SCOTLAND ROUTE STUDY FOR THE RAIL NETWORK

Report by Service Director Regulatory Services
EXECUTIVE

22 March 2016

1   PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1   **To advise members on a consultation exercise that is currently being undertaken by Network Rail on potential future infrastructure provision on the Scottish Rail Network and to outline the proposed response from Scottish Borders Council to the consultation exercise.**

1.2   The Scotland Route Study is a document produced by Network Rail that informs future infrastructure provision on the Scottish Rail Network between 2019 and 2029. It also takes a view on longer term development.

1.3   Network Rail produced a draft route study document for consultation at the end of December 2015, with the required closing date for responses being noted as 10th March (Network Rail has agreed to an extension of time until this report has been reviewed by Executive). Network Rail has indicated that the final route study document is planned will be published in July 2016.

1.4   The proposed response from Scottish Borders Council has been separated into three key elements:

- Borders Rail – Provision of additional dynamic loops on the line to help improve service reliability, longer trains to help accommodate increased passenger demand and potential enhancement of parking facilities;

- Borders Rail Extension – To extend the Borders Rail project beyond Tweedbank to Hawick and Carlisle;

- New Rail Stations – To ensure that additional capacity on the East Coast Main Line is available to accommodate local, long distance and freight related services and the development of new stations at Reston and East Linton.

2   RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1   **It is recommended that the Executive:**

a)   **Approves the consultation response from Scottish Borders Council in relation to the Scotland Route Study produced by Network Rail.**

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Scotland Route Study is a key part of the longer term planning process for Network Rail and will help to influence investment decisions over the next two control periods (between 2019 and 2029) and beyond towards a proposed forecasting date of 2043.

3.2 The key issues that Network Rail anticipate that will shape the future network within Scotland include:
- Safety;
- Performance;
- Resilience;
- Construction of High Speed Rail;
- Meeting forecasted demand; and
- Enabling future aspirations.

3.3 The closing date for providing a response to the consultation document is 10th March 2016(Network Rail has agreed to an extension of time until this report has been reviewed by Executive), with Network Rail anticipating that a final route study document will be published in July 2016.

4 THE SCOTLAND ROUTE STUDY REPORT

4.1 Some of the key elements from the draft consultation document have been provided below.

4.2 The main drivers of change along with some typical interventions were provided within the draft consultation document and these have been provided in **Table 4.1** below.

2043 Drivers of change	Typical Interventions
• Growth in passenger numbers – 'prospering in global stability' demand forecast scenario forecasts demand to double on many of the busier routes, and at the major terminal stations in Scotland	• Longer trains – platform lengthening and station capacity • Additional network capacity – delivering more frequent services • Additional passenger and circulating capacity at major stations
• Scottish Government aspirations for faster journey times, new stations, electrification and improved connectivity	• Network capacity – more frequent services and optimised timetabling of interurban versus local stopping services • Linespeed improvements
• Long Distance Market Study findings – more Anglo Scottish passenger services, HS2, longer trains and faster journey times	• Network capacity • Linespeed improvements • Longer trains – with implications for major stations
• Freight Market Study findings – more cross-border intermodal services, longer and larger gauge trains	• Network capacity • Electrification – benefits of faster, larger gauge trains

Table 4.1 – Key Rail Network Drivers and Typical Interventions

4.3   The report notes that one of the most significant infrastructure improvements in the current control period (2014-2019) was the completion of the Borders Railway Project.

4.4   The three key travel markets of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen will continue to be very important in terms of forecasting future employment growth and therefore dictating potential enhancement work throughout the Scottish rail network. The Edinburgh to Glasgow Improvement Programme is a key example and will be delivered within the current control period to help reduce end to end journey times and to increase capacity per train set.

4.5   The forecasting for potential future growth in the Edinburgh Travel Market has predicted an annual 4.1% growth rate between 2012 and 2023 and an annual growth rate of 1.6% between 2023 and 2043.

4.6   The document acknowledges that demand for commuting and regional services from East Lothian and the Scottish Borders on the ECML is set to increase in the future. One option identified in the report to help increase capacity on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) is the provision of loops at Grantshouse.

4.7   Demand on the Borders Rail corridor is forecast to exceed available capacity by 2023. The lengthening of peak trains and the reviewing of stopping patterns should be considered as potential options.

4.8   The report identifies that a potential scheme to re-model the route between Portobello Junction and Slateford Junction will offer potential service improvements to Borders Rail.

5   CONSULTATION RESPONSE

5.1   The proposed response to the consultation exercise has been separated into three sections:
   • Borders Rail;
   • Borders Rail Extension; and
   • New Rail Stations

5.2   **Borders Rail**

Scottish Borders Council acknowledges the fact that passenger forecasts are planned to exceed capacity on the Borders Rail Corridor by 2023. The Council would agree that the peak time lengthening of trains is required on the route. However, noting the success of the first phase of Borders Rail, Scottish Borders Council would encourage Network Rail to consider train lengthening for both peak and non-peak services immediately to help cope with the existing demand on the route which has completely outstripped predicted patronage levels and to help encourage continued patronage growth on the route up to and beyond 2023.

