

Report to Partnership Meeting 7 February 2014

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Dalcross Station

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with information on the latest status of the proposed reopening of Dalcross Station taking account of recent status updates by Network Rail.

Dalcross Reopening Background

Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan 2012 outlined the following intention for Control Period 5 2014-2019:

Aberdeen to Inverness Rail Line Improvements Phase 1, delivering the network capability to enable the operation of enhanced commuting services from Aberdeen to Inverurie and from Elgin to Inverness. In addition, working with station promoters to deliver new stations at Kintore (Nestrans) and Dalcross (HITRANS).

This was confirmed in the Office of Rail Regulation's final determination of the Periodic Review in autumn 2013.

Full hourly, sub 2 hour journey times are not due to be completed until 2030 under Scottish Government's Infrastructure Investment Plan.

As station promoters HITRANS will need to refresh the planning permission and the business case for the station at Dalcross. The current timetable has three arrivals in the morning peak into Inverness at 0745, 0810, 0833, but only two evening returns at 1715 and 1813, with an earlier train at 15:29. The most likely enhancement is a new 16xx departure and some off-peak infilling to break up some of the more critical two hours gaps in service.

It is proposed to develop the station in phases, with Phase 1 being the construction of a single platform station on the north side of the line with associated car parking. This will be on a similar basis to the original planning permission that was approved in 2007/08.

Stops at Dalcross will add 3 minutes in the timetable. To avoid significant disbenefits to other passengers this extra time will ideally be clawed back through infrastructure upgrades to ensure no net change. The stopping pattern may be limited until further infrastructure works are carried out on the route.

Network Rail have confirmed in its CP5 Enhancements Delivery Plan (Dec13) that Dalcross (Petty) Level Crossing has to be closed to permit operation of the new station. This needs to be delivered while the level crossing still has operational life, before significant abortive expenditure on renewals is carried out. The document states one of its key assumptions: *agreement will be*

reached with relevant stakeholders for the closure of Dalcross Level Crossing prior to the construction of the new Dalcross station.

This can be found on page 144 at www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/delivery-plans/control-period-5/draft-cp5-delivery-plan

Dalcross is an Automatic Half Barrier Crossing (AH).. The crossing is actuated by the train striking a treadle in the track, with sufficient time at a regulated speed being allowed for the barriers to come down and lights to come on before the train passes. The system relies on trains all travelling at the same speed. The crossing has been life extended already, and requires replacement in 18 months at a cost of £2m-£5m. The crossing is incompatible with the cost effective operation of the new proposed Dalcross station, because trains will be stopping after striking the treadle and thus greatly extending the crossing closed time, which leads to misuse and thus safety risks.

Phase 2 will see a need for a long passing loop to increasing capacity on the Nairn-Inverness section, enabling a half hourly train service, at which time the second platform and associated footbridge will need to be provided.

HITRANS Actions

HITRANS has a significant role to play in delivering this project. Key actions include:

1. Early dialogue with Network Rail, Transport Scotland and ScotRail to understand industry plans for Dalcross.
2. Refresh of the planning application.
3. Refresh of the business case.
4. Discussions with potential funders, both Transport Scotland, other public sector agencies and the possibility of private developer contributions.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to approve the report..
2. Members are asked to approve engagement of consultants to refresh the business case.

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
Date: 30th January 2014