

## First ScotRail response to SBP Consultation

From: Gerard O'Hanlon [mailto:gerard.ohanlon@firstgroup.com]

Sent: 14 December 2007 16:20

To: McMahon, Paul

Cc: Jerry Farquharson

Subject: Consultation on Network Rail's strategic business plan - response from First ScotRail

Mr McMahon

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Network Rail's strategic business plan. The following comments are on behalf of First ScotRail. We have limited our comments to issues that specifically relate to Scotland, as First's rail division has commented on national and general issues.

"[ Comments on....]The plans for enhancing capacity to deliver the requirements of the HLOS and the demand forecasts underpinning these"

We have been fully consulted by Network Rail and worked closely with Network Rail in the process of developing the Strategic Business Plan. We believe it is overall a realistic and efficient plan, based on our understanding of the funding available. The prioritisation of actions seems generally appropriate to us although we have made specific comments to Network Rail on details of the plan, which we trust Network Rail are addressing. We would be happy to discuss these more detailed comments with yourselves, if that would be of assistance. The demand forecasts used were reasonably consistent with our own forecasts.

The plan includes some major enhancement projects (such as Airdrie Bathgate and Borders re-opening). It also separately includes some smaller scale enhancements which are important if these major projects are to succeed.

Examples include Hyndland East and Finnieston turnback (for Airdrie Bathgate) and Portobello Junction (for Borders). The plan should recognise these linkages and interdependencies, particularly where projects are subject to different funding and approvals processes.

"[ Comments on....] the performance improvements proposed by Network Rail in response to the requirements of the HLOSs, including the balance between what Network Rail and train operators will achieve;"

The Strategic Business Plan specifies a performance target for Scotland (actually the FSR franchise) of 92% PPM by 2013/14. We were fully consulted in the development of this target, and agree that there is a reasonable balance between what Network Rail and the operators are required to achieve. Based on current performance of the current network, this is a conservative target and performance rather better than 92% should be achievable by 2013/14. However the assumptions behind this target need to be clarified, as there are a number of major projects in development that potentially have a material impact on performance:

Airdrie Bathgate - the capacity for this enhancement scheme has been reduced by the cancellation of the Edinburgh Airport Rail Link and work is still ongoing to develop a feasible timetable

Glasgow Airport Rail Link - development work is ongoing, there are infrastructure constraints in the Paisley area and a solution is sought which can accommodate the new service without a material adverse impact on existing services

There are major proposals to enhance and electrify the Edinburgh - Glasgow route. These proposals are welcome, but construction work could be at its peak in 2013/14, which is a risk to achievement of PPM targets in 2013/14.

We have seen Network Rail's general action plans to improve performance, but have not seen details of how these will be applied specifically in Scotland, and the levels of delay minutes that should be saved. However we have confidence in the Scotland Route and accept that these plans will be developed in due course.

The occurrence (or not) of severe weather events can have a material impact on annual PPM for Scotland; such events are random in nature and may or may not occur in any one year. We believe that the assumptions regarding weather related disruption should be made more explicit, so we can be confident that the 92% PPM target is intended to be achievable given the occurrence of reasonably probable extreme weather events.

I hope these comments are helpful, please do not hesitate to contact me for further clarification.

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