

Item:

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Report to Partnership Meeting 15 September 2017

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Moray Firth Arc Station Developments

Purpose of Report

To update Members and Advisors on current and potential station developments on the Moray Firth Arc.

Elgin

The new extended loop through Wards Road Level Crossing is currently under construction. Signalling from Elgin to Nairn is being re-controlled to Inverness Signal Box, and power-operated points will ease access to the yard at Elgin which is planned to become a ScotRail depot, with trains stabled overnight. Wards Level Crossing will be closed for a period during the ten day blockade and mitigation measures have been programmed.

Forres

The new Forres Station is due for completion in October 2017, during the ten day blockade. The two platform station will allow trains to cross without delay. Waterford level crossing is to be closed, with access via the new bridge over the railway at the new station.

Nairn

Design work has been commissioned for station car parking and disabled access on the southern platform, following a meeting held on site with Fergus Ewing, ScotRail, Network Rail, ScotRail, Highland Council, HITRANS and the local Access Forum. HITRANS will be contributing £10k towards the c.£100k cost.

Inverness Airport Dalcross

A meeting is shortly to be held between Transport Scotland and with local project partners to progress towards a formalisation of the governance arrangements for the delivery of Inverness Airport (Dalcross) Station and confirmation of the local funding and wider economically beneficial commitments. This will see the station included in Network Rail's Control Period 6 (2019-24) committed schemes.

The Case for Closure for Dalcross (Petty) level crossing is being drawn up by Network Rail. Once finalised it will enable the statutory process to begin.

Inverness Rail East (IRE)

Given the scale of developments east of the A9, HITRANS proposes to investigate the feasibility of providing stations at Seafield, Beechwood (Campus) and Stratton. See Annexe 1 for details.

Inverness Station

The £6m station project for façade, retail and concourse improvements is under development.

HITRANS with THC, have awarded a contract worth £45k to Civic Engineers who are working in partnership with OPEN and Doig+Smith to deliver feasibility, community engagement and detailed design of access improvements for active travel around the 3 entrances to Inverness Railway Station, linking to the wider active travel network and looking at access for all abilities. This will add value to the work being carried out at the station through Abellio ScotRail and Highland Council.

Work is underway to create new fuelling and CET (toilet tanking) facilities at Rose Street, funded by Hitachi and DfT for the new Virgin Trains East Coast InterCity Express trains (IEP). Further work will entail the provision of shore supplies to the platforms.

ScotRail appointed consultants Arcadis to develop an Inverness Station Travel Plan. A stakeholder meeting was held recently, and a draft STP has been produced.

We propose to refresh Platform4Change, the embryonic wider Station Masterplan, mentioned in Network Rail's Scotland Route Study, during the course of this financial year, once the detail of the £6m station upgrade is finalised.

Evanton

Following THC's survey of local residents' views on Evanton Station re-opening we propose to begin work on the case for the new station, including demand forecasting and integration with service and infrastructure changes that may occur arising from the Far North Line Review Team's work and the publication of Transport Scotland's Investment Strategy.

Invergordon

HITRANS has proposed that ScotRail spends some of the SQUIRE windfall funding on waiting facilities on the Inverness-bound platform (currently under the eaves), and signage from the cruise-liner port, which will provide passenger benefits for the increasing number of cruisers arriving for the day and looking for independent off-boat excursions, and local commuters too. A meeting is to be held with THC's local ward manager to identify their priorities and the potential for match funding.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Comment – Decongestion through mode shift to rail

Policy

Impact - Positive

Financial

Impact –Funding available through HITRANS' CP5 Rail budget

Equality

Impact – Neutral

Comment –Persons of restricted mobility will benefit from improved access to the rail network in many of the schemes noted above.

Recommendations

1. Members and Advisors are asked to note the report.
2. Members are asked to consider Annexe 1 which sets out a brief for the Inverness Rail East Feasibility Study and if content approve the allocation of £25,000 from the Rail Projects budget (within the Research and Strategy Delivery Programme) to deliver the study.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager, HITRANS
Date: 4th September2017

Annexe 1

Inverness Rail East- Draft Brief

HITRANS is seeking expressions of interest from suitably qualified consultants to examine the technical and business case for new rail stations at:

1. Seafield, on the Aberdeen-Inverness Line
2. Beechwood (Campus), on the Highland Main Line
3. Stratton, on the Aberdeen-Inverness Line

Key Outputs

1. Technical feasibility- in terms of topography, land take etc.
2. Proposed service pattern.
3. Strategic fit with Network Rail's Scotland Route Study; ScotRail's Rail Revolution; Scottish Ministers High Level Output Statement; Rail Infrastructure Strategy and Investment Strategy; Regional and Local Transport Strategies.
4. Opportunities arising from A9/A96 upgrading and new Eastlink.
5. Indicative costs.
6. Demand identification.
7. Complementarity/exclusivity.

Background

HITRANS in its Regional Transport Strategy seeks to facilitate Invernet rail journeys both into the old city and across it to the new development sites to the east.

The area to the east of the A9 is going through rapid change, with the UHI Campus building on the Retail Park developments and housing growth at Culloden, Smithton, Tornagrain and Stratton. The City Deal has identified the A9 and Inshes junction for investment in order to provide capacity for the forecast increase in road movements. The A96 dualling project and East Link (A9-A96) will create additional capacity in the area. NMU access to the east was facilitated by the opening of the Golden Bridge in 2013. This will be complemented by the new NMU/PT bridge over the railway, linking the Retail Park and the Campus.

HITRANS has been working on Inverness Airport Dalcross Station for a number of years, to provide connectivity to the Inverness Airport, Inverness Airport Business Park and the new town of Tornagrain. Planning was awarded this year and the station should be open by 2020.

Rail investment of over £300m is going into A2I and HML. However capacity constraints at Inverness Station and access problems into Millburn and Needlefield freight yards will remain. HITRANS has already commissioned some work on a new rail junction to help to overcome this, and this will be made available, along with technical work on Seafield.

Study Management

The Consultant will report to HITRANS at key points during the work including face-to-face at the inception meeting and thereafter in person or by telephone/video conference as required.

Personnel

Consultants selected for this commission must demonstrate previous recent experience of successful rail studies. Consultants are expected to demonstrate their capacity to deliver similar projects within comparable timeframes, referring to relevant technical expertise of team members. Further, consultants are expected to show understanding of the geographical context and associated challenges of conducting such work in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Selection

Consultants will be selected by written submission. Assessment will be based on the criteria identified in Part E of this document.

Budget

A budget of £25000 including expenses (exc. VAT) has been set for the project.