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Midnight Train to Georgemas:

A Sleeper Train for the Far North?

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SYSTRA

The Concept

- Improve connectivity between the Far North/Orkney and Central Belt
- Develop tourism markets
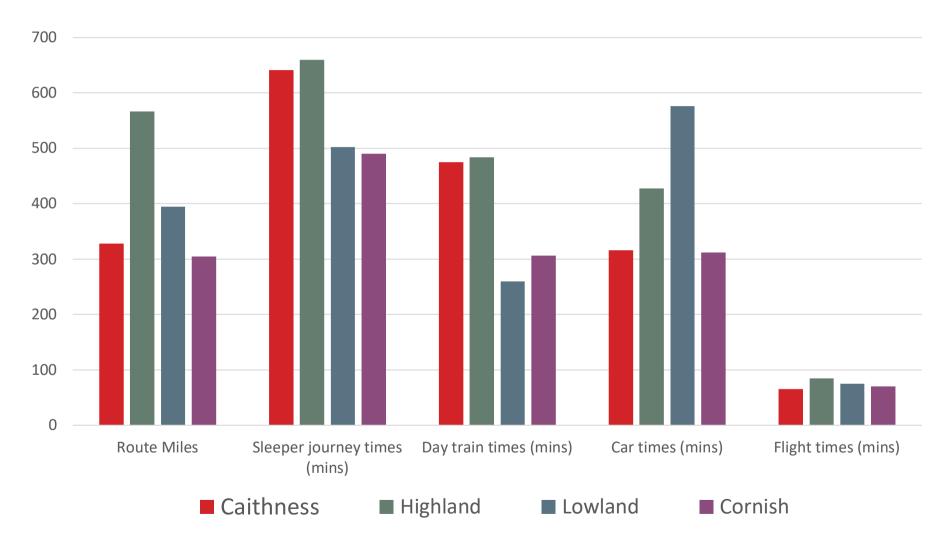- Offer early arrival/late departure in the Central Belt
- Opportunity to develop a parcels service
- An opportunity presented by Caledonian Sleeper renewal

SYSTRA

Benchmarking against existing sleepers and competitive position
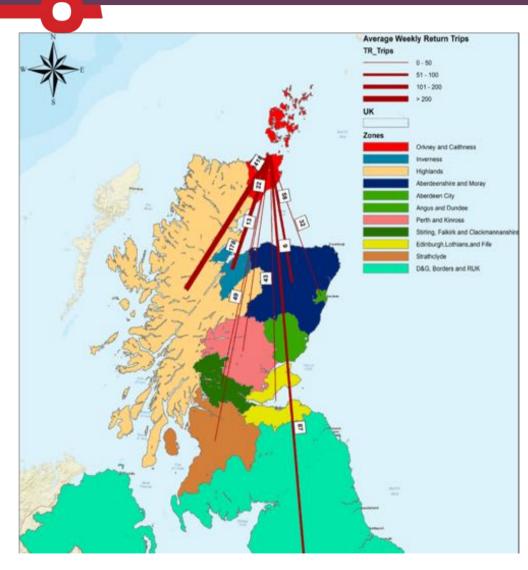
The Market for the Service

SYSTRA

Understanding the market

- An unusual service to study – an innovative approach required

- Mobile phone data from Telefonica

- Examined long distance passenger movements in a rural area:

  - Trip duration

  - Low/Mid/High Season

  - Excluded air & ferry trips

- Information on Inverness derived from a model

SYSTRA

Orkney & Caithness – Weekly Return Trips by All Modes

Destination	Weekly Trips
Inverness	178
Highlands	1418
Aberdeenshire	58
Aberdeen	32
Angus & Dundee	9
Perth & Kinross	22
Stirling	49
Edinburgh	43
Strathclyde	49
Borders + England	87
TOTAL	**1945**

SYSTRA

The Market for a Sleeper

Market Segment	Annual Demand (One Way Trips)
Orkney/Caithness – Central Belt	8,598
Inverness – Central Belt	20,571
TOTAL	**29,169**

SYSTRA

The Market for a Sleeper

A conservative assessment of the market potential because:

- Exclusion of all air trips

- No newly generated trips included

- Opportunity for new tourism markets:

  - Potential to develop short rail & ferry package tours

  - Secondary benefit to day trains

  - Wider impact on economy of Caithness/Orkney

SYSTRA

A Market for Parcels

- Opportunity to experiment with a new market

- Considered a "**mixed**" train in the early stages

- Parcels for distribution **northbound**

  - Local premium on parcels north of Inverness may justify this

- High value small items **southbound**

  - Build on shellfish by rail on Highland Sleeper

SYSTra

Delivering the Service

SYSTRA

Operational Objectives

- ## Connect with the Orkney Ferry
  - Challenging – drives the timetable

- ## Serve Inverness at a viable time
  - The case for a portion?

- ## Serve Glasgow or Edinburgh?
  - Option to serve both

- ## Finding a route that is open and available
  - Highland v Aberdeen

- ## A mixed train??

SYSTRA

A Mixed Train?

- Early stages considered a "mixed" train

- Would carry freight and passenger traffic

- Unique in the UK

- However:

  - Complex to deliver

  - Timetabling difficult – clashed with other objectives

  - Created other operational issues e.g. train formation

SYSTRA

The Train: A Unique Opportunity

- Reuse existing Mark 3 Sleepers & Mark 2 Day Coaches

  - Derogation for PRM-TSI Modifications

- DVT – Parcels, luggage and flexibility

- Six vehicles with Inverness portion

LOCO – SLEEPER – 2*DAY COACH – LOUNGE – SLEEPER - DVT

SYSTRA

Timetable: Southbound

LOCATION	ARRIVE	DEPART	REMARK
Thurso	-	19:30	
Georgemas Junction	19:46	19:54	Train reverses
Inverness	00:10	00:45	Attach Inverness portion
ROUTE	*Highland Mainline*		
Perth	03:21	04:00	Operational stop
Stirling	04:37	04:39	
ROUTE	*Linlithgow*		
Edinburgh	05:23	07:03	Early connection to London
ROUTE	*Carstairs*		
Glasgow Central	08:11		

SYSTRA

Timetable: Northbound

LOCATION	ARRIVE	DEPART	REMARK
Glasgow Central	-	21:25	High Level Station
ROUTE	*Carstairs*		
Edinburgh	22:23	22:28	
ROUTE	*Linlithgow*		
Stirling	23:08	23:10	Late connection from Glasgow
Perth	23:48	23:50	
ROUTE	*Highland Mainline*		
Inverness	02:14	02:54	Detaches Inverness portion
Georgemas Junction	06:55	07:25	Crosses 0618 Wick - Inverness
Thurso	07:42	-	Connection into sailing

SYSTra

Conclusions: Midnight Train – An Opportunity

Strong support from stakeholders for such a service

Delivers on multiple objectives:

- Improves connectivity, broadening opportunities in the Far North

- Creates jobs in Caithness – train crew base in Thurso

- Stimulates tourist activity bringing more spending

  - Basis for a new tourism rail offer

- Offers a sustainable approach to parcels

- With (admittedly conservative) demand estimates, likely to have similar financial performance as existing Highland sleepers

SYSTRA