Item:
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HI ▶ TRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting 8 February 2019

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Press'n'Ride

Purpose of the Report

To inform members of the progress of Press'n'Ride

Summary
1. HITRANS developed the Press'n'Ride concept in order to improve performance and reliability of trains at request stops.
2. £115k was awarded by Transport Scotland for this, matched by Smart Cities money.
3. Network Rail has adopted the scheme as part of the Far North Line Review Team work, but now focussing on a signalling rather than a railway comms solution.
4. That means there is now £230k to be re-allocated.

Press'n'ride Background

The Inverness to Thurso/Wick/Kyle rail services are characterised by long journey times on single track with many stations. The routes serve remote communities, the towns of Caithness with their ports for Orkney, the hinterland of Skye and growing commuter towns and villages in Easter Ross. The Scottish Government set up a task force for the Far North Line (as it is often referred to) to address reliability and performance issues with key stakeholders such as The Highland Council and HITRANS. This project would see one of the causes of the slow journey time and poor reliability tackled with a smart solution that would see the current method of alerting the driver to the need to stop at a request stop.

Currently all services have to leave a set amount of time aside in the timetable to accommodate a number of potential stops at 'Request only' stations. The train has to reduce speeds on these sections of track to accommodate potential stop for any passenger on the platform. This proposal would see the installation of an automated request system installed at each station whereby the driver would be aware of any passenger in advance via an alert to the conductor generated by the comms system. This would enable the driver to maintain line speed and help improve reliability in the first instance and eventually journey time on these key lines into Inverness, while also reducing emissions and brake wear through not having to accelerate back to linespeed.

New Project

It is proposed to use the funds to pump-prime the creation of a new Token Exchange Point on the Kyle line near Stromeferry. This will increase the capacity of the line which is constrained by a long 42 minute section between Strathcarron and Kyle- perhaps the longest single track section in the UK. This will enable trains to leave Strathcarron while shunting is taking place at Kyle; it allows trains to follow each other into Kyle at 25 min intervals rather than 42 min; it provides greater access to the track for maintenance; and it allows for greater flexibility during periods of rockfall maintenance.

The cost is not yet established, but will involve a new Uninterruptible Power Supply, a radio mast and Train Protection Warning System equipment on the ground; and software changes within the RETB signalling system.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact - Positive

Policy

Impact - Positive

Financial

Impact – Will require match funding

Equality

Impact – Neutral

Recommendations

1. Members and Advisors are asked to approve the report.

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Date: 25 January 2019