

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee

8th Meeting, 2022 (Session 6), Tuesday 8 March 2022

Transfer of operation of ScotRail

Note by the Clerk

Background

1. On 1 April 2022, operation of ScotRail services will transfer to an arms-length company owned and controlled by the Scottish Government.
2. The Committee has agreed to hear views of stakeholders on this, as well as take evidence from the Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP.

Public ownership of ScotRail

3. On 17 March 2021, the former Minister for Transport, Michael Matheson MSP, [announced](#) his decision not to extend the franchise arrangements for operation of Scotrail. He said

“I therefore confirm that the operator of last resort will run ScotRail services after the end of the current franchise contract. That means that from the expiry of the current franchise, ScotRail services will be provided within the public sector by an arm’s-length company owned and controlled by the Scottish Government.”

4. On 3 February 2022, the Scottish Parliament [debated](#) the transfer of ownership of ScotRail.
5. On 8 February 2022, the current Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP, [announced](#) the transfer would take place on 1 April 2022

“Today, I can confirm that the transition of ScotRail into Scottish Government control will take place on 1 April 2022. Although that is good news, it is clear that much work still needs to be done, in a collaborative way, to ensure the long-term sustainability of rail operations in Scotland, to best meet the needs of the people whom we represent.”

6. Both the debate and the statement highlighted a number of issues for consideration during the transition of operation including
 - Levels of service provision, including ticket office facilities;

- Employment terms and conditions for ScotRail staff, including union engagement and the existing policy of no compulsory redundancies;
- Ticket prices and concessions;
- Changes to rail travel patterns for both passengers and freight since the pandemic;
- Investment in rail services both as emergency measure during the pandemic and also to transition to decarbonisation of the railway;
- Passenger safety; and
- The role of railway in active travel and modal shift.

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee consideration

7. The Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee has agreed to hear from stakeholders ahead of the transfer of operations. At its meeting on 8 March 2022, it will hear from
 - Robert Samson, Senior Stakeholder Manager, Transport Focus;
 - Mick Hogg, Regional Organiser, National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT);
 - Michael Clark, Programme Director, Strategy and Transformation, Great British Railways Transition Team;
8. The Committee will hear from the Minister for Transport, Jenny Gilruth MSP, at a later meeting.

Clerks

Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee