

**REPORT TO:** CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 27 SEPTEMBER 2010

**REPORT ON:** EAST COAST MAIN LINE RAIL FRANCHISE - POSSIBLE LOSS OF SERVICE NORTH OF EDINBURGH (REMOVAL OF DIRECT RAIL SERVICE FROM DUNDEE TO LONDON KINGS CROSS)

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF CITY DEVELOPMENT

**REPORT NO:** 442-2010

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report informs Members of ongoing issues relating to possible changes to the East Coast mainline rail services linking Dundee to London Kings Cross.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee
- a notes the contents of this report;
  - b approves Dundee City Council, officers and members to engage with other local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships similarly affected by these possible changes to direct rail services to and from London.

## **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

## **4 BACKGROUND**

4.1 There are currently three daily direct daytime trains in each direction between Dundee and London Kings Cross. Press reports (and debate in House of Commons) have indicated that the Westminster Government through the Department for Transport (DfT) is reconsidering the East Coast Franchise and alongside it the need for new rolling stock (Inter City Express Programme) which may result in no East Coast Main Line service operating north of Edinburgh, thus Dundee may lose its direct connection to / from London Kings Cross.

[ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/2010-08/> ]  
[ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/iep/fosterreview/> ]

4.2 North of Edinburgh (to Aberdeen, Dundee and Inverness) the route is not electrified and requires through Diesel powered trains from London. There is a possibility that only electric powered trains will be specified, resulting in the loss of through trains to London from north of Edinburgh.

4.3 These issues will be further detailed in an announcement as part of spending review at Westminster in October 2010.

### **Scotland's National Transport Strategy**

4.4 Scotland's National Transport Strategy

[\[http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/04104414/2\]](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/04104414/2)

sets out the strategic policies for Scotland and is the foundation of the TACTRAN Regional Transport Strategy as well as focussing capital investment towards nationally important / vital transport projects. Particularly relevant to protecting direct rail connection to London is Scotland's Transport Needs item 10:

*"Item 10. There are 3 key strategic outcomes that we must focus on to achieve this vision. They are to:*

- ***Improve journey times and connections***, to tackle congestion and the lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on our high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety;
- ***Reduce emissions***, to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on our high level objective for protecting the environment and improving health; and
- ***Improve quality, accessibility and affordability***, to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car."

- 4.5 The loss of direct rail connections may encourage more use of the car and in terms of London the use of aviation, especially once rail connections to Edinburgh Airport are delivered (via Gogar and the new tram links to / from Edinburgh Airport) i.e. passengers may change at Edinburgh onto a plane and not a train.

### **The Strategic Transport Projects Review**

- 4.6 The Strategic Transport Project Review (STPR)

<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/projects/strategic-transport-projects-review>

focuses on identifying those interventions that most effectively contribute towards the Scottish Government's Purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth and complements both the National Planning Framework 2 and the delivery of the three strategic outcomes identified in the National Transport Strategy.

- 4.7 Rail Electrification (Appendix 1 refers) is a key government policy of the Scottish Government and features strongly in the STPR with phase one, Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme underway (which includes electrifying the central belt rail network). Electrification of the rail network through Fife, Dundee, Angus, Aberdeenshire to Aberdeen is phase three (with no date assigned). Prioritisation of the Phase Three programme may protect the continued provision of direct rail services between Dundee and London.
- 4.8 The Campaign for Rail Electrification Aberdeen to Edinburgh (CREATE) movement of the 1980s and 1990s was a collaboration of East Coast of Scotland local authorities (from Aberdeen to Edinburgh) which campaigned for rail electrification between Edinburgh and Aberdeen. It is anticipated that this area of common interest may result in the formation of a lobbying group of interested parties north of

Edinburgh (local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce etc)

- 4.9 Other STPR rail enhancement priorities ie express services linking Aberdeen to Central belt could offer services operating Aberdeen to Glasgow/Edinburgh and only stopping at Dundee. So perhaps this may mitigate the loss of through trains so long as connections were sensible cross platform and well timetabled ie 10 minute connection at Edinburgh to give good end to end journey times to London. However this would still represent a detrimental level of connectivity.

