

## **5a Rail Matters**

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### **o Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update Board members on rail matters, particularly to note the announcement on the new operator of the ScotRail and East Coast franchises and to note progress on a number of rail matters.

### **o Background**

The Regional Transport Strategy identifies the need for more detailed sub-strategies, one of which is for rail. A Rail Action Plan was agreed by the Nestrans Board in 2009 and is available on the Nestrans' website at:

([http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db\\_docs/docs/RAP%20second%20draft%20sept%202010.pdf](http://www.nestrans.org.uk/db_docs/docs/RAP%20second%20draft%20sept%202010.pdf))

### **o East Coast Franchise**

As reported previously, the East Coast franchise providing services between Aberdeen and London Kings Cross has been awarded to a consortium of Stagecoach and Virgin and will operate as InterCity East Coast Trains. In December, the company announced the appointment of David Home, as Managing Director of Virgin Trains East Coast when the franchise starts in March 2015.

The new Virgin Trains East Coast franchise will start in March 2015 and is planned to run until 31 March 2023, with the option for a one-year extension at the Department for Transport's discretion. Trains will operate under the 'Virgin Trains East Coast' brand and the franchise will be managed by Inter City Railways, a venture between Stagecoach and Virgin. Plans are now well underway to ensure a smooth transition to the new franchise, and it has recently been confirmed that the Head Office will remain in York.

Over £140 million will be invested in the new franchise delivering major improvements for customers. Stagecoach and Virgin have announced plans to transform the on-train experience and deliver a more personalised service, with at-seat food ordering from the buffet car and hot food available to passengers in standard class. A new Nectar loyalty scheme will be launched and it will be easier to buy tickets and make seat reservations. Passengers will also benefit from new trains, an improved timetable with faster journeys and better connections, more services to new destinations, better value fares, new technology and a range of station and accessibility enhancements.

### **o Sleeper Franchise**

The new Sleeper franchise has been awarded to Serco, who will begin providing overnight Sleeper services from April 2015 for a period of 15 years. More than £100m will be invested in building 72 state of the art carriages, which will make up four new trains, at a cost of £100m by the summer of 2018, part-funded by a £60m grant from the Scottish government.

## o **ScotRail franchise**

As members may be aware, Transport Scotland has announced that the ScotRail franchise has been awarded to Abellio, a subsidiary of Dutch Railways company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. As indicated previously, Nestrans has had early discussions with the Abellio team.

The franchise length is for a minimum of seven years from April 2015, with an option to extend to ten years following a review during Year 5.

Abellio will take over all of the services currently operated by First ScotRail on 1 April 2015, except for the Caledonian Sleeper services, which will transfer to a separate franchise operated by Serco.

## o **Nestrans Seminar with Abellio**

Nestrans has been able to secure a seminar with the new ScotRail operator in Aberdeen on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February. This lunchtime event will involve a presentation from Mike Kean of Abellio ScotRail, who will provide an outline of the company's plans for the new franchise with a particular focus on prospects for the north east. There will be a Question & Answer session and an opportunity for networking.

Invitations have gone to all local MPs and MSPs, Nestrans Board members, senior local authority representatives and stakeholders including Chamber of Commerce, SCDI, FSB, Aberdeen Harbour Board, Aberdeen International Airport, Disability Advisory Group, VisitScotland and Sustrans.

## o **Rail Patronage 2013/14**

The Office of the Rail Regulator has issued rail statistics for the year 2013/ 2014, which again demonstrate the significant levels of rail growth at stations in the north east.

Passenger numbers at the eight stations in the Nestrans area are up by an average of 7.83% on the previous year, at 5.8 million entries and exits through the stations. This compares to an all Scotland increase of 1.10% and a reduction in passenger numbers in the Strathclyde area of -0.64%. Passenger numbers in 2013/14 are now over double that of 2004/05 with an increase of 105%, more than double the all-Scotland increase of 49%.

