to with more than one journey leg and perhaps more than one mode of transport. Good offers seamless, convenient journeys timed connections. greater shift to more sustainable, integrated journeys will help to reduce emissions and congestion.

10. Convenience, speed and cost were key considerations for a satisfactory travel experience, with a slightly differing emphasis placed on each depending on the individual, or the circumstance for the journey. These priorities need to be reviewed in light of different integrated transport combinations to ensure all needs are met for more consistently seamless transitions.

11. There were four key areas for attention which will enhance the experience of integrated travel for passengers and potential passengers.

   Information - to give passengers the tools to proactively plan their journeys and make them smoother and less stressful overall.

   Travel environment - to improve the comfort and security of rail and integrated travel. Infrastructure and service provision to make rail and integrated travel as accessible and as tailored as possible around passengers’ needs – for example, car parking for those in more remote areas with limited access to the station.

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³ Ferry Passenger Survey (Caledonian MacBrayne) - 2016
⁴ Transport Integration in Scotland - 2014
**Ticketing, costs and fares** - to simplify the purchasing process for passengers by putting in place new technology to enhance convenience and to benefit passengers with potential cost-savings and greater flexibility of available transport options. For those who rarely or never used rail or other public transport, needs centred more on overcoming environmental barriers on rail and public transport generally.

**Security and the cleanliness and comfort** on public transport was a key hygiene factor.

12. The NIP recognises that journeys can require multiple interchanges therefore improving connectivity and building passenger confidence and trust in integrated transport is essential. Our research with rail passengers shows that trust in competence: punctuality/reliability is the single most important hygiene factor overall; if this isn’t right then trust just isn’t possible. The central importance of punctuality/reliability chimes with other Transport Focus research where punctuality is a key driver of passenger satisfaction with their journey and features strongly in passenger priorities for improvement.

13. Trust in Motive: provide passengers with a sense that the train company is looking out for them (and not purely driven by commercial goals): treating customers fairly, being clearly ‘on my side’ and communicating well can all help drive up levels of trust.

14. Trust in Judgement: passengers consider the overall judgement of train companies are they truthful, do they act with honesty and integrity, do they have high principles and a good reputation. People look to all these things to gain a sense of whether, or not, a train company is trustworthy. Ensuring the transport system delivers consistently good performance is a practical action that will build passenger trust.

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5 Trust in train operators – an exploration of issues influencing passenger trust in rail - 2019