

Item:

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Report to Partnership Meeting 14 September 2018

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY

Rail Investment-Local Rail Development Fund

Purpose of Report

To update Members on the outcome of the bids for funding from the Local Rail Development Fund.

Rail Enhancement and Capital Investment Strategy- RECIS positive

Transport Scotland issued the RECIS document on 19 March 2018. Through this Rail Investment Strategy TS is setting out its new approach to planning and funding rail projects. It looks beyond the traditional 5-year railway industry planning cycle and takes a strategic approach to all rail capital investments with a particular focus on making best use of the opportunities presented by major renewals. This is the much-vaunted pipeline approach, consulted on last year, which creates:

- A focus on value for money and the identification of whole-life costs in addition to initial capital expenditure
- Investment in rail interventions (e.g. services or infrastructure) only where they clearly represent the optimum value for money solution in terms of economic, social and environmental outcomes
- Assurance from whole-system specification, making sure that the infrastructure, rolling stock and timetabling all work together
- Confidence for the supply chain through steady work-banks, promoting employment, training opportunities and innovation
- Optimum coordination of all enhancement and major renewals projects
- Decisions taken for the long-term
- Rail corridors assessed holistically
- Improved modal integration
- An environment which allows rail operators to deliver their franchise commitments
- Environmentally sustainable connections

In the HITRANS area options in the pipeline include Far North Connectivity, Highland and West Highland Improvements.

Projects will be prioritised by their rating against the following:

- the ability to derive maximum utility from the existing network through whole industry measures that can make best use of existing railway assets, fully exploiting timetable/service-based opportunities and rolling stock options
- the ability to derive maximum utility from the existing network from opportunities (such as asset renewals or timetable exercises), fully exploiting these to ensure maximum value for money
- efficient and affordable, targeted investment in our infrastructure, in the right location and at the right time centred around whole industry measures to unlock additional capacity on the network
- targeted investment to help reduce inequality and increase inclusive economic growth

Each project will be assessed against the criteria set out above at each stage of its development to optimise the progression of all projects. The criteria broadly align with the investment hierarchy that applies in the Strategic Transport Projects Review.

New rail projects pre-pipeline can be promoted by RTPs, LAs and community groups as well as TS and ScotRail, and must follow STAG. To assist this a £2m Local Rail Development Fund (LRDF) 2018-19 was also announced allowing local promoters, such as RTPs and others, to bid for assistance with the costs of preparing appraisals and business cases. The Strategic Business Case will give the promoter evidence to proceed or not to an application to enter the rail pipeline process.

The continuation of previous ring-fenced funds for freight, network improvement, stations and level crossings will now be subject to evaluation.

LRDF projects

HITRANS submitted the following projects for the £2m LRDF pre-pipeline pot in June:

Inverness Rail East- a new station to serve the burgeoning East of the city
Evanton- reopening investigation
Skyefall- continued work on the multi modal solution for Strome ferry
Oban Hub- work on the benefits of integration
Branchliner II- development of a timber rail network
Caithness Orkney Connectivity- Midnight Train to Georgemas
InJunction- Keith Regained
Get Lossie- dedicated bus linking the town to Elgin's half hourly rail services
Fastline Faslane- new station proposal for Scotland's biggest single site employer
Orkabus- dedicated buses linking rail and Pentland Firth crossings
West Highland Line Enhancements- train service options

Kil No More- Kildonan Station closure investigation- was submitted then subsequently withdrawn after Cllr Mackie's motion opposing the move was backed by the Council, not believing "that four minutes of saving on a journey of 3hrs and 56minutes will result in widespread jubilation in Caithness or any other area", and that it would harm rural connectivity.

Awards

Only Fastline Faslane was awarded funding in the announcement on 9 August which committed £681k.

The Transport Scotland Press Release stated:

Ten local communities will be the first to benefit from a new Scottish Government rail fund worth £2m.

Successful applicants to the Local Rail Development Fund were announced on 9 August by Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity.

The aim is to provide money for communities to carry out a multi-modal transport appraisal which could potentially bring forward proposals for improvements to rail connections in their areas.

He made the announcement in St Andrews on a visit to one of the successful groups, St Andrews Rail Link (StARLink).

Mr Matheson said:

“Since 2007, we have invested around £8bn to help build the best railway Scotland has ever had. The success of this relies on communities embracing the potential harnessed by the railway and it is very pleasing to see so much interest in the Local Rail Development Fund.

“Providing funding for these transport appraisals will allow the successful applicants to consider the transport issues and opportunities affecting their local communities. It has been great to hear, first-hand, the enthusiasm and drive behind them.

“Helping communities bring forward proposals to tackle these specific, local rail connectivity issues, will allow us to consider potential projects as part of our plans for future investment in our railways.”

