

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@nestrans.org.uk>
Sent: 11 March 2016 10:07
To: Scotland Route Study
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Network Rail Scotland Route Study
Attachments: RD Network Rail SRS (FINAL).doc; RD NR Scotland Route Study Appendix.docx

Further to Nestrans' submission on the Scotland Route Study, I had mentioned that I would also forward an extract from a briefing note which was considered by the Nestrans Board at its meeting on 29 February. This is now attached and I would be grateful if you could consider this as part of our submission

Regards

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 March 2016 14:40
To: 'scotlandroutestudy@networkrail.co.uk'
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Network Rail Scotland Route Study

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached Nestrans' response to the Scotland Route Study. I will also put a hard copy in the post.

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt.

Regards

[REDACTED]

10 March 2016

Our Ref

RD/N15/5

Your Ref

Lead Strategic Planner
Scotland Route Study
Network Rail
151 St Vincent Street
Glasgow
G2 5NW

Dear Sir/Madam

Scotland Route Study: Long Term Planning Process

Thank you for your letter of 9 December 2015, providing the opportunity to contribute to the Scotland Route Study: Long Term Planning Process.

Nestrans is grateful for the level of cooperation and collaboration associated with the drafting and welcomes the inclusive process which has enabled us to contribute to early iterations of the development of long-term planning. Nestrans and the Regional Transport Partnerships have been involved in the process, working with Network Rail to ensure realistic projections, in contrast to the previous RUS (Route Utilisation Strategy), which was prepared without this level of consultation.

Nestrans and its constituent authorities welcome the considerable progress that has been made since the publication of the previous RUS in relation to the delivery of a railway that is fully accessible at the point of use. Recent investment at stations such as Dyce and elsewhere in the north east, have made a considerable difference to the wider community in enabling access to the network. We would urge that this investment is maintained to continue to bring these benefits to the remaining communities not benefitting from a fully accessible railway station, such as at Insch.

The previous RUS documents were based on the assumptions contained in the Traffic Model for Scotland, did not recognise the Aberdeen area as a separate market and projected minimal or no growth for the north east of Scotland. We particularly welcome therefore, the recognition in the Scotland Route Study that the Aberdeen area has been recognised as a separate market. I believe that the Study is stronger for your consideration of information provided to enable a clear understanding of the market and likely future growth. Entries and exits through north east stations have increased from 2.835million in 2004/05 to 6.032million in 2014/15, an increase of 113% in a decade, almost exactly double the average rate of growth across Scotland. A future projection for the north east market of 52% growth between now and 2023, and 151% growth between now and 2043 are considered realistic and achievable.

Since the publication of the Route Study, you will be aware that the Scottish and UK Governments have announced a £250million City Region Deal for the Aberdeen City-Region and the Scottish Government has announced a further package of £254million of additional spending, much of which is committed to delivering transport infrastructure upgrades including the Aberdeen-Dundee rail line. We understand that this funding is additional to enhancements that are already planned and that specific commitments have been made to allocate £200million to improve the single track section at Usan near Montrose in Control Period 6 (2019-2024). We feel that this enhancement is essential and would seek Network Rail's support in ensuring it is delivered in line with the Scottish Government's commitment by 2024. The final Scotland Route Study should recognise these commitments and be amended to reflect the impact of the City Region Deal.

The proposals as "investment choices for funders" and are considered under seven areas. Of most relevance to Nestrans are i) Edinburgh to Glasgow and Fife, iv) Glasgow Queen Street to Aberdeen and vi) Aberdeen to Inverness. The investment choices of most relevance are under i) a possible "Fife by-pass" line which would enable Aberdeen-Edinburgh trains to avoid the constrained section around Kinghorn and Burntisland; under iv) "addressing strategic constraints such as ... Usan to Montrose single track", Camperdown looping facility and capacity of Aberdeen station, Perth station remodelling and resignalling; and under vi) a third phase of enhancements between Aberdeen and Inverness building on existing commitments; as well as a rolling programme of electrification in phases extending to Aberdeen.

Nestrans is supportive of these investment choices, but the priority and implementation may need to be reconsidered in the light of the Scottish and UK Government's announcements on funding for an Aberdeen City Region Deal and the Scottish Government's announcement of further funding to bring forward infrastructure improvements in the period 2020-2025. In particular, additional funding to enable line enhancement in the Usan/Montrose area and the potential for further local rail enhancements will require to be considered early in the life of the Route Study.

It is essential to ensure that the Scotland Route Study is fully aligned with other Network Rail Route Studies, notably the East Coast Route Study. Whilst the Scotland Route Study covers lines in Scotland, it is necessary to recognise the cross-border nature of some services and ensure full compatibility between this Route Study and others where there is a service linkage.

