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Report to Partnership Meeting 26 April 2019

RESEARCH AND STRATEGY Delivery

Local Rail Development Fund

Purpose of Report

To update members on the Local Rail Development Fund

LRDF Round One

A consultant's brief for Fastline Faslane, value £50k, is due to be sent out week commencing 15 April. A steering group comprising Argyll and Bute Council, SPT, Royal Navy and HITRANS will be formed.

LRDF Round Two

A second round of £1.3m has been announced, with bids to be returned by 28 June. As previously communicated, we propose to resubmit four projects that were rejected last time, and consideration needs to be given to match funding. The projects appear below, with Transport Scotland's reason for refusal last time.

1. Evanton Station

The application could have benefitted from additional text, especially in relation to criteria two, with more details being provided to explain the transport issue. There was some evidence of a link to STAG principles, but insufficient evidence provided of how this proposal would tackle local issues and promote economic growth. The text around the HITRANS Regional Transport Strategy would have benefitted from more focus on how it links to the particular transport issue.

HITRANS comment: We will discuss this with THC

2. Skyefall (A890 & Kyle Railway between Ardnarff & Attadale)

This is not a unique proposal as a STAG Part 2 was completed recently (2017) for Strome ferry.

HITRANS comment: The original STAG consulted Network Rail who did not identify any opportunity for an online solution. HITRANS and Network Rail have developed proposals for a shared road/rail clearway.

3. Oban Hub

The application could have benefitted from additional evidence to support the proposal. In particular, there was insufficient explanation of how the proposal would tackle local issues and promote economic growth. The response to this section of the application

detailed the proposed interventions rather than the potential social and economic benefits for the community. The text around the HITRANS RTS could have benefitted from more focus on how it links to this particular transport issue.

HITRANS comment: It is difficult to avoid interventions when considering improvements on the railway estate, but we will investigate further.

4. Branchliner II (Timber by Rail)

The application could have benefitted from additional evidence of a multi-modal approach in line with STAG principles and to demonstrate how the proposal would tackle local issues and promote economic growth.

The text around the HITRANS RTS could have benefitted from more focus on how it links to this particular transport issue.

HITRANS comment: Our original submission stated:

Scotland has a number of forests that are close to railway lines- this scheme seeks to link them with processing centres in an efficient way, removing HGVs from fragile rural roads, accessing timber resource from landlocked sites using existing capacity on the rail network. This study will investigate the business case for low cost infrastructure-lite timber terminals, as well as the case for re-invigorating some existing but currently unused terminals. Key to this is the timber industry's willingness to use rail.

In view of the target set by Scottish Ministers to increase rail freight over the next five years, and the apparent lack of a similar target for road freight, it would seem difficult to serve a number of catchments by coastal shipping, inland waterway or air. However, we may be able to seek funds from LRDF and the Scottish Timber Transport Scheme (STTS) for further work building on the working group established by Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – RTS compliant

Policy

Impact – Mode shift, freight efficiency, cooperation across sectors

Financial

Impact – Will require some matching funds from other partners

Equality

Impact – Evanton and Oban projects provide improved accessibility to regional services and opportunities for users of all capabilities

Recommendations

1. Members and Advisors are asked to note the report and approve the four projects.

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