



## Scotland Route Study Regional Working Group 4 – Nestrans - Glasgow

### Meeting Minutes

26<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Present:

██████████ - Nestrans  
██████████ - Nestrans  
██████████ – Consultant to Nestrans  
██████████ – Lead Strategic Planner – Network Rail (NR)  
██████████ – Senior Strategic Planner – Network Rail  
██████████ – Economic Planner – Network Rail  
██████████ – Strategy & Planning Assistant – Network Rail

#### 1. Introduction

██████████ introduced the meeting as an opportunity to discuss any topics arising from the publication of the Scotland Route Study Draft for Consultation on 10th December 2015.

#### 2. Discussion

The following comments and discussions from Nestrans were prompted as a result the consultation process:-

- The current Route Study process and consultation was an improvement on the previous Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) process.

##### **Demand Forecasting**

- Pleased with the demand forecasting results for Aberdeen but not clear why there is early rapid growth to 2023 which levels out greatly to 2043.
  - This is the impact of the costs from Transport Model for Scotland (TMfS) to 2018 including franchise fare assumptions, these fare assumptions have then been carried on beyond this date.
- Is the demand forecasting constrained by capacity?
  - No it is not.
- Pleased to see Aberdeen treated as a separate market in the Route Study.
  - The bigger data zones available in TMfS can make the forecasts in this area more volatile. The four demand scenarios for economic conditions are being further refined to show a more rigorous range of economic outcomes.
- Do the scenarios reflect how different economic conditions affect the cities?

- Yes they do and the published final document will discuss the implications of this for each city.
- Plans for traffic management in Aberdeen City have previously been shared with the Route Study team, have these been taken into account as part of the demand forecasting model? The plans are to cut car traffic into the city centre and therefore bus and rail will become more important modes. Work being carried out by ScotRail will also contribute to this.
  - This new policy will be reflected in the demand forecasting model via increased parking costs.
- £200m has been announced as part of the Aberdeen City Deal to improve journey times from Aberdeen to the central belt. It is widely accepted in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire that a proportion of this money may be spent outside the area in order to directly benefit it.
  - Does funding from the City Deal propose to diversify the economy?
    - Yes as well as funding for the oil and gas industry the deal is proposing to promote the specialist engineering skills that have grown up around it and diversify these into other areas. There are also proposals to further grow the biopharma and food & drink technologies areas. Also improve growth in the tourist industry.

#### **Choices for Funders**

- The programme to deliver rail enhancements between Aberdeen and the central belt is scattered and contradictory in the draft document. Is there a structured programme being put together to build on the current Route Study options?
  - The draft Route Study has agreed a proposed train specification for 2043 which is then tested against the current rail network to identify where it cannot deliver this specification. The full list of considered options contained in Appendix 6 shows options considered at an early stage with an explanation of why it was rejected or considered for further development. Options for 2043 which support the proposed specification are put forward and from this it is then possible to propose choices for CP6 which will work toward the 2043 specification.
- More money may be required to achieve certain results quicker than is outlined in the Route Study choices. For example HST trains will be in use on the interurban routes by 2018 and infrastructure should be geared to taking advantage of their superior performance in comparison to other rolling stock.
  - While the 2018 baseline position for the Route Study is defined within the document it is accepted that it is in reality an evolving position. Work to maximize the potential of HST trains is already being undertaken by ScotRail.
- The current choice for funders to double track between Montrose and Usan is scheduled by 2029, is this timescale affected by the City Deal money?
  - The choices for funders proposed could be funded by the City Deal in addition to Transport Scotland and the Department for Transport. Is there a timescale in which it is expected that the City Deal money should be spent?
  - Within the next 5 to 10 years.

- Timetabling work is being carried out on proposed options for this route, Montrose-Usan has been identified as a constraint on the network but it has not been determined if removing this constraint will result in the desired 20 minute saving on journey time. A number of options will be considered which may provide this output.
- It is important that Nestrans board members and other local stakeholders see progress on these schemes as they are not always aware of how the development process is advancing. Keeping them informed with regular updates for their ongoing comfort that progress is being made.
- Electrification between Aberdeen and Inverness seems to have been rejected as an option by the Scotland Route Study, why is this?
  - This option has not been discounted, however current option planning programme suggests that it will take place post 2043 and has therefore not been included in this current Route Study. The long term planning process will be refreshed and this option may be included in the next Route Study.
  - Proposed cross-Aberdeen services would benefit from electrification, there is also a link into the grid available at Woodside which may make electrification toward Inverness easier.
- There is a 5 year gap between the option to electrify between Perth and Dundee and Dundee and Aberdeen, why is this? Would it not be more sensible to continue to programme of electrification without a break.
  - There are a number of routes in Scotland which are not yet electrified and we are in an ongoing discussion with Transport Scotland on the programme scheduling in order to, among other considerations, maximize available rolling stock.
- Have fares been considered in demand forecasting, to suppress demand?
  - The model uses the current TS position on fares, in places they are being used to manage rail demand upwards but were not yet being used to suppress rail demand at peak times.
- By 2030 HSTs will be old however there is no discussion in the Route Study on succession plans for this rolling stock.
  - This topic will be covered in more depth by the Initial Investment Plan (IIP) published in September; however it may be mentioned in the final Route Study.
- The option to extend platforms at Aberdeen station is scheduled for CP8, however if the proposed franchise variations are put in place this may need to happen sooner. It would be needed for additional local services. Do you know how long the tunnel will be into Aberdeen Station? If it is this may cause a serious impediment.
  - Thus far ScotRail have confirmed that they do not need further infrastructure enhancements to deliver planned changes to the timetable in CP5. However changes to Aberdeen station infrastructure may be required beyond CP5 which will require evidence to support further investment.

