

4a Kintore Station

- Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on progress regarding the project to develop a new railway station to the north of Kintore.

- Background

The Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Projects Review contained a commitment to enhance the railway line between Aberdeen and Inverness. The project will enable an hourly frequency between the two cities, with a journey time close to two hours.

The first phase will be complete by end-March 2019. The scheme that Transport Scotland have instructed Network Rail to construct includes the re-doubling of most of the track between Aberdeen and Inverurie; relocation of Forres Station and platform extensions at Inch and Elgin. The specification also includes the necessary rail infrastructure to allow for new stations at Kintore and Dalcross, near Inverness Airport. These enhancements are intended to provide greater capacity at either end of the line to facilitate journeys into Inverness and Aberdeen without compromising the capabilities of the end-to-end journeys.

Nestrans' Regional Transport Strategy contains a proposal to develop a new station at Kintore and for improved rail services to Inverness. These are detailed in the Rail Action Plan which supports the RTS.

The expectation from Transport Scotland and the rail industry is that funding for the rail station at Kintore (including platforms, passenger facilities, car park and access road, land and associated development costs) will be sourced partially from the Scottish Stations Fund, as well as from Nestrans / Aberdeenshire Council / Strategic Transport Fund etc.

- Progress on Kintore Station

Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council officials continue to work alongside Network Rail and others, to develop a new station at Kintore, and to put in place the necessary funding, consents, land acquisition and designs.

A number of elements are currently being progressed in parallel to deliver this station in time for the completion of the re-doubling of the rail line in Spring 2019 which are detailed below.

1. Car Park and Access Road Outline Design Work

Aberdeenshire Council have commissioned AECOM to prepare an outline design, costings, desktop environmental and geotechnical review, and risk register. This work has been progressed to draft report stage; prior to finalisation it is subject to stakeholder consultation and review.

2. Rail Platforms and Associated Infrastructure Outline Design Work

Network Rail have been commissioned to prepare designs and costings, for the rail platforms, and associated infrastructure. This work is substantially complete, and is being progressed in tandem with the wider Aberdeen to Inverness Project designs.

3. Business Case

A business case is also being prepared, which will form the main basis of the Scottish Stations Fund submission. This sets out the scheme background, rationale for investment, and option appraisal supporting a new station at Kintore. Specific demand forecasting work has been undertaken, which demonstrates a convincing case for investment, corroborating Network Rail's own forecasts for growth on the route. When final costings have been confirmed for the capital investment, a cost benefit analysis will be undertaken to complete the work.

4. Scottish Stations Fund Bid Application

A formal submission to the Scottish Stations Funding process is being programmed for July 2016. In order to complete the submission, it will be necessary for Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council to confirm their capital commitment to the project, with the remainder being provided by the Scottish Stations Fund.

5. Land Acquisition

Aberdeenshire Council are progressing with land acquisition, which is intended to be completed via compulsory purchase order. In order to progress with this procedure, it is necessary that there is firm commitment to the scheme (taken to being an identified line with the Council's capital plan), and it can be demonstrated that no other reasonable alternative is available. As soon as funding is confirmed, the CPO process can be formally commenced.

6. Planning Consent

It will be necessary to obtain planning consent for the car park and access road. Pre-application discussions have been undertaken with Aberdeenshire Council (as planning authority), and a timescale for submitting the planning application is being developed. The station site is included within the proposed Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan.

It is currently intended that the finalised bid documentation will be reported to Nestrans Board during June 2016, as well as Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee.

• Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Note the progress with the Kintore Station project and instruct officers to continue liaison with Network Rail, Transport Scotland and others to ensure continued progress within the Scottish Stations Fund submission, and associated elements.

PF/11 April 2016