

ScotRail submission of 15 June 2023

PE1930/I: Ensure customers are always given information on cheapest possible fare in new Scotrail contract

I note the resolution of the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee to write to ScotRail following your meeting on 17 May 2023. Thank you for reaching out to us for our views on the options to upgrade the infrastructure which would support the use of contactless bankcards on the rail network.

ScotRail do not have any current plans to upgrade the retail infrastructure to support the use of bankcards as travel tokens on the rail network in Scotland. This is primarily due to the significant funding that would be required to upgrade all automatic ticket gatelines and platform validators. Ultimately, the upgrades would require significant additional government funding over and above our current public subsidy and this is not considered a practical use of limited public resources at this time.

We do, however, support the end goal that would be achieved by the implementation of a 'tap on, tap off' system such as proposed, namely the ease of use for passengers and the automatic calculation of the cheapest fare for the product used to ensure rail is as practical and affordable as possible.

To this end, ScotRail are actively pursuing the introduction of a pilot scheme that would meet the same outcomes, but using barcode technology that is compatible with the existing infrastructure across the network. An Account Based Travel scheme using barcode technology would support the type of Pay-As-You-Go proposition that contactless bankcards would offer.

In practical terms, this would see customers downloading an app to their mobile device, registering an account, and linking a payment card to that account. When travelling, the app would generate a barcode which would allow the customer to access the rail network through the gatelines and present the barcode ticket to ScotRail staff whilst travelling. The use of the app would require location services to be enabled, and this will allow ScotRail to use GPS to identify the trip being made and calculate the appropriate fare in the back office; debiting the

customer's payment card. The scheme would apply daily and weekly capping to ensure maximum customer value.

We believe our proposed pilot scheme, and the subsequent rollout if successful, is a logical and positive progression following our introduction of barcode mTickets that can be purchased through the ScotRail app. These mTickets have proved hugely popular with customers and account for a rapidly growing segment of our ticket sales. This is an exciting customer proposition which will deliver a simpler travel and purchase experience for customers through a method they are already familiar with using, without the need for investment in the retail infrastructure.