Item:
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HI TRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting 15 April 2016

CONSULTATION

Network Rail's Scotland Route Study

Purpose of Report

To brief members on Network Rail's Scotland Route Study.

Scotland Route Study

The purpose of the Route Study is to provide an evidence base that will inform funders in Scotland when considering rail industry investment choices for Control Periods 6 and 7 between 2019 and 2029. It is one of a new generation of Studies across Great Britain which will also set out how forecast growth could be met through to 2043. This longer term planning horizon is deliberate: it enables a broad range of options to be considered that take account of developments such as High Speed 2 and technological advancements, with a view to creating a prioritised set of choices for the next 10 years and beyond.

This Route Study also contains a Market Study which forecasts demand for passenger journeys undertaken wholly within Scotland. It has been combined with the Market Studies for Long Distance (Anglo Scottish) Passenger and Freight flows, to consider the potential roles that the railway could play in supporting the Scottish economy through to 2043, and identifying opportunities to enable the network to meet the future needs of the people of Scotland.

The choices for funders included in this Route Study have been developed through a strategy of focussing on making the best use of the existing network wherever possible before considering infrastructure enhancement. Where the outputs required cannot be delivered within the constraints of the current network, trade-offs between outputs have been considered, and options to enhance the network have been considered.

The rail industry has developed an aspirational train service for 2043. This Indicative Train Service Specification (ITSS) reflects the opportunities which could be achieved if the Conditional Outputs from the Market Studies are met within Scotland. This process identified seven areas of the Scottish network where changes would be required to support the delivery of the 2043 ITSS, including: Glasgow Queen Street (High Level) to Aberdeen and Inverness, Aberdeen to Inverness and the Far North Line.

The publication of the Route Study in July 2016 will be followed by the Initial Industry Plan in Sept 2016. Scottish Ministers produce their High Level Output Specification/Statement of Funds Available (HLOS/SoFA) in July 2017. Network Rail then produces the Strategic Business Plan in Jan 2018 identifying how the HLOS is to be delivered. ORR confirms which HLOS projects are to be delivered and for what cost in the Regulator's Final Determination in Oct 2018. In April 2019 Control Period 6 (2019-2014) starts, with the Network Rail Delivery Plan describing how the Final Determination is to be delivered.

HITRANS Response

HITRANS' response appears in the Annexe below.

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.
Equality	-	No impact on equalities issues.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 05 February 16

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Annexe

CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Network Rail's Scotland Route Study

HITRANS is the statutory Regional Transport Partnership covering most of the Highlands and Islands: Highland Council; Moray Council; Orkney Islands Council; Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) and parts of the Argyll and Bute Council area.

HITRANS welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Network Rail's Draft Scotland Route Study which we note includes many of our aspirations that have been expressed in various HITRANS studies, including:

- Room for Growth
- InverCity Study
- Inversparkie
- PTOC
- Inverness-Dingwall Resignalling
- Far North S&C Report
- Far North Level Crossings Study
- Rail Freight Capability Study
- Platform4Change (Inverness Station)

Background

The purpose of the Route Study is to provide an evidence base that will inform funders in Scotland when considering rail industry investment choices for Control Periods 6 and 7 between 2019 and 2029. It is one of a new generation of Studies across Great Britain which will also set out how forecast growth could be met through to 2043. This longer term planning horizon is deliberate: it enables a broad range of options to be considered that take account of developments such as High Speed 2 and technological advancements, with a view to creating a prioritised set of choices for the next 10 years and beyond.

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Network Rail has led the development of this Draft for Consultation Route Study using a collaborative approach with input from the rail industry, Transport Scotland and Regional Transport Partnerships. Responses to this Draft for Consultation document work are welcomed. The public consultation is open until 10th March 2016.

HITRANS comments

Inter-city

We assume Highland Main Line Phase 3 and Aberdeen-Inverness Phase 2 will be implemented in CP 6 2019-24. The Scottish Cities Alliance is focussed on speeding up inter-city connectivity in Scotland. Reduced journey times on Inverness to Aberdeen and the Highland Main Line will improve the growth of the Highland economy and help compete with the A9 and A96 dualling projects scheduled for completion in 2025 and 2030 respectively.

RETB signalling and rural routes

The RETB signalling system is due to remain operational until 2040. The SRS is end-dated 2043, therefore we would have expected some commentary on future signalling options for the rural routes. Token exchange transaction time, section length and loop entry/through/exit speeds are all constraints on performance and capacity. Originally conceived as an equipment-lite scheme, the addition of power supplies, points heaters, TPWS, OSS and GPS monitoring means that the operational footprint is now closer to conventional routes. RETB also defines the terminating platform at the seaward end of the rural routes, limiting flexibility.

Equally there should be reference to future rolling stock characteristics on these routes which are unlikely to be electrified.

