Item:
12

HI▶TRANS
THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

Report to Partnership Meeting 23 April 2021

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Fort William Opportunities Around Rail

Background

Fort William suffers from well-known congestion problems, with journey low reliability on the road networks across the town especially during April-September. The increase in tourist traffic impacts on HGV movements at major industrial sites including the smelter, sawmill, and fish processor. This is exacerbated when accidents occur leading to very lengthy diversions. The congestion is not only in the peaks but can also be impacted by tourist staying in the town overnight leaving their accommodation to journey out to visitor attractions. Uniquely rail can provide alleviation for some of these problems.

Systra have been engaged to carry out some What If? timetabling work, based on an additional Class 156 being available, and two theoretical new stations at Nevis Range and Lochy Bridge.

Emerging thoughts

- Option 1 – Rannoch: Two off-peak services to Rannoch
- Option 2 – Rannoch + Glenfinnan v1: 1 off peak service to Rannoch, 1 off-peak service to Glenfinnan
- Option 3 – Rannoch + Glenfinnan v2: two off-peak services to Rannoch, 1 off-peak service to Glenfinnan, less favourable Friday school service
- Option 4 – Glenfinnan + Mallaig: 1 off-peak Glenfinnan, 1 off-peak Mallaig, no additional service to Rannoch

The following table summarises the school services which could be delivered in each option:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Lochy Bridge AM Arr	08:08	08:08	08:08	08:08
Lochy Bridge PM Dep (Mon-Thur)	15:46	15:46	15:46	15:46
Lochy Bridge PM Dep (Fri)	13:29	14:09	13:29	14:38
Banavie AM Arr	08:20	08:20	08:20	08:20
Banavie PM Dep (Fri)	X	X	X	X
Banavie PM Dep (Mon-Thur)	X	X	X	X

The following comments relate to all options:

- In the morning there is a point at which the sleeper, a new service and the Jacobite are all using the station at the same time. FTW can accept permissive working and platforms should be long enough to accommodate on the basis of the Sleeper being formed of up to 2*73+5Mk5 and the new local service being formed of a Cl156. At a push it would work with 2*73 and 6 Mk5.
- Mallaig – where time is needed for the Jacobite to shunt and run round. The current times seem generous, but the point here is that during the shunt it prevents the Arisaig – Mallaig token being released.
- Last train departs Mallaig at 20:10 to align with 19:55 Armadale Ferry arrival.
- 1Y58 18:27 Mallaig – Fort William is sent back to Mallaig after current last service to avoid a stock imbalance.
- In all options two units stable overnight at Mallaig, and there is an 06:03 and 07:00 departure from Mallaig. This requirement isn't binding and we could have two units stabled at Fort William.
- It isn't possible to connect with the Lochboisdale ferry (summer departure time now 16:00), whilst the Jacobite running north earlier helps get a unit to Mallaig, the unit off the 08:21 Glasgow – Mallaig to Fort William cannot arrive in time for the afternoon school train. In summer the Lochboisdale ferry works additional Mallaig – Armadale sailing.

- Option specific comments
- Option 1: 09:21 from Fort William runs to Bridge of Orchy as it cannot do anything else whilst still operating the Friday school service
- Option 2: This could be a Mon-Thurs timetable with option 1 operating on Friday only if 14:09 dep from Lochy Bridge is too late
- Option 2: Requires use of siding at Glenfinnan – this is being investigated
- Option 4: Does not work for Friday school service.

Next Steps

HITRANS awaits the draft final report which will include details on the traincrew resources, fuel etc required.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Integration, tourism benefits

Policy

Impact –Efficiency of transport operations, decongestion, mode shift, emissions reduction, post pandemic planning

Financial

Impact – The study is fully funded

<u>Equality</u>

Impact – Access to network

Recommendation

1. Members and are asked to approve the report.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 12th April 2021