

Item:
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Report to Partnership Meeting 4 February 2022

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Evanton Station Reopening

Purpose of Report

To update the Board on Evanton Station feasibility.

Background

The re-opening of Evanton Station (formerly Novar) has been under discussion for some years and comes on the back of recent Beaully and Conon Bridge reopenings. The community of Evanton seeks to achieve better low-carbon connectivity to its neighbouring towns, and the city of Inverness, in order to support the population as it travels for work education and leisure. This will have a positive effect on emissions and fits well with Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy policy on the hierarchy of transport mode, and with the Rail Decarbonisation Plan. The station re-opening is included in the Regional Transport Strategy and the Inner Moray Forth Development Plan2 draft.

Study

HITRANS has appointed Aecom to investigate the technical feasibility of a new station, to study how it would impact on current rail services in terms of capacity, and to understand the infrastructure changes as a result of the Far North Line Enhancements programme (which follows on from the government-led Far North Line Review Team's findings). Potential journey times will be compared to existing current public transport provision.

We have twice unsuccessfully sought Local Rail Development Fund monies for a Case for Change report. It is now felt that technical feasibility will assist future decision-making processes.

Community Consultation

When completed a separate piece of work will be commissioned on community consultation in order to present the findings, hear the views of local residents and to understand their current travel requirements.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Mode shift, integration.

Policy

Impact – Features in Inner Moray Forth Development Plan draft, decarbonisation, transport efficiency, network usage maximisation.

Financial

Impact – The study is fully funded.

Equality

Impact – Access to the network.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to approve the report.

Report by: Frank Roach
Designation: Partnership Manager
Date: 25th January 2022