Highland Main Line

We would urge electrification on Central Belt to Inverness to be timed for commencement before the life expiry of the ScotRail HST diesel fleet c. 2029, so that a fully electric fleet can be procured if the electrification programme is accelerated, or a bi-mode fleet can be procured to permit phased electrification. Freight operations Daventry-Grangemouth/Coatbridge-Inverness could switch to electric traction throughout.

Perth station re-modelling, redevelopment and re-signalling prior to electrification, including freight looping capacity and with improved transport interchange capabilities will be of enormous benefit for Highland travellers interchanging there between Edinburgh and Glasgow services. The proposed layout will greatly shorten interchange times, and permit linespeed improvements from Stanley Jn to Perth Station approach (currently heavily speed restricted)

The installation of additional loops and/or double track in advance of electrification of the Highland Main Line will increase capacity, improve performance in the event of perturbation and also be of benefit to

freight operations. Killiecrankie is rightly noted as a constraint both for existing freight gauge clearance, and for future electrification.

Inverness-Edinburgh services will be greatly improved with Hilton-Ladybank improvements and HSC (Higher Speed via Cowdenbeath-Halbeath-Inverkeithing direct), bringing the Edinburgh time closer to the Glasgow time. An indication of optimal journey times to Central Belt would be useful, including opportunities for peak/shoulder peak arrivals at both north and south terminals, and the impact of Edinburgh Gateway.

We would like to see a strong emphasis on climate change mitigation as HML has experienced substantial weather-related disruption in recent years at Kingussie and Dalguise.

We would also urge the industry to study in-depth the capability and capacity of Inverness Station, acknowledged in Appendix 6 6.1.13, including:

- its ability to handle an increased quantum of trains
- dedicated sleeper facilities
- compliant north platforms that can used by rolling stock with 1/3-2/3 doors
- through platforms to permit Tain-Elgin locals
- improved fuelling, CET facilities near the current washer road

Aberdeen-Inverness

We agree with the following proposals:

- new dynamic loops/double track at Dalcross and other locations
- extension of existing loops, signalling enhancements
- linespeed improvements
- track renewals

and urge double tracking to run from Inverness to Dalcross, with the provision for a signalled connection to Norbord. More efficient operations can be achieved by joining east and south lines at a new Seafield Jn, abandoning both the restrictive single track tunnel under the A9 and Raigmore Level Crossing (see Appendix 6 6.6.11).

Electrification of the route has been omitted from various policy documents over the years. Once Inverness-Perth and Perth-Dundee-Aberdeen are electrified post-HST, it would be inefficient not to complete the triangle. Freight gauge will be further enhanced, for new traffic and as a diversionary when HML is unavailable.

Far North

Re-signalling from Inverness to Dingwall, plus an additional loop between Inverness and Dingwall will:

- enable journey time reductions with no RETB token exchange delays
- improve capacity and permit additional peak services
- improve performance and reliability when there is perturbation

This should also include new overspeed sensors to permit linespeed running within loops (currently restricted to 15mph); permissive working to split and join at both Dingwall platforms, a bi directional loop to enable freight and other trains to be passed. It should replicate the current RETB 24 hour network availability. The scheme may also help mitigate additional transaction time switching RETB panels at Invergordon.

We are pleased to see the testing of Wick 2 hourly (assume 6tpd) and Invergordon hourly, although Tain may make sense. However the long sections such as Helmsdale-Forsinard when freight paths are added in must make this hard to achieve

The construction of the Georgemas Chord will allow trains from the south to reach Thurso perhaps 7 mins quicker. It will require motorised points to be controlled through the RETB system. The triangle created will be helpful for turning charters etc.

We are pleased to see reference Inverness station remodelling including the possible reconfiguration of platforms 5-7 and track layout at Inverness station to facilitate more frequent services on this section of route, and suggest that compliant north platforms that can used by rolling stock with 1/3-2/3 doors plus through platforms to permit Tain-Elgin locals should be investigated along with improved fuelling and CET facilities near the current washer road.

West Highland Lines and Dingwall to Kyle

It is disappointing that there are no proposals for enhancing routes to the three west coast ports of Mallaig, Oban and Kyle. Appendix 2 RC08 proposes one opportunity every 2-3 hours which may be difficult to achieve with the existing infrastructure. We agree that Fort William-Glasgow particularly will require more than 3 ScotRail trains per day.

In the past the SRA concluded that an extended loop for freight operations was required, while there are opportunities for journey time reductions through schemes such as enhancing Crianlarich operations, improving handover at Helensburgh Upper and enabling faster cross-panel switching at Banavie for trains at St Fillans and Upper Tyndrum.

Other journey time reductions must be sought from the track to take advantage of the superior performance on the C 158s, in order to compete the with the A82/A85 road times.

At Oban the increase in both ferry and rail services, and the potential for sleepers underlines the need for investment in the interchange.

Frank Roach
HITRANS 10.03.16