

TAYSIDE AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND TRANSPORT PARTNERSHIP

8 DECEMBER 2015

RAIL STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE

REPORT BY PROJECTS MANAGER

This report updates the Partnership on progress made in promoting and implementing Rail Strategy priorities and on various rail issues.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Partnership :-

- (i) notes the Minister for Transport and Islands' response to the Chair's letter seeking a meeting to discuss the Partnership's TERS rail strategy proposals, as discussed in 3.1 to 3.6 and Appendix A of the report;
- (ii) remits officers to engage with ScotRail Alliance and Transport Scotland on opportunities to progress TERS and other regional strategy priorities;
- (iii) notes the findings of the Newburgh & Oudenarde: Initial Rail Demand Feasibility Study and subject to agreement amongst all the client group partners, agrees further discussions take place with Transport Scotland, Network Rail and ScotRail regarding this project before consideration is given to proceeding to a full or partial STAG process; and
- (iv) notes the various progress updates on ScotRail liaison, Glasgow Queen Street Improvement Works, Community Rail Partnerships and Network Rail's Scotland Route Study provided within the report.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Tay Estuary Rail Service (TERS) study (2009) identified a number of proposed enhancements to services and infrastructure, including an hourly stopping service between Arbroath and Glasgow.
- 2.2 At its meeting on 15 September 2015 the Partnership agreed to seek a meeting with the Minister for Transport and Islands to discuss the Partnership's Tay Estuary Rail Service proposals for delivering enhanced regional and national rail services and connectivity, having specific regard to the potential opportunity which is afforded by the cascade of diesel rolling stock upon implementation of the Edinburgh - Glasgow rail electrification Improvement Programme (EGIP) in 2016 (Report RTP/15/34 refers).
- 2.3 Tactran, in partnership with Perth & Kinross Council, SEStran and Fife Council, has undertaken a preliminary investigation to jointly consider the demand potential at proposed new/reopened rail stations at Bridge of Earn (Oudenarde) and Newburgh.

- 2.4 Tactran continues to liaise with the Transport Scotland and the rail industry on a number of issues, including future liaison arrangements with ScotRail, Glasgow Queen Street Station closure for improvement works, Community Rail Partnerships and Network Rail's Scotland Route Study.

3 DISCUSSION

Tay Estuary Rail Service

- 3.1 The ambition for the Tay Estuary Rail Service (TERS) is to provide an additional hourly stopping service calling at Arbroath, Carnoustie, Monifieth, Broughty Ferry, Dundee, Invergowrie (Dundee West), Perth, Gleneagles, Dunblane, Stirling and Glasgow to complement existing and future Aberdeen/Inverness to Glasgow intercity services.
- 3.2 In order to provide the additional hourly service, 3 Diesel Multiple Units are required. The TERS study identified the ScotRail refranchise in 2015 and the completion of Edinburgh - Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) in 2016, which will result in release of diesel rolling stock for use on other routes, as key opportunities to progress implementation of the TERS service.
- 3.3 At its meeting on 16 June 2015 the Partnership agreed to write to the Minister for Transport and Islands requesting Scottish Government support for implementation of the TERS proposals on the Arbroath to Glasgow corridor and commitment to retention of cascaded rolling stock upon completion of EGIP (Report RTP/15/21 refers) and a letter was sent to the Minister on 16 June 2015. The Minister's response dated 23 July 2015 reaffirmed a number of service and rolling stock proposals contained within the Abellio bid for the ScotRail franchise and appeared to confirm that Scottish Government is committed only to supporting those service enhancements which are built in to the ScotRail franchise agreement with Abellio ScotRail.
- 3.4 At its meeting on 15 September 2015 the Partnership noted the Minister's response and agreed that whilst Tactran's aspirations for developing the TERS proposals was referenced in the Invitation to Tender for the renewed franchise, it was extremely disappointing that, unlike other bids for the franchise, the selected Abellio bid did not include provision for progressing TERS. The Partnership therefore agreed to seek a meeting with the Minister to discuss the response and Tactran's proposals for enhancing local, regional and national rail connectivity through TERS, which includes supporting Scottish Government proposals for enhancing services between Aberdeen/Inverness and the Central belt under the Strategic Transport Projects Review (RTP/15/34 refers).
- 3.5 The letter requesting a meeting, which was sent to the Minister on 19 October 2015 and the Minister's response dated 11 November 2015, are attached at Appendix A. The response notes that the Minister is unable to meet in the near future, but reaffirms commitment to connecting Scotland's 7 cities with particular reference to rail improvements between Aberdeen to the Central Belt and proposes a meeting with Transport Scotland officials.
- 3.6 As outlined below, Tactran officers continue to liaise with the ScotRail Alliance on various issues, including discussions on understanding future rail growth across Scotland and appropriate interventions. It is recommended that the Partnership remits officers to engage with ScotRail Alliance and Transport Scotland on opportunities to progress TERS and other regional rail strategy priorities.

