



## Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme – Ticketing Enhancements Update

**Date of meeting** 13 March 2024

**Date of report** 19 February 2024

### Report by Treasurer

#### 1. Object of report

To update the Strathclyde Concessionary Travel Scheme (SCTS) Joint Committee on progress regarding enabling SCTS concession rail tickets to be purchased at station platform ticket vending machines (TVMs)

#### 2. Background to report

Members may recall, as part of a wider ticketing update report presented to the Committee of 30 September 2022<sup>1</sup>, the Committee was informed of an increasing number of requests from Scheme users to both ScotRail and SPT asking that the current rules prohibiting Ticket Vending Machine (TVM) concessions ticket purchases be reconsidered.

Members are reminded the reason for this rule is so that a visual inspection of National Entitlement Cards (NEC) can be made at the point of purchase to determine eligibility for SCTS discounts.

The basis for these requests, as reported previously, was largely concerns that some rail stations are unstaffed or have limited opening hours, meaning SCTS tickets can only be purchased on-board trains where a ticket examiner is present or at staffed destination stations, in effect making it challenging to purchase tickets at the start of journeys, resulting in needing to queue on arrival at destination stations.

While it is acknowledged that the use of TVMs could increase risk of concession ticket misuse, there is the opportunity to work with ScotRail to mitigate this, and that enhancements to ticketing would be viewed positively by NEC holders, making rail journeys easier and more attractive as well as contribute positively to improving equality outcomes for older and disabled users.

There is an estimated 166 TVMs located at 130 rail stations in Strathclyde (out of 196 Strathclyde stations in total). Just 13 stations with TVMs accept both cash and card as a payment method, with the remaining 117 stations being card only.

Any solution will require collaboration between SPT and ScotRail to resolve technical challenges as well as agreeing processes for ensuring that revenue protection safeguards remain in place and that the opportunity for ticket misuse is reduced as far as is possible.

#### 3. Progress Update

##### 3.1. Working Group

Efforts to introduce a solution are being taken forward jointly as a project between SPT as SCTS administrator and ScotRail in their operational capacity, who have established

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.spt.co.uk/media/u5kbifwo/sctsjc300922\\_agenda9.pdf](https://www.spt.co.uk/media/u5kbifwo/sctsjc300922_agenda9.pdf)

relationships with Scheidt & Bachmann (S&B), the supplier of the ScotRail Network's TVMs and responsible for the software / user interface technology that these machines use.

Since the last committee update, SPT has continued to engage ScotRail to agree a mechanism to progress and to expedite a solution. A project working group has been convened and a Project Initiation Document (PID) drafted which establishes agreed roles and responsibilities, identifying technical solutions, setting of project objectives, safeguarding revenue as well as ensuring equality impacts are carefully considered.

The following project objectives have been agreed by the group:

- Enhance the travel experience for SCTS customers by offering greater ticket purchasing opportunities and provide a more convenient ticket offer.
- Remove barriers to accessing discounted fares for particular groups including people with disabilities, some of whom may experience difficulty with direct communication and interacting with others e.g. people on the autism spectrum
- Minimise opportunity for ticket misuse and safeguard revenue.
- Offer more sustainable purchase choices by reducing the need to issue paper tickets.

### 3.2. Technical Scope

It is a working assumption that any solution will involve SCTS tickets being loaded directly onto the NEC using existing TVM technology, thereby removing the need for paper concession tickets to be issued from machines as well as the need to present the user's card and paper ticket separately for inspection. As such, this requires a more detailed understanding of current ticketing technology capability and whether this would meet the requirements of SPT, ScotRail and concession customers.

As a first key stage, a detailed technical specification was recently agreed between SPT and ScotRail setting out around 15 individual technical requirements that the project must meet regarding the interface between TVM and the users' NEC. This technical specification was issued to S&B in late November 2023 to confirm, or otherwise, whether the agreed specification can be met and to establish high level costs for implementation. Members are reminded that a requirement will be to ensure the ability to purchase tickets stations and ticket selling staff is retained for people not wishing to use TVMs.

At the time of writing, we await the outcome of discussions between ScotRail and S&B in response to the technical specification and will provide an update to a future meeting of the Committee, by which time we should have an understanding of timescales, costs and of any potential issues to address.

### 3.3. Online Ticket Sales

As part of working group discussions, it is now also recognised there is the opportunity to consider introducing functionality for online purchases of SCTS tickets. In doing so, this would promote greater inclusivity and help to reduce barriers for SCTS customers, in particular, people with disabilities, to travel more independently.

While discussions are still at an early stage, there is agreement between SPT and ScotRail to consider this as part of the wider project remit. It is considered that the same revenue protection assurances being sought for the TVM project could also be applied in this instance. Both parties are committed to working together to agree a scope of requirements in order to facilitate an online solution in addition to the TVM component currently being developed. An update on progress will be given to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### 4. Committee action

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report, and in particular, the ongoing work between SPT and ScotRail to implement a solution enabling rail station TVM concessionary ticket sales and proposals to potentially develop online ticket selling functionality.

The working group will continue to act as the forum for all key project considerations, and it will be for the group to establish a route map and timeline for delivery, costs to deliver and the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan for both the TVM and online solutions.

#### 5. Consequences

Policy consequences	The Scheme will continue to meet the RTS Objective “To improve accessibility, affordability, availability and safety of the transport system, ensuring everyone can get to town centres, jobs, education, healthcare and other everyday needs” and its Priority “Improved quality of life”
Legal consequences	None at present.
Financial consequences	None at present, although it should be noted that any implementation of TVM sales (and/or on-line sales) will be designed to minimise any potential financial loss to the Scheme through misuse.
Personnel consequences	None at present.
Equalities consequences	Changes would contribute positively to improving equality outcomes for older and disabled users.
Risk consequences	None at present.
Climate Change, Adaptation & Carbon consequences	A reduction in paper ticket use will contribute positively to the environment.

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