

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE – 11 OCTOBER 2006**

#### **DRAFT NETWORK RAIL ROUTE UTILISATION STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND**

##### **Report by the Executive Director of Development and Property Services**

## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

**1.1** The purpose of the report is to:

- (a) Advise Members that Network Rail have published their draft Scotland Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) for consultation.
- (b) Request Members to authorise the Executive Director, after consultation with the Chair, to respond on behalf of the Council.
- (c) Invite Members to submit any comments they wish to be included in the response.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

**2.1** The draft Scotland Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) is the third in a series covering the Great Britain rail network, developed by Network Rail and its partners in the rail industry, including the Scottish Executive and SPT.

**2.2** The scope of the Scotland RUS includes all railway lines in Scotland except the West Coast Main Line south of Carstairs and the East Coast Main Line east and south of Edinburgh. The strategy primarily covers the period up to 2016, which is beyond the end of the next Network Regulatory Control period in 2014. It coincides with the duration of the First ScotRail franchise period, which will run until 2011, with the opportunity to extend to 2014.

## **3. THE STRATEGY**

**3.1** The strategy is based on an analysis of the gaps between the Scottish railway system's current capacity and the demand over the next few years. Three principal issues were identified:

- Overcrowding on some suburban routes into Glasgow and Edinburgh.
- Heavy utilisation of track capacity on many key sections of the Scotland RUS area.
- Freight demand is primarily focused around the flows to/from Glasgow and Ayrshire.

**3.2** In order to address these gaps and issues, a number of options are proposed including the construction of the Glasgow and Edinburgh Airports rail links, various additional loops, platform extensions, signalling, car parking capacity and revision to timetables. Glasgow Cross Rail or additional local stations which may be investigated in the future have not been included in this strategy which is primarily aimed at maximising the use of the existing network.

#### **4. ISSUES AFFECTING EAST AYRSHIRE**

**4.1** Clearly any improvements in the utilisation of Scotland's rail network will have implications for East Ayrshire.

In south west Scotland, the proposed options include:

(1) Glasgow/ Paisley/ Ayrshire:

- Timetable recast to provide skip-stopping service pattern to intermediate stations. (before 2009)
- Longer trains with platform extensions. (2009-2014)
- Construct Glasgow Airport Rail link with "capacity improvement" on the existing Paisley to Glasgow corridor. (2010)

(2) Glasgow and South Western Lines:

- Timetable recast south of Kilmarnock. (Creating the potential for additional slots for freight services on the route). (Before 2009)
- Revised Stranraer Service. (Before 2009)
- Complete or partial reinstatement of the double track on the single line section between Annan and Gretna and the provision of additional signal capacity between Kilmarnock and Annan to provide a planning headway of 15 minutes. (Before 2009)
- Stevenson: Extend loop. (Before 2009)
- Glasgow/Kilmarnock: Construction of an additional or extended loop at Lugton and longer platforms at the intermediate stations to enable longer trains and a timetable recast to incorporate additional services. (2009-2014)
- Ayr/ Kilmarnock/ Hunterson: Improve maintenance access to address the conflict of the growth in the coal traffic and line maintenance possessions. (Post 2014)

- 4.2 Whilst the proposals are to be broadly welcomed, the Executive Director's response will include a request for immediate action on the proposed Lugton Loop.
- 4.3 It is recognised that the existing capacity restrictions on the Glasgow – Dumfries – Carlisle line through East Ayrshire are significant impediments to growth and external connectivity.  
Kilmarnock is the only major town within the Strathclyde Partnership for Transport area that is not currently served by a 30 minute service or better to Glasgow.
- 4.4 In the current financial year SPT made additional funding available to continue the studies needed for the provision of the dynamic loop required to facilitate a half-hourly service between Kilmarnock and Glasgow. Network Rail are currently carrying a detailed study of the technical issues and costs are due to report on this within the next few months.
- 4.5 During consultations on the Scottish Executive's Rail Priorities, East Ayrshire Council asked the Executive to accelerate the development work on this project.
- 4.6 The Leader of the Council, during recent discussions with Councillor Alastair Watson – Chair of SPT, has also stressed the need for immediate implementation of this loop and Local MSP's have added their weight behind the project by lobbying the Transport Minister.

## **5. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS.**

- 5.1 Copies of the draft consultation document have been placed at the Member's Information Point. The document can also be viewed on the Network Rail website [www.networkrail.co.uk](http://www.networkrail.co.uk)
- 5.2 Responses are requested by 16 November 2006, and the final Strategy is planned to be published in spring 2007

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None for East Ayrshire

## **8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**8.1** The enhancements proposed, particularly the loops at Lugton / Barrhead and Annan/Gretna, and increased freight capacity are identified in the Council's Local Transport Strategy as high priorities for East Ayrshire.

## **9. COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

**9.1** The proposals will make a significant contribution to the Community Plan aims for access, economic regeneration, improving opportunities and social inclusion.

**9.2** By facilitating further modal shift from road to rail the proposals will also help to improve health and the environment.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**10.1** The Committee is requested to:

- (i) Note that the draft Scotland RUS is now out for consultation, with responses due back on 16 November 2006.
- (ii) Authorise the Executive Director, after consultation with the Chair to respond on behalf of the Council.
- (iii) Invite Members to submit any comments they wish to be included in the response.

**James Lavery**  
**Executive Director of Development and Property Services**  
SG/YK - FV  
21 September 2006

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

For further information on this report, please contact Sandy Gillatt, Chief Engineer, Traffic & Design (Tel 01563 576310)

Implementation Officer: Sandy Gillatt, Chief Engineer, Traffic & Design (Tel 01563 576310)