Bridge of Earn / Newburgh

Introduction

- 3.7 In 2014, a client group consisting of Tactran, SEStran and Perth & Kinross and Fife Councils commissioned consultants SYSTRA to undertake an initial rail demand feasibility study regarding the potential for new/re-opened rail stations at Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn in Perth & Kinross and Newburgh in Fife.
- 3.8 The study considers only rail proposals and is not part of a STAG study (as required by Transport Scotland for any scheme requiring funding from the Government) but would inform such a study. A copy of the study is available in the Members' area of the Tactran [website](#) and the summary section extracted from the study is attached at Appendix B to this report.

Background

- 3.9 The study considers the likely rail passenger demand and provides a high level cost benefit analysis for the provision of an hourly rail service at a new station located at either Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn or Newburgh. The two potential stations are located on the single track line between Perth and Ladybank on the Edinburgh – Perth – Inverness line and would primarily be served by Edinburgh – Perth local trains but also by a number of Edinburgh – Inverness long distance trains to form an hourly service through the day.
- 3.10 Bridge of Earn is located west of the A90 just south of Perth and has a current population of around 2,700. The development at Oudenarde, as outlined in Perth & Kinross Local Development Plan, is adjacent to Bridge of Earn on the east side of the A90 and the masterplan includes 1600 housing units, more than doubling the local population, a business development area, new school and includes land set aside for a potential rail halt.
- 3.11 Newburgh is a relatively small town with a population of slightly more than 2,000 people and is located approximately half way between Perth and Ladybank. It is relatively isolated and served by the A913. Only modest growth is anticipated for the town over the next few decades.

Patronage and Benefit Forecast

- 3.12 The initial patronage forecasts (per annum) for years 2020 and 2030 for the two stations are:

	2020	2030
Oudenarde/Bridge or Earn	192,000	286,000
Newburgh	83,000	93,000

- 3.13 As can be seen from the above table, the patronage forecasts for Oudenarde are significantly higher for Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn than for Newburgh. The patronage forecasts are based on relatively high level 2001 and 2011 travel census data and must therefore be regarded as initial forecasts.

3.14 The total estimated benefits (per annum) for the two stations are:

	2020	2030
Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn	£399,000	£612,000
Newburgh	£583,000	£717,000

3.15 From the table above it can be seen that, although estimated patronage is significantly higher at Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn, the estimated benefit at Newburgh is forecast to be higher. This is due to the relative isolation of Newburgh and much poorer current travel alternatives (by bus or car) relative to Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn, meaning that the economic benefits to each user of Newburgh station is estimated to be significantly higher than that for Oudenarde.

Cost Benefit Analysis

3.16 Construction costs of £3.486m (including 66% optimism bias) and annual operating costs of £41,500 (including 41% optimism bias) were assumed to be the same for both stations. These estimated costs are taken from a 2005 report by Atkins adjusted to reflect 2014 costs and, therefore, a scenario where the potential costs are 50% higher was also considered.

3.17 Costs to existing rail passengers (due to increased journey time) varies depending upon whether local or intercity services call at the station due to different levels of existing patronage on these types of services. Therefore two scenarios were considered; one assuming all stopping services are local and one assuming a combination of local and intercity services calling at the station to provide an hourly service, based on the current timetable.

3.18 Based on these estimated costs a range of Benefit to Cost Ratios (BCRs) was identified for each station. The BCRs for Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn range from 0.9 to 2.0 and for Newburgh from 1.3 to 2.8. The study does not specifically consider a scenario where services would call at both stations but does note that this scenario would likely perform less well than either single station option and would have additional timetabling and infrastructure implications. It should however be noted that either of the two stations would be beneficial for both towns.

Conclusion

3.19 The results of the study indicate that there is potential for a positive business case for providing a new station at Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn or Newburgh, with a station at Oudenarde/Bridge of Earn attracting significantly higher potential patronage and a station at Newburgh providing greater estimated benefits per passenger.

3.20 However, it should be noted that the demand forecasting undertaken is based on relatively high level 2001 and 2011 travel census data and must, therefore, be regarded as initial estimates of patronage and related benefits. Any further work would require more detailed forecasts, including greater consideration of the locational impact of the substantial development proposals at Perth Western Edge.

