

Report to Partnership Meeting 26 September 2014

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Oban 6.2

Purpose of Report

To inform Members on the introduction of the Oban 6.2 trains project.

Background

Minister for Transport and Veterans Keith Brown MSP announced the enhancement of services to Oban at the Community Rail Conference on 19 February 2013. This has seen a step change in service frequency from 3 trains per day to 6 trains per day with an additional short working service to/from Dalmally to Oban. This last allows the transport of school pupils to Oban High School. The service enhancement follows on from a significant amount of case building by HITRANS dating back in the first instance to the Room for Growth study of 2006 which highlighted the poor frequency of trains to Oban. Subsequent work by HITRANS and Highland Rail Partnership included:

- HRP/HITRANS engaged consultants Faber to review timetable options for the West Highland lines in 2006.
- In 2007 HITRANS commissioned Habtrans to investigate timetable options for enhanced Oban line services. 4, 5 and 6 per day were explored. The Oban service of three trains per day is currently the worst frequency of any route in Scotland.
- Halcrow carried out an economic appraisal of the five trains per day option, identifying a Benefit:Cost ratio of 5.0 optimistic, 3.9 pessimistic.
- James Laird of the Institute for Transport Studies in Leeds did some further work on option and non-use values and identified WEBs that raise the BCRs above by a further 0.2.
- HITRANS commissioned Delta Rail to carry out a Sectional Running Time study on the West Highland Lines, establishing theoretical journey times for Class 156, Class 170, re-engined Class 170 on existing and enhanced infrastructure, where loop entry/exit is increased to 25mph and 40 mph from the current 15 mph. Journey time reductions of up to 11.5 mins on the Oban route were identified.
- HITRANS also commissioned Scott Wilson to consider options for the deployment of motorised switch and crossings on RETB routes that would allow faster loop entry/exit speeds.

Oban 6.2 Introduction

The following key activity has taken place ensuring the successful introduction of the Oban 6.2 rail service enhancement:

- On Thursday 14 August over 130 Oban HS pupils arrived for the new school session by train. This followed three induction days in June on the train for rising S1 pupils and a single day for the existing Oban Line High School pupils, carried out with the help of

Argyll and Bute staff, HITRANS, ScotRail staff and British Transport Police. Feedback from the pupils has been very positive.

- Reliability has been assured with the operating plan to turn back the 0521 ex Oban at Crianlarich to form the school train, in the event of a failure of the 0520 ex Glasgow which forms the school train normally.
- New shelters were installed at Taynuilt and Dalmally to cope with the crowds, and a Platform Validators for smart cards are starting to appear.
- A second all year round Sunday service between Glasgow and Oban (and vice versa) is to commence from 02 November, vastly improving weekend opportunities by rail.

Some photographs of the enhancement in facilities, smart card technology and the first day of school transport by train to Oban are provided below to give a flavour of the successful delivery of the Oban 6.2 project.



Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.

Risk	Impact	Comment
RTS delivery	√	This project fits well with a number of RTS Horizontal themes.
Policy	√	This project has integration and environmental benefits.
Financial	√	This project is fully funded
Equality	-	No impact on equalities issues.

Report by: Frank Roach
 Designation: Partnership Manager
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