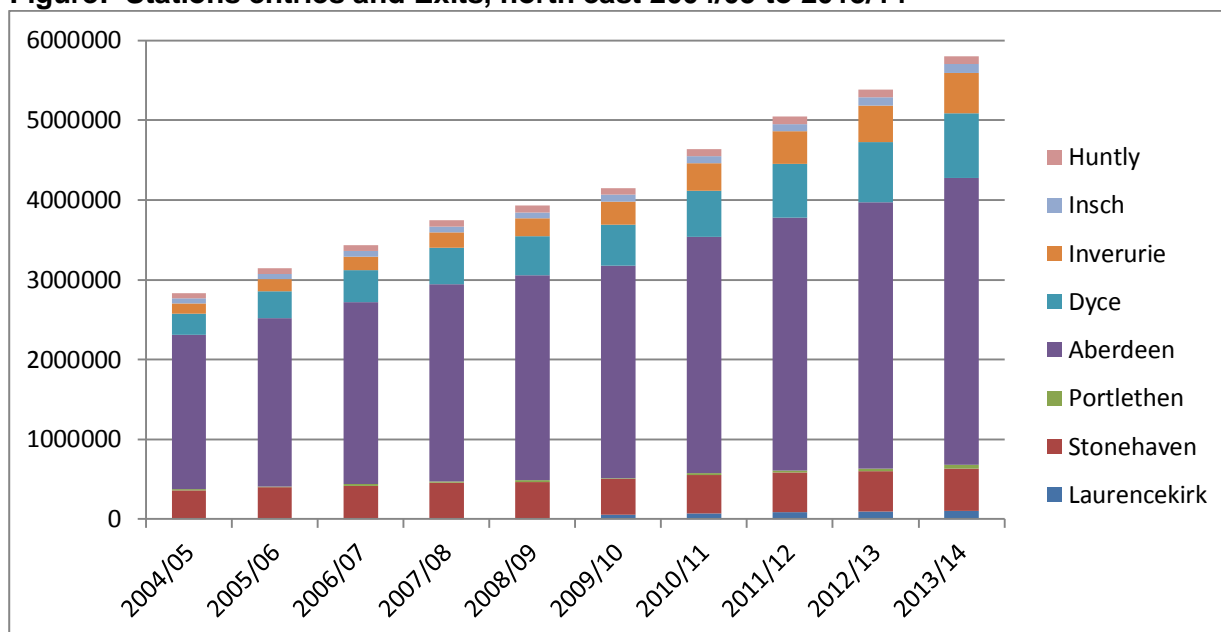
Comparing to 2012/13 data, every station in the north east saw an increase in numbers with Portlethen showing the largest year-on-year rise at 72% to 48,174. (This is an increase of 350% on 2004/05). Laurencekirk saw a total of 102,770 passengers – almost three times the predicted levels contained in the original business case of 36,000.

Dyce has risen to 810,678 (an increase of 200% since 2004/05) and Inverurie's impressive showing continues to grow to 501,646 – an astonishing 290% increase from 2004/ 2005. Overall the north east share of the Scottish total has increased from 2.44% of passengers to 3.35%.

Further evidence that the small timetable changes that have been made, providing services at times passengers want, is having a very significant impact.

A table detailing the data is attached as Appendix A to this report and a graph of passenger usage by station is included below.

**Figure: Stations entries and Exits, north east 2004/05 to 2013/14**



Source: Office of Rail Regulator

### o **Aberdeen-Inverness enhancement project**

Members will be aware of Transport Scotland proposals for a £170 million first phase upgrade of the Aberdeen-Inverness line.

Officers of both Nestrans and Aberdeenshire Council have met with Network Rail, who are undertaking the work on behalf of Transport Scotland and continue to discuss progress on this proposal. The upgrade will enable the new station at Kintore, to which the local bodies will develop the proposal including purchase of the necessary land and construction of the access, car parking, etc. Officers will prepare a bid to the Scottish Stations Fund for a contribution towards the scheme.

A further phase to be implemented in the period 2019-2024 will enable end-to-end journey times of less than two hours and a regular hourly through service in each direction.