StARLink Convenor Jane Ann Liston said:

“As a prime national and international destination, being the Home of Golf and Scotland’s oldest university, the historic tourist destination of St Andrews has suffered for years from the onslaught of increasing traffic clogging up the town.

“The StARLink campaign believes that the option of direct rail travel from Edinburgh, including the airport interchange, and Dundee to the town would significantly alleviate both the physical and environmental effects of too many cars in the a small town with a mediaeval layout. In addition, improving the connectivity with the likes of Cupar, Dundee and Dunfermline will spread the economic benefits generated by St Andrews over the whole of Fife and also across the Tay.”

The successful applicants and the potential rail elements that the appraisals will consider as part of the studies are:

East Lothian Council – Haddington
Fife Council – Cross Forth Travel
Hitrans – HMNB Clyde Transport Opportunities
Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council – Access to Linlithgow Station
Nestrans – Accessibility at Inch Station
Newburgh Train Station Group – Newburgh
StARLink – St Andrews
South Lanarkshire Council – connectivity in Clydesdale
Tactran – Bridge of Earn/Oudendarde P&R
Tactran – Stirling Strategic P&R
East Lothian Council – Haddington
Fife Council – Cross Forth Travel
Hitrans – HMNB Clyde Transport Opportunities
Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council – Access to Linlithgow Station
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Tactran – Stirling Strategic P&R

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Reasons for non-award of HITRANS schemes

Inverness Rail East (Seafield, Beechwood UHI & Stratton Farm)

The evidence could have been more fully presented. Furthermore, the application could have benefited from additional text, especially in relation to how the proposal could benefit the local community.

There is some reference to the Highland Council's transport strategy and HITRANS' Regional Transport Strategy. It would have been helpful if this text could have been expanded, with more focus on this particular transport issue.

Evanton Station

The application could have benefitted from additional text, especially in relation to criteria two, with more details being provided to explain the transport issue.

There was some evidence of a link to STAG principles but insufficient evidence provided of how this proposal would tackle local issues and promote economic growth.

The text around the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy would have benefitted from more focus on how it links to the particular transport issue.

Kildonan Station Closure

Application withdrawn on 29 June 2018.

Skyefall (A890 & Kyle Railway between Ardnarff & Attadale)

This is not a unique proposal as a STAG Part 2 was completed recently (2017) for Stromeferry.

WHL Enhancements

This is not a unique proposal as the work will be taken forward by the WHL Review Team.

Oban Hub

The application could have benefitted from additional evidence to support the proposal. In particular, there was insufficient explanation of how the proposal would tackle local issues and promote economic growth. The response to this section of the application detailed the proposed interventions rather than the potential social and economic benefits for the community.

The text around the HITRANS RTS could have benefitted from more focus on how it links to this particular transport issue.

Branchliner II (Timber by Rail FNL)

The application could have benefitted from additional evidence of a multi-modal approach in line with STAG principles and to demonstrate how the proposal would tackle local issues and promote economic growth.

The text around the HITRANS RTS could have benefitted from more focus on how it links to this particular transport issue.

Caithness/Orkney Connectivity (Midnight Train to Georgemas (MT2G))

The application appears to focus on a solution and the evidence presented, therefore, shows insufficient alignment with STAG principles.

The application would also have benefitted from more focus on the local issues and greater demonstration of how the proposal could promote economic growth in communities.

Keith & Dufftown Heritage Railway - Re-connection to the Mainline

This application could have benefited from further evidence, in particular, it was not clear from the evidence presented how this proposal would tackle local issues and promote economic growth in communities.

It would also have been helpful if evidence had been provided to show how the proposal aligns with local and regional transport strategies.

Lossiemouth Connectivity via virtual branch line

This application appears to be solution-led as the focus is on the provision of a bus link. There is insufficient evidence, therefore, of alignment with STAG principles.

The application would also have benefited from additional text to demonstrate how this proposal would tackle local issues. Evidence linking to regional and local transport strategies would have been helpful.

Caithness bus links between rail and ferry

A fuller explanation of the transport problem and how this affects the local community would have helped support the application. Furthermore, the application could also have benefited from further evidence to demonstrate how the proposal would tackle local

issues and promote economic growth. A clear illustration of how the proposal links to local and regional transport strategies could also have been beneficial.

Round Two

We understand that Transport Scotland may be considering a second round of applications and we would hope to resubmit some schemes, resources permitting.

Next Steps

1. Prepare a brief and tender for Fastline Faslane.
2. Consider resubmissions, and new submissions.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Positive. A number of schemes are referenced in the RTS.

Policy

Impact – Positive

Financial

Impact – Funds are available in the HITRANS budget.

Equality

Impact – Neutral

Recommendations

1. Members and Advisors are asked to approve the report.
2. Members and Advisors are asked to consider schemes for resubmission for Round Two.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 28 August 2018