

Item:
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Report to Partnership Meeting 21 April 2023

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Rail Round Up

Purpose of Report

To inform Board Members on HITRANS rail developments.

Fastline Faslane

HITRANS has finally had feedback from Transport Scotland to the £80k Local Rail Development Funded Case for Change from consultants Stantec. It concludes that the report doesn't make a clear case for change in the study area. Until this is resolved we cannot proceed on to the second stage of Options Appraisal, which has already been funded through LRDF2. This fund was to have been spent by March 2023, and we await confirmation of new timescales.

Evanton

Work continues on technical feasibility for Evanton station reopening, with timetabling now a key milestone. Visibility of Network Rail's own work on future timetables for the route, including the Tain/Invergordon hourly option, is required. There was press coverage in February of local campaigners on site urging the trains to stop.

Rolling Stock Strategy

At the February 23 Board meeting I reported a timeline for the procurement of new rolling stock for ScotRail, but it is now apparent that due to funding difficulties those dates may slip. We will still proceed with a piece of work on what rural, scenic rolling stock should look like in the 2030s.

Inverness Airport Station (IVA)

The station was opened by the then Transport Minister Jenny Gilruth on 2 February 2023 and is already seeing significant use. To date just over 100 trips per day on average are being made, compared with a predicted 180 per day in year one, despite the time of year, and the fact that business passenger numbers are at 60%, and leisure passenger numbers at 80% of pre-Covid demand.

The 2015 Business Case (Systra) forecast the following numbers;

	2015	2046	2055	2075
Annual Ins and Outs	3,952	82,680	107,848	111,904
Airport / IABP Staff	57,928	92,092	106,236	144,196

Tornagrain Residents	3,640	100,256	116,584	145,080
Total	65,520	275,028	330,668	401,180

The realtime display at the bus stop is now live, and the display inside the terminal is being split to show train and bus departures. All buses to and from the airport terminal call at IVA.

At 1056 On 10 April the following services were available from IVA in the following 2h30.

- bus 27 To Inverness Airport Due
- bus 11 To Inverness 16 mins
- bus 11 To Inverness Airport 26 mins
- bus 11 To Inverness 11:47
- bus 11 To Nairn 11:49
- bus 27 To Contin 11:51
- bus 27 To Inverness Airport 11:57
- bus 11 To Inverness 12:13
- bus 11 To Inverness Airport 12:23
- bus 11 To Inverness 12:47
- bus 11 To Nairn 12:49
- bus 27 To Contin 12:51
- bus 27 To Inverness Airport 12:57
- bus 11 To Inverness 13:13
- bus 11 To Inverness Airport 13:26

Meanwhile the majority of users observed choose to walk to the terminal on the new path. Signage to the new path is being provided by HIAL.

Request to Stop

The automated system for alerting train drivers to the need to stop at request stops has been entered by HITRANS for two rail innovation awards. It is hoped that the system will be rolled out to the Kyle and West Highland Lines.

Skyefall

HITRANS has engaged a consultant to document the safety and technological solution to the problem of Stromeferry bypass road-rail sharing, with a paper to be aired at the UK Light Rail conference in July.

Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport

The Green Freeport is led by Port of Cromarty Firth, Global Energy Group, the Port of Inverness, Inverness Airport/Business Park and other sites around the Firth. The consortium has over 30 members including many from the energy sector. It aims to create 25,000 jobs and generate £4.8bn in investment, with a focus on floating offshore wind, nuclear and hydrogen.

Guidance has been received from the government on the Outline Business Case and Full Business Case.

Recruitment is underway for a CEO for the freeport company.

There is a £25m local fund for land assembly, site remediation and small-scale transport projects, with match funding required.

The freeport will invariably drive demand for new transport and infrastructure, and HITRANS thoughts on this appear below.

Cromarty Firth Freeport New Transport Infrastructure
Rail freight terminal at Invergordon Hourly Inverness-Tain electric rail services (30' peak) in both directions Evanton Station reopening Tain-Elgin IMF rail services HML electrification, frequency, journey time, gauge
Access to new housing Alness, Evanton, Invergd, Seaboard -20 min n'hoods Public Transport access to new developments Bus priority schemes
Active travel interventions between settlements Green travel plans for all new developments 20% vehicle miles reduction
Inverness harbour extension Nigg ferry all year round
Longman energy project Hydrogen blend into gas network at Invergordon District heating schemes Hydrogen fuel retail stations
Develop air connectivity Heliport
HGV parking HGV driver welfare facilities Longman -Kessock upgrade A9 dualling/crawler lane Tore-Cromarty Bridge Junction improvements at Tomich, Alness etc New road link A9 to Invergordon Port A96 dualling to past Tornagrain/IABP

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact –Mode shift, integration, economy, population growth

Policy

Impact –Transport efficiency, economic development, just transition, hydrogen strategy

Financial

Impact – Nil currently

Equality

Impact – Public transport interventions improve access for all

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.

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