- Infrastructure enhancements in the station need to tie up with the plans that architects are developing for the concourse and surrounding local area.
  - Yes, [REDACTED] is involved in the group discussing this and has shared our potential plans with them. Passive provision will be made for any possible changes.
- The Kittybrewster to Aberdeensingle line section is a potential constraint which should be considered if work is taking place at the station, platform changes could make it a lot less flexible. Confirmation to be provided as to how long the single line section will be at the end of CP5. Action NRWithout mentioning it as part of Route Study options people may ignore the potential cost. The extent of single line section, the costs of enhancements and when they should take place should be discussed in the final published Route Study.
  - What were the consultation comments on the option for a Fife bypass?
    - Reception has been mixed with most consultation responses so far received from members of the public. There is some confusion as to why the option for this piece of new rail has been proposed when others have not been considered. It has been proposed in order to help meet the 2043 Conditional Output of journey time reduction between Aberdeen and the central belt.
  - The Scottish Government's commitment to fully connect Scotland's seven cities would promote electrification from Aberdeen to Inverness.
    - Electrification is an input to connectivity not an output; it may not be the right answer to greater connectivity. If connectivity is defined as a reduction in journey time then electrification may or may not facilitate this output.
    - Dualling of the A96 was a political decision in order to improve connectivity; rail electrification was implicit in the Government announcement on city connections.
  - Is phase 2 of Aberdeen to Inverness enhancements under way?
    - Development work has been previously undertaken to GRIP 3 with class 170's and would need to be further developed with the new rolling stock depending on what the specified outputs for Phase 2 not yet defined..
    - The proposed mix of 158s and HSTs may give a similar performance profile.
    - Evidence is being developed to determine what outputs may be proposed.
  - The STPR includes a half hourly service Aberdeen to Inverurie and Elgin to Inverness. The Scotland Route Study only proposed a small extension of this to Keith. This leaves a short section between Aberdeen and Inverness with only one train per hour. Should the option be considered to raise this to 2tph?
    - We have undertaken a lot of analysis of proposed services on this route and will continue to do so.
  - Will there be provision of additional services South of Aberdeen?
    - The 2043 Indicative Train Service Specification includes this detail.

**AOB**

- The Aberdeen/ Aberdeenshire Council view of the current downturn of oil prices is that there has been phenomenal growth in the Aberdeen area in 2012/13/14 and this has now slowed to normal growth. This type of downturn has happened three times in the past and each time the economy has recovered stronger than ever. The local authorities are considering what is happening currently as a breathing space to allow them to plan for the future.
  - The demand forecasting scenarios which have been created do not pick up on this sort of short term event; it would not affect growth figures.
  - We are advised that the oil prices are due to pick up in Q2 of 2017.
  - When you look at the way in which the oil industry works there is now a great deal of international technological development and people on the rigs and other parts of the industry come from all over the world. These are not necessarily people living in Aberdeen and their jobs are not as affected by the short term downturn.
- A full review of the Highland Main Line was undertaken to assess all constraints which existed in order to put together a plan of enhancements to meet the desired outputs. Will a similar review be taking place to identify all constraints between Aberdeen and the Central Belt in order to develop a strategic business case to provide a 20 minute journey time reduction? Some smaller schemes could be missed under the current Route Study process.
  - Smaller schemes will continue to be developed through CP6 with funding from the ring fenced funds.
- There is no single scheme which will provide the 20 minute journey time reduction; it will be a number of larger and smaller schemes.
  - We are undertaking timetable development work to provide evidence of how to provide the required output. We will assess various combinations of options to determine where the most benefit can be derived.
- Money could be going into premature renewals which should be conducted in conjunction with enhancement works to gain the most value for money.
  - The Strategy and Planning team work closely with the Route Asset Management teams in order to ensure that renewal and enhancements are undertaken together where appropriate. .
- Does Network Rail have a feel for what area the 20 minute journey time could be derived from?
  - Not at present, we have to treat the network as a whole to determine the most appropriate options.
- Do you think the reduction will come through infrastructure enhancement, timetable improvements or rolling stock?
  - The answer may be a combination of all three. We are considering all these areas..
- What is the timetable for new IEP trains into Aberdeen?
  - Will find out this information. Action NR. PMN: December 2018

- There is a risk that the new dual power IEPs will increase journey times as the diesel engines may be under powered.
- The Route Study option to raise line speeds between Inverkeilor and Halbeath seems very expensive. For that price or less would it be possible to increase line speeds over the Tay Bridge?
  - This is a consideration and further evidence on costs is being gathered at the moment.
- Was the Route Study Summary document useful to you?
  - This sort of publication is always useful to show progress to board members.
  - We can send you an electronic copy of the summary document which you can print out for them. Action NR
- How will the governance of allocating and spending City Deal money on railway work? This needs to be presented to the Transport Minister over and above options for the route study.
  - NR will discuss further with Nestrans and Transport Scotland to determine the best way forward with the governance of City Deal money.

**Comment [A1]:** Is this right location, just seemed quite far away?