Nestrans also welcomes the Indicative Train Service Specifications, which provide for a total of four trains per hour between Inverurie and Aberdeen and for five trains per hour between Aberdeen and Stonehaven, by providing for both inter-urban and local services. However, there should be consideration given to how early these frequencies can be provided. As you may know, Nestrans and other Regional Transport Partnerships have been in discussion with Abellio ScotRail regarding the possibility of introducing Inverurie to Stonehaven/Montrose services from 2019. This would enable a much more frequent service at intermediate stations such as Portlethen and would enable fewer stops on the inter-urban services and therefore quicker end-to-end journey times. The future Train Service Specification levels contained in the Route Study should therefore be considered for early implementation, not towards the end of the long-term planning process.

Further, although the Route Study is focussed on existing lines and stations and not potential for new routes, you will be aware of the ongoing strategic study into transport links between Aberdeen and Ellon, Peterhead and Fraserburgh. One of the options under consideration is to reopen the former Formartine & Buchan line, which may require a further

two train paths per hour in each direction between Aberdeen and Dyce. The Route Study should acknowledge this possibility and ensure sufficient capacity on the lines north of Aberdeen (by minimising the length of any section of single track line) and by providing for additional platforms at Aberdeen station. The possibility of additional stations in the Aberdeen city-region area should also be accommodated.

The Study references electrification, but indicates a timetable which would result in electrification not reaching Aberdeen until CP8 by 2034 and the Edinburgh-Aberdeen line not until CP10, possibly as late as 2044. Nestrans believes that this programme should be advanced to bring the benefits of electrification much earlier and that further consideration should be given to electrification to Inverurie in an early phase and between Aberdeen and Inverness before the end of the long term planning process.

Nestrans would also wish to see more emphasis on maximising the opportunities for railfreight, including facilitating additional freight facilities, gauge enhancement in conjunction with all upgrades and electrification as mentioned above.

A report on the Scotland Route Study was considered by the Nestrans Board at its meeting on 29 February 2016 and I will separately forward to you a background paper provided by Allan Rail Solutions, which the Board endorsed.

I hope that you will be able to take on board these comments and look forward to working with you in helping to develop rail infrastructure to and within the north east over the coming years.

If you wish to discuss any of the above or require further information, please contact Rab Dickson, Transport Strategy Manager

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ramsay', with a stylized, flowing script.

Councillor Ramsay Milne
Chair

Notes on Scotland Route Study – draft for Consultation

Key points to note are:

The suggested 2043 Train Service pattern on the local routes:

- Hourly Aberdeen –Inverness
- Hourly Aberdeen –Keith
- Hourly Montrose -Inverurie
- Hourly Stonehaven –Inverurie

This results in a half hourly Aberdeen –Keith service, four trains per hour Aberdeen-Inverurie and half hourly Stonehaven –Aberdeen local trains. The exact service intervals will depend on the impacts of other trains on the network. However if an hourly frequency regular interval service is to be provided by Aberdeen to Inverness (A-I) Phase 2, then the Aberdeen – Keith service should be near enough in the slots to provide a half hourly frequency because of the locations of the crossing loops. Because the Montrose/Stonehaven –Inverurie services are not linked with the longer distance services west of Inverurie, they will naturally fall in between these longer distance services and will be able to offer the opportunity to be half hourly south of Aberdeen (depending on the timings of the longer distance services) and broadly quarter hourly on the Aberdeen – Inverurie leg . However it is likely that the location of the Aberdeen – Inverness route (i.e. all the services north of Aberdeen) will be dictated by the timetable of the long distance services south of Aberdeen and in particular the Montrose –Aberdeen leg of the local service, which will need to fit into a significant gap in the long distance trains because of the difference in journey times Aberdeen – Montrose between a limited-stop express and a local train with potentially four or five calls (which have a running time of at least ten minutes more).

However detail aside this service pattern appears to be in line with Nestrans requirements, although there will probably be a desire to deliver earlier than 2043.

For the Interurban routes south of Aberdeen, the Route Study proposes three long distance trains every hour: one cross border, one to Edinburgh and one to Glasgow, as well as a substantial strengthening of the services south of Dundee on both routes (and an Arbroath – Dundee local service). This should permit a significant reduction in calls in the express trains to Aberdeen thus improving end-to-end journey times.

Infrastructure upgrades

Proposed upgrades to infrastructure are detailed in Appendix 6 of the Route Study.

Those of most relevance to Nestrans are:

- the construction of a proposed new Inverkeithing –Cowdenbeath line (5.2.5 a/b/c) and associated line speed increases (5.2.6/7) to enable the long distance trains to avoid the slow Fife Coast line, saving about 10 minutes running time–by the end of CP7 (2029) ;