### **Regional Transport Strategy**

- 4.10 The Tay and Central Scotland area (TACTRAN) requires good external connectivity to the south to ensure that the regions prosperity and economy is maintained and improved. The TACTRAN area is a key region as it connects to both Inverness and Aberdeen areas to the Central belt and beyond. The key themes of the Regional Transport Strategy is all about delivering economic prosperity connecting communities combined with sustainability and health. The loss of the direct trains to London Kings Cross would damage the economic competitiveness of the area and make the region more difficult to reach by long distance travel. This would reduce potential opportunities for the business and citizens of the region.
- 4.11 Recent Consultation with regard to the East Coast rail timetable process has included a Tayside response from TACTRAN (Appendix 2 refers).
- 4.12 Previous discussions have also highlighted that the Dundee Waterfront development and in particular the V & A Dundee are likely to increase demand for long distance rail travel to / from Dundee.
- 4.13 Dundee City Council has written to both Stewart Stevenson MSP, the Scottish Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change and Philip Hammond MP, the Secretary for State for Transport to highlight the initial concerns over the possible removal of direct rail connections between Dundee and London Kings Cross [Appendices 3 and 4 refer]. A response from the Scottish Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change has been received [Appendix 5 refers].
- 4.14 Officers from Dundee City Council will make contact with officers from the City of Aberdeen Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Angus Council, Fife Council, Highland Council, Perth & Kinross Council and Stirling Council, NESTRAN, HITRAN, TACTRAN and SESTRAN to discuss the possible ramifications and possible joint initiatives.

## **5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues directly associated with this report. However changes to the direct rail services between Dundee and London may have significant impact if they are implemented.

**6 CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Director of Finance have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

**7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 East Coast Rail Franchise Consultation  
[ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/2010-08/> ]
- 7.2 Intercity Express Programme  
[ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/iep/fosterreview/> ]
- 7.3 Scotland's National Transport Strategy  
[<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/04104414/2>]
- 7.4 Scottish Government Strategic Transport Projects Review  
<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/projects/strategic-transport-projects-review>
- 7.5 TACTRAN Regional Transport Strategy  
<http://www.tactran.gov.uk/documents/TACTRANRTS-FinalNov2008.pdf>

Mike Galloway  
Director of City Development

Neil Gellatly  
Head of Transportation

NHG/EB

15 September 2010

Dundee City Council  
Tayside House  
Dundee

## APPENDIX 1

### STRATEGIC TRANSPORT PROJECTS REVIEW : RAIL ELECTRIFICATION

#### ITEM 6 FURTHER ELECTRIFICATION OF THE STRATEGIC RAIL NETWORK

##### Intervention Description

A.46 This intervention supports the 'NPF2' and 'Scotland's Railways' to work towards an electrified rail network across the strategic routes in Scotland. It also contributes to a number of objectives relating to emissions and rail operations.

A.47 Rail electrification can contribute to emissions reduction by allowing train power to come from more environmentally friendly sources. This has not been assumed in the environmental assessment of the STPR, but none the less, offers potential benefits over the longer period. There are operational benefits compared with diesel powered trains both in terms of reduced journey times and operating costs. It also gives the opportunity for interoperability and more efficient use of rolling stock, particularly in the West of Scotland where running through some stations is restricted to electric rolling stock.

A.48 It is envisaged that electrification would be delivered on a phased basis. In the short term, this would include:

- Phase 1 - Committed improvements as part of the Edinburgh to Glasgow improvements, comprising Edinburgh to Glasgow via Falkirk route, Diversion Routes 1 (Haymarket) and 2 (Falkirk Grahamston), and electrification on the route via Cumbernauld and to Dunblane / Alloa; and
- Phase 2 - Electrification of the remaining routes in the Central Belt (Shotts, Whifflet, Paisley Canal, Glasgow North Suburban, East Kilbride and Kilmarnock).

A.49 In the longer term, extending into the period beyond STPR, this would include:

- Phase 3 - Electrification of routes between Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee including the Fife Circle;
- Phase 4 - Electrification from Dunblane to Aberdeen; and
- Phase 5 — Electrification from Perth to Inverness.

##### Contribution towards the Scottish Government's Purpose

A.50 This intervention supports the Key Strategic Outcome to reduce emissions in pursuit of a Greener Scotland by providing cleaner, more efficient traction for rail services. There are a number of areas where objectives to reduce emissions would be supported by this intervention.

A.51 Currently 23 per cent of the Scottish rail network is electrified and this intervention would see the expansion of this over the greater part of the network. Electrified services would reduce energy consumption by 15 per cent for inter-urban and 20 per cent for stopping services.

A.52 This intervention would also allow greater flexibility of operation for services across the network, giving opportunities for new routes and through services. Electrification would support other rail interventions as part of an overall strategy for 'step-change' performance across parts of the system, particularly in Fife.



### Links to Other Strategies

A.53 The electrification of routes is likely to be linked to other elements of route modernisation, for example, the upgrading of signalling systems. A strategy of electrification has been highlighted in the National Transport Strategy ('Scotland's Railways' / Freight Action Plan), The Scottish Rail Planning Assessment<sup>32</sup>, and the Network Rail Scottish Route Utilisation Strategy<sup>33</sup>.