3.21 Similarly, the costs are assumed to be the same for both stations and based on 2005 estimates. This would also need to be investigated in greater detail.

- 3.22 There are a number of infrastructure and policy constraints that need to be fully taken account of, including:
- the stations' position on a single section of track restricting timetabling and stopping capabilities and giving uncertainty over the capacity of the single track line to accommodate new stations;
 - Transport Scotland's Highland Main Line improvements and commitment to reducing journey times between Inverness and the Central Belt;
 - Transport Scotland's commitment to increasing line speed on the Ladybank to Hilton Junction section of track; and
 - the requirement within the current ScotRail timetable to stop both local stopping and intercity services to provide an hourly service.
- 3.23 Any further work would also need to consider other travel mode options as part of a full STAG appraisal. It would, therefore, be necessary to identify and allocate fairly significant resources towards this project should it be decided to go ahead with a fully STAG compliant appraisal.
- 3.24 It is, therefore, recommended that, subject to agreement amongst all client group partners, further discussions take place with Transport Scotland, Network Rail and ScotRail regarding the wider implications of this project before consideration is given to proceeding to a full or partial STAG process.

ScotRail Liaison

- 3.25 Abellio commenced operating the ScotRail franchise on 1 April 2015 and has partnered with Network Rail in Scotland to form the ScotRail Alliance. As reported orally at the Partnership meeting on 10 March 2015, Tactran hosted a regional stakeholder briefing by Abellio on 6 March 2015 in which they set out their plans for the life of the franchise.
- 3.26 Tactran officers have continued to engage with the ScotRail Alliance on a number of issues such as future rail growth, Community Rail Partnerships, transport integration, planned works, etc. Rob Shorthouse, Client and Communications Director at ScotRail attended the Regional Transport Partnership Lead Officers' meeting on 11 November 2015 and outlined proposals for liaison between ScotRail and RTPs, including attendance at RTP Rail Fora. RTPs have differing arrangements regarding Rail Fora ranging from quarterly meetings to meeting on a needs basis, with Tactran being in the latter category.
- 3.27 The Director is giving consideration to the future frequency, purpose and format of Tactran's Rail Forum, and is liaising with other RTPs to provide a consistency in approach between RTPs.

Glasgow Queen Street Improvement Works

- 3.28 As reported to the Partnership meeting on 16 June 2015, Glasgow Queen Street Station (Upper Level) will be closed between 20 March 2016 and 7 August 2016 to facilitate improvement works to Glasgow Queen Street High Level tunnel.
- 3.29 It was noted at the Partnership meeting in June 2015 that ScotRail was at the early stages of planning a strategy to accommodate services during the closure. ScotRail has continued to work on its accommodation strategy and it is intended trains will be diverted to either Glasgow Queen Street Lower Level or Glasgow Central Station, aiming to allocate services to/from each city to one of these stations and to make most use of limited paths available.
- 3.30 It is proposed that all stations in the Tactran area will continue to receive the same frequency of service as current, but will have extended journey times due to the longer distance travelled on diversionary routes. Full timetable details will be made available by ScotRail in January 2016 once final planning has been completed.
- 3.31 The December 2015 timetable, which has no significant changes in the Tactran area, commences on 13 December 2015 and will operate until Glasgow Queen Street Station closure commences on 20 March 2016 and the timetable will revert to the December 2015 timetable at the end of the closure period on 8 August 2016.

Community Rail Partnerships (CRP)

- 3.32 At its meeting on 10 March 2015 the Partnership noted progress in developing Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) in the Tactran region and agreed to delegate authority to confirm Partnership support for future CRP applications to the Director (Report RTP/15/09 refers).
- 3.33 Previous applications for CRP status on the Highland Main Line including all stations north of Perth and south of Inverness, and on the West Highland Line including all 19 stations between and including Crianlarich and Mallaig, have been approved by Scottish Ministers. Both CRPs have since been formally launched and held inaugural meetings.
- 3.34 Tactran confirmed support for an application for CRP status for Strathallan CRP covering Gleneagles, Dunblane and Bridge of Allan Stations, during August 2015, as reported to the Partnership at its meeting on 15 September 2015 (Report RTP/15/34 refers). The Strathallan CRP application has been submitted to Scottish Ministers and a decision is awaited.

Scotland Route Study

- 3.35 As part of their Long Term Planning Process for Control Period 6 (2019 – 2024), Network Rail commenced preparing their Scotland Route Study towards the end of 2014. The Scotland Route Study is the first part of the planning process and aims to bring forward options for developing the rail network in CP6, based on predicted growth to 2043.