### o **East Coast Main Line Authorities**

As previously reported, Nestrans are partners in the East Coast Main Line consortium, a grouping of local authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships working in partnership to promote the case for investment in the line to enable economic growth.

The Chair of Tactran represented Scottish interests at the recent meeting of the consortium in York. Options for funding future activities are ongoing, but are expected to be within the levels previously agreed by the Nestrans Board.

### o **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Board:

- a) Note the contents of this report.

APPENDIX A

		Rail station passenger numbers (entries + exits)									
		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
<b>Laurencekirk</b>							56,496	73,594	86,142	92,470	102,770
	Year on year increase (%)								17.05	7.35	11.14
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)										
<b>Stonehaven</b>		363,851	397,351	416,175	452,596	466,966	444,822	482,722	502,816	510,412	528,307
	Year on year increase (%)		9.21	4.74	8.75	3.18	-4.74	8.52	4.16	1.51	3.51
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			14.38	24.39	28.34	22.25	32.67	38.19	40.28	45.20
<b>Portlethen</b>		10,772	14,887	21,073	22,055	19,906	15,186	18,382	19,078	28,000	48,174
	Year on year increase (%)		38.20	41.55	4.66	-9.74	-23.71	21.05	3.79	46.77	72.05
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			95.63	104.74	84.79	40.98	70.65	77.11	159.93	347.22
<b>Aberdeen</b>		1,931,923	2,107,855	2,278,872	2,470,281	2,568,810	2,657,014	2,964,302	3,170,226	3,338,072	3,599,431
	Year on year increase (%)		9.11	8.11	8.40	3.99	3.43	11.57	6.95	5.29	7.83
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			17.96	27.87	32.97	37.53	53.44	64.10	72.78	86.31
<b>Dyce</b>		269,263	334,731	401,021	453,356	487,972	515,524	579,660	677,876	759,898	810,678
	Year on year increase (%)		24.31	19.80	13.05	7.64	5.65	12.44	16.94	12.10	6.68
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			48.93	68.37	81.23	91.46	115.28	151.75	182.21	201.07
<b>Inverurie</b>		127,779	154,103	175,934	195,139	223,566	292,408	345,790	403,948	451,854	501,646
	Year on year increase (%)		20.60	14.17	10.92	14.57	30.79	18.26	16.82	11.86	11.02
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			37.69	52.72	74.96	128.84	170.62	216.13	253.62	292.59
<b>Insch</b>		62,261	66,432	65,823	72,644	79,466	82,706	86,854	93,718	107,122	113,922
	Year on year increase (%)		6.70	-0.92	10.36	9.39	4.08	5.02	7.90	14.30	6.35
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			5.72	16.68	27.63	32.84	39.50	50.52	72.05	82.97
<b>Huntly</b>		69,533	70,430	75,708	84,223	87,894	84,300	90,010	93,792	94,026	98,276
	Year on year increase (%)		1.29	7.49	11.25	4.36	-4.09	6.77	4.20	0.25	4.52
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			8.88	21.13	26.41	21.24	29.45	34.89	35.23	41.34
<b>Total North East</b>		2,835,382	3,145,789	3,434,606	3,750,294	3,934,580	4,148,456	4,641,314	5,047,596	5,381,854	5,803,204
	Year on year increase (%)		10.95	9.18	9.19	4.91	5.44	11.88	8.75	6.62	7.83
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			21.13	32.27	38.77	46.31	63.69	78.02	89.81	104.67
<b>Total Scotland</b>		116,288,353	126,305,821	133,800,313	139,630,401	154,217,916	157,927,913	164,340,651	166,645,886	171,475,598	173,355,591
	Year on year increase (%)		8.61	5.93	4.36	10.45	2.41	4.06	1.40	2.90	1.10
	Increase since 2004/05 (%)			15.06	20.07	32.62	35.81	41.32	43.30	47.46	49.07
	North East as a percentage of Scotland total (%)	2.44	2.49	2.57	2.69	2.55	2.63	2.82	3.03	3.14	3.35
	Strathclyde area 12/13	115,574,690									
	Strathclyde area 13/14	114,844,677									