### **Current Status of Project**

A.54 Network electrification is included in the Scottish Ministers' High Level Output Statement<sup>34</sup> for rail services (Summer 2007) as a 'Tier 3' intervention. Electrification of the Edinburgh to Glasgow route and associated connecting links was included in a Ministerial Statement on 27 September electrification of the route between Glasgow and Edinburgh has been planned to Guide to Railway Investment Programme level 1. No other interventions have been developed at this stage. The intervention to electrify Scotland's rail network has been in the public domain for some time now through Scotland's Railways. It is generally accepted that this intervention would provide a number of positive benefits to the general public in terms of faster journey times and a reduction in emissions.

### **Indicative Costs**

A.55 There are significant costs associated with implementing electrification. As well as the overhead cabling system, modifications to structures such as bridges and tunnels are often required to accommodate the increased clearance required.

A.56 The estimated costs of the proposed phased electrification plan are expected to be in the range £250m to £500m for each of the five phases.

### **Deliverability**

A.57 The technologies for electrification already exist, and there are no major technical barriers to implementation. There would be an impact on the operation of existing rail services during the electrification of these routes. While some of the work could be carried out during normal maintenance possessions and during the night, it is likely that there will be some significant work required which would require longer closures. These could be mitigated through diverting over other routes where possible, but there could still be some disruption for existing rail users.

**APPENDIX 2**

TACTRAN response to East Coast Rail Timetable Change Consultation.

**APPENDIX A**

New East Coast Timetable Consultation  
East Coast Main Line Co Ltd  
East Coast House  
25 Skeldergate  
York  
YO1 6DH

24<sup>th</sup> February 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

**Consultation, New East Coast Timetable**

I refer to the above consultation. The response from *Tactran*, which has been prepared in consultation with and has the agreement of our four partner Councils, Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council and Stirling Council, is as follows:

Tactran welcomes the timetable changes in general, particularly the faster journey times between Edinburgh and Kings Cross. It is noted that the arrival times in Edinburgh from London will provide better connections to Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose and Perth, and consequently shorter overall journey times for those passengers changing at Edinburgh.

There are areas of concern to Tactran regarding the 06.32 journey from Dundee to Kings Cross, the apparent loss of the 21.32 Aberdeen – Edinburgh service and the last departure from Edinburgh to Kings Cross. It is noted that the 0632 Dundee departure will give an earlier arrival time in London by direct train than currently. However, the 25 minute stand at Edinburgh will detract from this advantage. Also by changing this journey from a Cross Country Plymouth service to an East Coast one there is considerable detriment to longer distance passengers as it will arrive at Edinburgh with insufficient time to make a connection into the Cross Country journey that it currently operates (0811 Edinburgh – Plymouth which would leave at 0810). Arrival times at major centres on the East Coast Main Line would also be later than currently – Newcastle 12 minutes later, Darlington by 11 minutes and York by 9 minutes. Tactran requests that this journey be re-examined to establish whether the Dundee departure could be brought forward by 5 – 10 minutes to connect with the 0810 Edinburgh Cross Country service and to link through to London using the 0800 Edinburgh path.

It is unclear from the draft timetable whether the 2132 Aberdeen – Dundee – Edinburgh will continue to operate. This provides a last link from Aberdeen and stations in the Tactran region (Montrose, Arbroath and Dundee) to Edinburgh. If this service is not to continue the last train will operate 30 minutes earlier to the detriment of evening visitors to the Tactran towns.

With regard to the last departure from Edinburgh to Kings Cross, currently this is at 1900 which allows connections from trains departing Dundee at 1726, Perth at 1700 and Stirling at 1736. The earlier time of 1830 will result in a last day time connection from Perth to London at 1559, from Stirling to London at 17.06 and at 1604 from Dundee by direct train. The

timings at Perth and Dundee in particular would disadvantage afternoon business meetings in the two cities.

I trust that the above comments are of assistance. If you require any further information, or clarification of any aspect in this response, please contact Michael Cairns, Strategy Manager on 01738 475774 in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Guthrie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Guthrie  
Director

**APPENDIX 3**

Dundee City Council letter to Mr Stewart Stevenson, MSP the Scottish Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change.