Service resilience has been a key concern during the first few months of operation on Borders Rail and Scottish Borders Council would like Network Rail to consider the provision of further dynamic passing loops on the line to help provide enhanced service reliability and functionality between Edinburgh Waverley and Tweedbank.

Scottish Borders Council welcomes the inclusion of a re-modelled route between Portobello Junction and Slateford Junction within the draft document. This proposed improvement work improves capacity on the ECML and supports future growth for local services. This work is vital to help deliver further improvements for Borders Rail and potentially encourage the delivery of more local service provision on the ECML. In the draft strategy document this work is programmed to take place during Control Period 9 (2034-2039). Scottish Borders Council would encourage Network Rail to accelerate this work and bring this proposal forward into an earlier control period.

The further development of the Borders Rail Line is potentially constrained by the current level of car parking at Tweedbank Station and to a lesser extent at Stow Station. At Tweedbank, the car park appears to be full on a regular basis and overflow car parking has been provided by Scottish Borders Council in an adjacent industrial estate. A longer term solution in relation to parking and a continued review of station facilities for customers at all of the stations on the Borders Rail Line will be required to help encourage further patronage for the route.

The existing wifi provision on the Borders Rail Line is currently intermittent and does not fully encourage mobile working. Scottish Borders Council would encourage Network Rail, Transport Scotland and ScotRail to work together to resolve this important issue.

The tourist market is very important to the Scottish Borders and every opportunity to enhance the tourist offering should be exploited such as the continued delivery of the steam train experience, enhanced on-carriage bicycle provision and co-operation on specific event provision. Scottish Borders Council would encourage Network Rail, Transport Scotland and ScotRail to work together with the Council to help provide opportunities for future tourist related activity on the Borders Rail Line.

5.3 **Borders Rail Extension**
Following the success of the Borders Rail Line, Scottish Borders Council is committed to extending the line beyond Tweedbank towards Hawick and Carlisle, providing additional resilience for the ECML and the West Coast Main Line and providing further economic opportunities and social benefits for the south of Scotland.

5.4 **New Rail Stations and Potential New Routes**

Scottish Borders Council has been working in partnership with East Lothian Council, Transport Scotland and Network Rail to develop the case for a local rail service on the ECML, including the provision of two new stations at Reston and East Linton. Scottish Borders Council acknowledges that the two proposed new stations have been mentioned in the draft strategy document and the Council would like to reiterate the view of both Local Authorities that this new local service will be transformational for local communities whilst helping to resolve overcrowding on the North Berwick Line and providing a sustainable low carbon transport option for the people of south east Scotland.

The success of the Borders Rail Line has understandably encouraged local communities throughout the Scottish Borders to consider potential future rail schemes in this area. There is an extensive former rail network in the Scottish Borders and there is an understanding that a lot of these former branch lines would not be suitable for redevelopment in the foreseeable future. However, Scottish Borders Council would encourage Network Rail to explore the redevelopment of former rail lines in the Borders such as that between Edinburgh and Peebles, noting that Midlothian Council has existing proposals to develop the former rail link between Edinburgh and Penicuik.

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 **Financial**

There are direct cost implications to the Council with regard to the provision of a new local rail service between Edinburgh and Berwick-upon-Tweed and potentially in the development of an extension to the current Borders Railway Line. However, a finalised Scotland Route Study Document will outline potential future modifications to the rail network that will be primarily promoted by Network Rail and Scottish Government.

6.2 **Risk and Mitigations**

The finalised Scotland Route Study will have an impact on how rail proposals are subsequently delivered in the Scottish Borders and the South of Scotland.

6.3 **Equalities**

There are no adverse impacts due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from this report.

6.4 **Acting Sustainably**

The key aspect of the report is the promotion of sustainable transport.

6.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no significant carbon emission impacts as a result of this report.

6.6 **Rural Proofing**

The development of the rail network in the Scottish Borders will help to improve accessibility and social inclusion for the area and could help to initiate the development of tourism and economic related opportunities for the whole of the Scottish Borders.

6.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes to the Scheme of Administration or Delegation are required as a result of this report.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR and the Clerk to the Council have not been consulted at this stage of the reporting process.

7.2 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive Place, Corporate Transformation & Services Director, Service Director Neighbourhood Services and Service Director Commercial Services have not been consulted at this stage of the reporting process.

Approved by

Director of Regulatory Services   Signature …………………………….

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Graeme Johnstone	Lead Officer for Access and Transport 01835 825138

Background Papers: None

Previous Minute Reference: APWG – 8th March 2016

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jacqueline Whitelaw can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Jacqueline Whitelaw, Environment and Infrastructure, Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA, Tel 01835 825431, Fax 01835 825071, email e&itranslationrequest@scotborders.gov.uk.