

Item:
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Report to Partnership Board 20.09.24

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY DELIVERY

Fastline Faslane

Purpose of Report

To inform the Board on progress in the Faslane project.

Background

HITRANS was successful in obtaining Local Rail Development Funding from government funding to explore transport issues in and around the Faslane Naval Base, and in particular, consider the case for provision of a rail link. To this end, the client group commissioned Stantec to undertake a Sustainable Transport Options Study in line with the Scottish Governments appraisal guidance (STAG) focused on access options to the area. This was followed by the Options Appraisal study, focussing on:

- Assisted Travel Scheme
- Enhanced Local Bus Services
- Rail Option

The study has now been completed and sent to Transport Scotland for their consideration. HITRANS will also be meeting with HMNB staff to discuss further steps.

Study Conclusions

This report has considered options to improve the connectivity to HMNB Clyde by more sustainable modes of transport to tackle the overwhelming car mode share. It has been developed primarily in response to this core transport problem, to which the underlying causes can be underpinned by:

- A lack of space on the Base for further accommodation provision, thus requiring daily tripmaking.
- Restrictions on who can stay on Base, therefore, requiring a significant number of support staff and contractor staff travelling daily.
- Challenging shift start times of 0800 which significantly reduces the ability to travel to HMNB Clyde by public transport.

- Geographic location of HMNB Clyde, whilst beneficial for sea deployments, poses several challenges for bus service provision, and beyond generally accepted distances to walk or cycle on a regular basis.

The appraisal has also recognised the potential economic, social and environmental benefits that could be realised through improving sustainable transport connectivity to Scotland's largest single site employer. Whilst a full economic appraisal of two options could not be undertaken at this stage, there is no evidence as to why they should be removed from consideration beyond this exercise. As such, following completion of the Detailed Options Appraisal, three options remain for further consideration:

- **ATS Option** – Which includes the expansion of the geographic coverage of the service and increased frequency.
- **Local Bus Option** – Including consideration of five potential local services that can be operated in the AM Peak to maximise potential bus patronage to the Base.
- **Rail Option** – A commuter service running twice a day between Dumbarton and Garelochhead, servicing a new station at Faslane.

All options provide a feasible alternative to the private car by delivering opportunities for modal shift and arrival at HMNB Clyde at more attractive time by public transport. It will be important to ensure that the delivery of any option does not make the potential user worse off in terms of cost.

The STAG process does not make any recommendations on which option should be selected, but rather appraises a set of credible options that can be progressed to an Outline Business Case (OBC) for more detailed development and assessment.

The appraisal has highlighted, where appropriate, that each of these three options retain merit for further consideration and market engagement, with each helping to deliver against the main objective of reducing car modal share by providing an attractive sustainable transport alternative.

Should either of these three options progress to delivery, it would be essential to ensure that the preferred option is accompanied by a package of measures that would lock-in the benefits of the investment for HMNB Clyde and the wider Helensburgh and Lomond area. This would include delivering complementary measures within the Base, such as reduced parking permits / spaces and delivering localised connected services to feed into the main option.

It is important to note that the three options in consideration are not mutually exclusive, and thus a package across any or all of the three would also provide far greater benefits.

Next Steps

Should the decision be made by HITRANS to proceed with any of the options, the next step would be to proceed to OBC development. If this also included the rail option, then a decision would also need to be made by Transport Scotland

on the merit for further consideration and this would then enter Transport Scotland's railway 'Pipeline' process and development and design work would begin to inform an OBC.

The OBC is the means by which an ***ultimate preferred option*** is arrived at and the approach to

funding, procuring and delivering is set out. There are several key project elements that would need to

be further developed at OBC to arrive at a preferred option:

- Engagement with the two local bus operators to fully understand the feasibility and appetite to operate the local bus options. Both operators indicated their interest in engaging further on this subject and potential timetable / servicing changes.
- Understand the contractual obligations associated with the ATS service provision. This should include the scope of services, levels of frequency and geographic scope.
- For the rail option, further detailed discussions with ScotRail and Network Rail to understand the ability to operate a service between Dumbarton, including, rolling stock, crewing, fares and the wider West Highland Line strategy.
- A wider data collection programme. This should include travel surveys beyond the scope of HMNB Clyde and include the residents of the wider Helensburgh and Lomond area. This should include travel behaviours, comprising – travel to work, modal share, distance travelled, travel for social / education / health.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – Mode shift, integration, decongestion

Policy

Impact – UK Defence infrastructure, decarbonisation, transport efficiency, vehicle miles reduction, local economic benefits

Financial

Impact – The LRDF study work is fully funded by Transport Scotland. Station feasibility work to date has been funded by HITRANS

Equality

Impact – Nil

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to note the report.

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Date: 2nd September 2024