Mr Stewart Stevenson MSP  
Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Climate Change  
The Scottish Government  
Victoria Quay  
EDINBURGH  
EH6 6QQ

If calling please ask for:  
Will Dawson 433375  
Our Ref       WD/FB  
Your Ref  
Date           20 August 2010

Dear Mr Stevenson

**East Coast Main Line Rail Franchise - Possible Loss of Service North of Edinburgh**

Recent press articles and discussions in the House of Commons have raised concerns in the City of Dundee that there is consideration being given to removal of East Coast rail franchise services north of Edinburgh.

Any loss of direct connection would have a significant impact on the economy of the Dundee City region and would increase perceptions of peripherality. There are concerns that the potential loss of rail service likely to coincide with an anticipated period of growth for Dundee in terms of the Waterfront including the V&A Dundee project.

I have written to The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, Secretary of State for Transport stating our concerns over these unwelcome developments (copy attached).

We are currently engaging with local government and Regional Transport Partnership colleagues north of Edinburgh to focus our joint efforts to protect the essential direct rail services to London.

I would ask for your consideration for Ministerial support for the continuation of essential direct rail services connecting Dundee to London Kings Cross.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Will Dawson  
Convener, City Development

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**APPENDIX 4**

Dundee City Council letter to Mr Philip Hammond, MP Secretary for State for Transport.

The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
LONDON  
SWP 4DR

If calling please ask for:  
Will Dawson 433375  
Our Ref       WD/FB  
Your Ref  
Date           19 August 2010

Dear Secretary of State

**East Coast Main Line Rail Franchise - Possible Loss of Service North of Edinburgh**

I write following recent press articles and discussions in the House of Commons which have raised concerns in the City of Dundee that there is consideration being given to removal of East Coast rail franchise services north of Edinburgh.

The City of Dundee is one of Scotland's most vibrant cities and the regional centre for Tayside and North East Fife located on the east coast approximately 45 miles north of Edinburgh. The city of Dundee is a modern employment centre with life sciences, video games, retail, financial services, tourism and academic sectors all now playing a significant role in the regional economy. All of these sectors require and use high quality services to London either by rail or by air from Dundee Airport.

Our collective vision for Dundee features transformational developments along Dundee's Waterfront, featuring the opening of the V&A Dundee, the redevelopment of the railway station concourse, the provision of significant commercial floor space and a substantial expansion of manufacturing activity in support of the development of the North Sea area for wind generation. One of the key requirements needed to support these new developments is good communication particularly with London. In this context the removal of through rail services to London would be extremely unhelpful and may threaten the pace and scope of our redevelopment plans.

In terms of transport strategy and environmental balance any removal of direct rail services to London would be a retrograde step and could lead to an increased perception of peripherality.

I would ask that you acknowledge that the proposals are not in the interests of the Dundee City region and to reassure us that a comprehensive appraisal (economic, transport and environmental) of the proposals will be undertaken ahead of any decision. To allow you the opportunity to hear at first hand how valuable direct rail services are, I would like to invite you to visit Dundee where we could meet with stakeholders and discuss the key issues.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Will Dawson  
Convener, City Development

## APPENDIX 5

Minister for Transport, Infrastructure and Climate Change  
Stewart Stevenson MSP

T: 0845 774 1741  
E: scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk



Councillor Will Dawson  
Dundee City Council  
Dundee City Council  
City Chambers  
DUNDEE  
DD1 3BY

Your ref: WD/FB  
Our ref: 2010/1000538

6 September 2010

Dear Will,

Thank you for your letter of 20 August 2010, outlining your concerns about recent reports on the future of direct cross border rail services to Dundee.

Cross border services are provided under franchises controlled by the Department for Transport (DfT). DfT is also responsible for the procurement of Intercity Express Programme (IEP) trains, intended for use on the East Coast route.

Sir Andrew Foster's recent advice to DfT on the procurement of IEP outlines some alternatives to the current model of providing direct services between London and Aberdeen and Inverness.

DfT's position on the procurement of IEP will be announced at the time of the UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October.

I fully understand the concerns you have raised, and it is the Scottish Government's position that is not satisfactory that DfT go ahead with the Intercity Express Programme while ignoring the realities of delivering cross border services to Aberdeen and Inverness. These services provide vital capacity and connectivity, both to England and within Scotland. As you have noted,

Sir Andrew's proposal that services to Aberdeen or Inverness may be provided by connecting trains would increase overall journey times and raise issues of accessibility for those with mobility impairments or who are travelling with families or luggage. As Mr Tetlaw has noted, these potential impacts would be contrary to Scottish Ministers' aims of encouraging modal shift to rail by offering improved journey times and accessibility.

Ministers have stated that with the reduction of direct services from Glasgow to London King's Cross next year, any proposal to further cut cross border services is unacceptable.

Kind regards,  
Stewart

**STEWART STEVENSON**