

## **CPG on Rail – Minutes 18 November 2020**

### **Zoom**

Attending: John Mason MSP, John Finnie MSP, Pauline McNeill MSP, Liam Kerr MSP, Graham Simpson MSP, Frank Roach (HITRANS), Jim Sharkey (Cllr.), Simon Walton (Campaign for Borders Rail), Kevin Lindsay (ASLEF), Jim Grieve (Sestran), Phil Mc Garry (RMT Political Advisor Scotland), Chris Day (Transform Scotland), Richard Ardern (Friends of the Far North Line Inverness), Nigel Mullan (Newburgh Train Station Group), Allison Cosgrove (Rail Future Scotland), Heather Noller, Adam Mackie

Apologies: Vic McKinley

### **AGM**

Elections for posts were held. John Mason MSP and Pauline McNeill MSP were re-elected as co-convenors with Liam Kerr MSP and John Finnie MSP remaining as vice-convenors. Scotrail alliance were re-elected as secretariat. Discussion over whether the group should remain subscription free, decided unanimously that it should.

### **Presentation by ScotRail on Recovery of the Rail Transport Sector from COVID-19**

The presentation covered the work of ScotRail during the pandemic to keep trains moving and to ensure public health measures were implemented. This included a discussion of cleaning methods and seating arrangements as well as limiting the movements of conductors in carriages to minimise contact between people.

The presentation also looked at the decline in usage of trains as a result of the pandemic, with passenger numbers and fares at around 20% of pre-COVID. This has led to the need for cutting services and creating new timetables.

### **Questions**

Question from Liam Kerr MSP on what ScotRail are doing to ensure replacement services such as busses are Covid secure. The response was that ScotRail would engage with replacement services.

Question from John Mason MSP of fare freezes to encourage commuters back onto trains as we move out of the pandemic, ScotRail could not provide comment.

### **Any Other Competent Business**

It was agreed that the Co-convenors of the group would write to the Scottish Government on the issue of a fares freeze and what can be done to return commuters to trains once it is safe to do so.

The date of the next meeting has yet to be decided but it is hoped to be able to have one more meeting before the end of the parliamentary session.