

## **Report to Partnership Meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2009**

### **RESEARCH**

#### **Rail Studies**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise members of the current status of HITRANS ongoing rail studies.

#### **BACKGROUND**

HITRANS is currently engaged in completing a number of rail studies across the region which we hope will help inform the development and future investment decision making at national level.

#### **Invab Sundays**

HITRANS have commissioned Halcrow to analyse the business case for additional Sunday services between Inverness and Aberdeen. This commission will use as its base for the costing work the draft timetable developed for HITRANS in by our consultant Habtrans. This comprises two additional through services, and one Keith and one Inverurie terminator.

#### **West Highland Section Running Times**

The purpose of this study is to identify potential journey time savings on current infrastructure, and also what the future might be with different rolling stock on enhanced infrastructure. Delta Rail have been awarded the contract to deliver this commission which will see them compare the current timetable against theoretical running times using current Rules of the Route, gradient profiles and Class 156 rolling stock performance data. They are also investigating higher loop entry/exit speeds and Class 170 and Class 170 re-engined variants.

#### **Sutherland Timber**

In order to progress timber on rail, we are working on lineside loading at Borrobol, and new sidings at Altnabreac. Both will serve as demonstration projects that could if successful be rolled out elsewhere across the area. A survey is being undertaken at Borrobol, while at Altnabreac a consultant is designing a layout for the timber terminal. In both cases we are in productive and useful discussions with Network Rail in relation to contractualising the scheme proposals.

## **Far North Level Crossings**

In order to develop the HITRANS menu of affordable and achievable enhancements, Scott Wilson are examining potential journey time savings through level crossing upgrades on Inverness-Wick. The trend currently is for train speeds across level crossings to be reduced; we would wish to investigate the rational of that scenario with the case for investment.

## **Switches and Crossings on RETB routes**

Similar to the work on Far North Level Crossings (detailed above), this scheme investigates opportunities that could arise on services within, to and from the Highlands with the replacement of RETB signalling. Scott Wilson are investigating the options for increasing loop entry/exit speeds through the provision of new point equipment.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Members are asked to note the report.

**Report by:** Frank Roach  
**Designation:** Partnership Manager  
**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> March 2009