- 3.36 To date Network Rail has met with Tactran and its constituent Councils twice within the process to share work undertaken and to get information and feedback. A third meeting is programmed for 7 December 2015, prior to Network Rail publishing its draft Scotland Route Study for consultation during December 2015, with the final Scotland Route Study programmed for publication in July 2016. An oral update on the 7 December meeting will be provided at the Partnership meeting.

4 CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 This report has been developed in consultation with the Transportation Officers Liaison Group and Chief Officers Liaison Group, who are in agreement with the proposals.
- 4.2 The Tay Estuary Rail Service proposals have been developed through a Steering Group comprising Tactran, Transport Scotland, Network Rail and ScotRail, and in consultation with constituent Councils' officers and other appropriate stakeholders.
- 4.3 The Bridge of Earn/Newburgh rail station proposals have been taken forward in partnership with neighbouring RTP SEStran, Perth & Kinross Council and Fife Council.
- 4.4 Discussions on Community Rail Partnerships have been with appropriate Community Groups and representatives, Scottish Government, Network Rail, ScotRail, other Regional Transport Partnerships and Local Authority officers.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The costs of developing, promoting and implementing the various strands of the Regional Rail Strategy, as discussed in this report, have been met from within the RTS Revenue Programme budget and Tactran's Capital Programme, with additional contributions from various partners.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Equality Impact Assessment and no major issues have been identified.

Niall Gardiner
Projects Manager

Report prepared by Niall Gardiner. For further information contact email niallgardiner@tactran.gov.uk or telephone 01738 475764.

NOTE

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (and not containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.

Report to Partnership RTP/09/25, Tay Estuary Rail Study, 23 June 2009

Report to Partnership RTP/13/33, Tay Estuary Rail Strategy Update, 10 December 2013

Report to Partnership RTP/14/14, Tay Estuary Rail Strategy Update, 17 June 2014

Report to Partnership RTP/15/09, Community Rail Partnerships: Progress Update, 10 March 2015

Report to Partnership RTP/15/21, Rail Issues Update, 16 June 2015

Report to Partnership RTP/15/34, Director's Report, 15 September 2015



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19 October 2015

Dear Minister,

SCOTRAIL FRANCHISE : OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Thank you for your letter of 23 July 2015 in reply to mine of 16 June 2015. Your response was considered by the Tactran Partnership Board at its meeting on 15 September 2015, when the Board agreed to request a meeting with you on our Tay Estuary Rail Strategy (TERS) proposals for enhancing rail services.

As I outlined in my earlier letter, Tactran has worked in partnership with ScotRail, Network Rail and Transport Scotland to develop proposals which will supplement and complement national plans for enhancing Scotland's rail network, as defined in STPR, IIP, HLOS and related strategies. The important role that rail plays in supporting sustainable economic growth regionally and nationally is reflected in our TERS proposals being a key element of the rail strategy within the recently approved Tactran Regional Transport Strategy 2015–2036 Refresh and inclusion of TERS within the TAYplan Action Programme and related LDP Action Programmes.

We very much welcome the improvements to be delivered under the new ScotRail franchise. However, as yet, there is no clearly defined programme for extending the benefits of electrification and associated rolling stock beyond the scope of the current EGIP project and, other than the plans to replace the Class 170 fleet with refurbished HSTs by early 2019, we await a clear plan and programme for implementing STPR Project 23 : Aberdeen – Central Belt Rail Enhancements. In the meantime we continue to experience growth in demand and pressure on capacity for rail travel to, from and between the 3 cities in the Tactran region and their respective catchments. You refer to Abellio ScotRail's rolling stock strategy delivering a 23% increase in seated capacity by 2019 and state that there is no budget provision within franchise funding to lease more trains to operate new services, yet we have been advised that the ScotRail/Network Rail Alliance's strategy aims to increase rail patronage by 40% during the life of the franchise.

Your recent announcement of investment in improving the Aberdeen – Inverness line includes a commitment to supporting delivery of enhanced commuter rail services in the Aberdeen and Inverness areas. TERS identifies a positive business case for very similar improvements to local and regional rail frequencies and connectivity. Our earlier work indicates that an additional hourly service between Arbroath and Glasgow, complementing the core hourly Aberdeen – Glasgow service and enhancing rail connectivity, journey times

and capacity between 5 of Scotland's 7 cities and their respective catchments, can be delivered at relatively low cost. As I also outlined in my letter of 16 June, we are aware that other bidders for the ScotRail franchise had developed plans for taking forward the key elements of TERS, confirming that our proposals are capable of ready implementation.