- Work on the High Girders of the Tay Bridge to remove restrictions (5.2.12b) and also resilience work on Dock St Tunnel in Dundee, again in CP7 (5.2.14);
- Grade separate Greenhill Upper Junction (west of Falkirk) in CP6 (5.3.1a) (but not Greenhill Lower Junction);
- Construct a new Almond chord (5.3.14) (to link the Edinburgh-Glasgow line into the Fife lines in CP6). Both the above have been deferred from the EGIP project. This one will add trains to the Fife lines, where there is more capacity than on the south lines at Haymarket. There are a number of proposals for the Fife lines' western approaches to Waverley station which may benefit the operation of service to/from Aberdeen;
- Improving signalling headways between Dunblane and Perth (6.4.4) and reconstructing Perth Station with remodelling and re-signalling which will improve journey times. All in CP6 pre electrification. This will also provide improve freight gauge on this section of the route to Aberdeen;
- Upgrading of line speeds between Dunblane and Auchterader to 100 mph (6.4.2) has been rejected. The justification looks erroneous and this needs reconsideration, especially in the light of electrification ;
- Additional and/or upgraded freight loops in CP6,7 & 8 will have the potential to improve passenger journey times by enabling passing movements;
- Major proposals at Stirling (6.4.5) proposed for CP7 need stronger justification given the implications and costs involved ;
- Double tracking Usan–Montrose in CP7 (5.4.3). This would ensure that, by 2029, a considerable constraint is removed from the timetable, and will probably be enough to deal with the constraints on the Dundee –Aberdeen route section to permit the proposed mix of three Aberdeen – Edinburgh/Glasgow/cross border services and the Montrose/Stonehaven–Inverurie services;
- Dundee–Aberdeen electrification in CP8 (By 2034). There is no electrification work planned in CP7 – it is suggested that Dundee-Aberdeen should be brought forward to CP7, where it could fit with the Usan-Montrose upgrade;
- There is a scheme (5.5.1) referring to the relocation of Craiginches Yard and/or better run round facilities to avoid bringing freight trains into Aberdeen station to run round. This is for CP7 and the run round move has already been considered and rejected (although the reason is not fully understood) by the Freight Fund. It will reduce pressure on the station at one time in the day, but if more freight trains run, perhaps more frequently;
- A new through platform at Aberdeen (no 8) (5.5.2) is suggested for CP7 and may be required to accommodate the additional local services. Any further services from the north would likely require an additional bay platform;
- Future proposals to relocate Clayhills Depot (5.5.3) may require more consideration, including an urban planning perspective rather than a purely railway perspective;
- The doubling of the track though the tunnels north of Aberdeen Station (5.5.4) is rejected for CP8, with the caveat that it might restrict freight gauge. Nestrans should query whether this imposes a constraint on operations north of Aberdeen and push for as short a single line as possible in the current A-I Phase 1 programme. There needs to be a better investigation into what would be required to provide a double track line through the tunnels with the required freight gauge and electrification clearances –possibly slab track;

- Aberdeen–Inverurie electrification (5.5.5) is rejected for CP9, but with the caveat that the business case should be reviewed with Dundee–Aberdeen electrification. The previous understanding has been that the electrical feeder station for the traction current into Aberdeen from the south will be at Woodside, north of Aberdeen, so the mileage required to deliver electrification to Inverurie may not be as much as indicated. The operation of Montrose/Stonehaven –Inverurie local services will strengthen the Business Case; particularly as local electric trains will deliver improved performance and reduce the speed differential with the express services. (The big benefits with electric traction are in acceleration.);
- Anniesland electrification (4.5.4) is proposed for CP6 which will slightly improve the timetable flexibility running out of Glasgow Queen St, as these trains will be a lot faster through the tunnel, uphill, to Cowlares West Junction.

Electrification

Electrification is not proposed to reach Aberdeen until CP8 (2029-34), whereas Glasgow–Dundee would be electrified by the end of CP6 (2024). Edinburgh–Dundee/Perth is not proposed for electrification until CP10 (2039-44) (5.2.15).

Electrification is rejected for Aberdeen –Inverurie completely.

Whilst the order of electrification is reasonable, this very considerable delay after the end of CP5 (2024) does not fit with the concept of a rolling programme which is intended to give a steady, so best value work load. The refurbished HSTs will be around 50 years old by the end of CP6 (2029) and due another major refurbishment as it will be ten years after their introduction into service in Scotland and 25 years since the last renewal of their diesel engines. So it will be important to consider their replacement in this time scale.

To complete the picture, electrification of the remaining Glasgow area suburban services is proposed for CP6, broadly as suggested in STPR, but the Highland Main Line is not proposed until CP10 (2039 – 44) the same as the Fife area.

It is suggested that programme needs to be discussed with Network Rail (potentially with a number of RTPs and interested councils) with a view to providing a continuous rolling programme as has been set out by Transport Scotland in the past and also to keep to the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) programme. This would suggest Dundee–Aberdeen and on to Inverurie in CP7 (by 2029) with Perth–Inverness following, probably finishing early in CP8 (possibly around 2031) and Fife completed by the end of CP8 (2034). This would provide a full electric service to Aberdeen by 2034. (Because of the delay to the Fife route, ScotRail services to/from Edinburgh will still be diesel up to this point, although East Coast Bi-mode IEPs will be able to operate electrically into Aberdeen from about 2029.)

There may also be a need to consider long-term electrification between Aberdeen and Inverness, to replace HSTs when they reach the end of their useful life.

DP/March 2016