HI▶TRANS

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting 15 November 2019

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Fair Exchange

Background

This project creates additional capacity, improved resilience and better maintenance access on the Kyle railway line between Strathcarron and Kyle. The line is signaled by Radio Electronic Token Block, with movement authority controlled by the issue of electronic tokens to the train.

Project Scope

It is proposed to capital fund a new Token Exchange Point near Stromeferry. This will see the installation of lineside equipment to enable the train to communicate with the signaller in Inverness. New signalling locations have not been created since the signaling system was devised in 1989. No infrastructure currently exists in the location require to install the Radio Electronic Token Block.

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.

HITRANS has accessed £115k ERDF Smart Cities funding, matched with £115k from Press'n'Ride which is no longer required.

Key objectives include:
- New Radio Electronic Token Block infrastructure with expansion capacity to be installed
- Increased capacity of Far North Line which is currently constrained by a long 42 minute section
- Reducing section time from 42 mins to 25 mins
- Improved access to track for maintenance
- Greater flexibility during periods of rockfall maintenance
- Improved resilience during perturbation
- Improved passenger information.
The project contributes to Smart Mobility indicators by making the journey more attractive and thus aiming to increase public transport usage and lower private car use in the area, as well as making the route more sustainable.

The project also acts as a demonstrator for other signalling locations on the North Highland and West Highland Lines which may be created, improving capacity and resilience on the network.

Benefits specifically in terms of the system itself include:
-       Currently no infrastructure exists and therefore this activity will provide basic electronic token infrastructure along with appropriate sustainable power infrastructure allowing for future expansion.
-       An improved electronic monitoring and management system with software specifically written for this unique location. This system and software will allow for subsequent expansion of the system.
-       As a closed system for security reasons there will be no specific data set generated by this improvement. However, the results of this improvement will be seen in other data set that are already in the public domain such as increased frequency of trains and even the addition of a new monitoring point on real-time information systems.
In addition to the above there are additional service, user and transport benefits such as:
-       Increased capacity provides communities with access to employment, education, health, social and leisure activities in the region
-       Improved connectivity which is vital to the development and growth of Inverness and the surrounding area
-       Further uptake of these transport services will secure viability and drive growth with additional benefits of reducing private car usage
-       More efficient access to the network for maintenance, reducing down time.

Further funding will be required to take the budget to the estimated £460k needed. A key meeting was held in September with Network Rail to discuss the project further. It concluded with an acknowledgement of the benefits to the network. The project will be considered for NR funding.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Resilience, safety

Policy

Impact – Efficiency of transport operations

Financial

Impact – Requires match funding

Equality

Impact – N/a

Recommendation

1. Members and Advisors are recommended to note the report.

Report by: Frank Roach
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Date: 4th November 2019