Tactran firmly believes that the additional services and capacity proposed by TERS can play a crucial role in supporting and accommodating planned and further rail passenger growth. I very much hope that you can find time within your busy schedule to meet with the Partnership to enable us to discuss our proposals in more detail, and have instructed our officials to make contact with your office with a view to arranging a meeting at a mutually convenient time.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Will Dawson', with a horizontal line underneath.

Councillor Will Dawson
Chair of Tactran

cc Chief Executive, Transport Scotland
Phil Verster, Managing Director, ScotRail/Network Rail Alliance

13 NOV 2015

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Our ref: 2015/0036629

11 November 2015

Dear Tayside and Central Scotland Transport Partnership

Thank you for your letter requesting a meeting to discuss the proposals within the Tay Estuary Rail Strategy for enhancing Scotland's rail network.

Unfortunately, due to a fully committed diary, I am unable to meet with you in the near future.

I welcome your support of the ScotRail Abellio franchise and it is important to recognise the benefits to passengers and the network up to 2019 and beyond. The Scottish Government is committed to improving the rail network, investing in and connecting our 7 main cities. Any future infrastructure enhancements will be considered within the context of our investment hierarchy of maintaining and safely operating the network, then making best use of our existing infrastructure, rolling stock and finally targeted infrastructure improvements subject to funds becoming available.

At present we are developing a strategy for the roll-out of electrification across Scotland from 2019 (i.e. Control Period 6 and beyond), which will take account of the potential to secure a range of benefits such as reduced emissions, better journey times and greater operational efficiency particularly on inter-city routes.

Additionally we are continuing to work closely with Network Rail to deliver Phase One of the Aberdeen to Central Belt corridor by 2019. Future phases of this project will be determined after completion of Phase One.

The Scottish Governments rail priorities for the next Control Period (CP6) will be identified from sources such as the Network Rail's Route Study for Scotland, which is expected to be published by the end of the year. The study considers demands on the network in Scotland to 2043 and the types of interventions that might be required to realise that demand on an incremental basis.

The report will identify a series of infrastructure options for the Scottish Government to consider and the Initial Industry Plan, which is due for publication in September 2016 will focus on the options that could be considered for delivery in CP6.

Transport Scotland will continue to support and work in partnership with regional transport partnerships, local councils and other rail community groups, whereby I have asked my officials to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the current position in more detail.

I hope this is a helpful update.

Kind regards



DEREK MACKAY

NEWBURGH & OUDENARDE: INITIAL RAIL DEMAND FEASIBILITY STUDY**SUMMARY**

This feasibility study has provided an update to the various previous studies with a greater focus on the modelling and appraisal of options. Although the appraisal adopted here is consistent with the STAG principles, this study is a feasibility study and does not identify the existing problems and opportunities within Oudenarde and Newburgh, detailed costs or detailed timetabling. It will however serve to inform any subsequent STAG focusing on transport issues within this area.

This study has addressed one key question - is there a business case for stopping services at Oudenarde or Newburgh?

Although Oudenarde and Newburgh represent very different opportunities – Newburgh a small town with limited transport connections to Perth and Dundee and Oudenarde a large planned housing development adjacent to Bridge of Earn – they are bound by similar restrictions which have not been addressed as part of this study:

- Their position on a single track section of line restricting timetabling capabilities;
- Transport Scotland's commitment to reducing/maintaining long-distance journey times particularly in relation to the Highland Main Line Improvements;
- The operational impact of stopping services on this section of line; and
- The increase in line speed on the Ladybank to Hilton Junction.

These restrictions would need to be addressed before any decision is taken to provide an hourly service at a new station between Ladybank and Perth.

This study has looked at the introduction of an hourly stopping service on Edinburgh – Perth services with a three minute journey time increase for existing passengers. Although boarding and alighting levels are predicted to be considerably higher at Oudenarde, the much higher benefits per passenger for users of Newburgh station results in a greater total economic benefit for Newburgh station. Benefits per passenger for users of Newburgh station are greater due to the relative difference between existing and future generalised cost being greater for Newburgh users than Oudenarde. This is due to the less-attractive existing public transport and car journey times to/from Newburgh compared to Oudenarde.

The analysis suggests that the benefits would generally exceed the costs for each of the two stations, with cost benefit ratios ranging from 1.3 - 2.8 for Newburgh and 0.9 - 2 for Oudenarde.

The Business Case for both new rail stations outlined in this report would be further strengthened by the inclusion of a range of local economic and environmental benefits such as improved access to employment and other services and local air quality and climate change benefits from the reduced car traffic which have not been quantified here.