



## Report to Partnership Meeting of 4 December 2009

### RAIL

#### Railway Round Up

##### 1. Rail Freight Policy Development

Transport Scotland is consulting on the development of a rail freight policy, noting that '*policy which supports and encourages increased modal shift to rail from less sustainable modes of transport will contribute to our target to achieve a reduction in emissions by 80% by 2050.*' A draft HITRANS response is being produced and will be tabled at the Board meeting having been considered by the Permanent Advisors. The deadline for responses is 23 December 2009.

##### 2. East Coast

The DfT are now running the former National Express East Coast service, branded East Coast. While the possible termination of Glasgow east coast main line services has been proposed, north of Edinburgh services to Inverness and Aberdeen remain as before. HITRANS will continue to press for the retention of the Inverness London service when DfT refranchises the East Coast services.

##### 3. Highland Main Line Upgrade

Network Rail has been instructed by Transport Scotland to take the project to GRIP 3 (option selection) for delivery of hourly, faster services in 2011/12.

##### 4. Inverness-Aberdeen

Network Rail is soon to commence feasibility work on hourly, faster services for delivery post 2016.

##### 5. Oban 5

The case for 5 trains per day has been submitted to Transport Scotland for evaluation.

##### 6. Inverness-Aberdeen Sundays

The case for additional Sunday services on this route has been put to Transport Scotland, along with an offer of £50k towards Year1 costs jointly from Nestrans and HITRANS.

##### 7. Level Crossings Study

Consultants Scott Wilson are finalising the study into journey time savings on Inverness-Wick level crossings. The results will identify a hierarchy of crossings based on the greatest time saved for the lowest spend.

#### **8. Switch and Crossing Study on RETB Lines**

Consultants are finalising the report which identifies a technical solution to the problem of interfacing with the RETB signalling system on the West Highland and North Highland lines.

#### **9. Freight Capability**

The HITRANS study into the capability of the Highland routes can now be let, following the issue of the Transport Scotland Freight Policy Development Consultation. The Study will focus on loading gauge; structure gauge; pathing; and access, ownership and capacity of terminals. The intention is to identify the ultimate capacity of the current rail network in the region to carry freight.

#### **10. Timber by Rail**

Feasibility work for provision of a side loading facility at Borrobol on the Far North Line has now been completed, in association with Scottish Woodlands and HIE. Options have been designed for the Altnabreac terminal for further ongoing timber extraction, and discussions will follow with private sector operators and Network Rail.

#### **Recommendation**

The Board are asked to note the above.

**Report by:** Frank Roach  
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**Date:** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009