



Fergus D Cochrane
Clerk
Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Date:
31 July 2009

PE1115

Thank you for your recent letter to Susan Malcolm in relation to PE1115 which is in support of the re-opening of Blackford railway station. I am replying as Transport Scotland has delegated responsibility for rail in Scotland.

Your letter asks whether the Tay Estuary Rail Study (TERS) has been assessed through STAG appraisal methodology and whether the appraisal impacts on the issues raised in PE1115.

TACTRAN, the Regional Transport Partnership for the Tayside region, submitted its TERS report to Transport Scotland last month. The study considered possible enhancement options to provide an hourly stopping rail service on the Arbroath to Glasgow rail corridor with the potential for new stations at locations such as Dundee west, Blackford, Greenloaning and Bannockburn. The case for a station at Blackford was examined alongside the case for enhancements to the existing Gleneagles station. The study concludes that calling trains at an enhanced Gleneagles station is preferable to a new station at Blackford.

Transport Scotland will give careful consideration to the new service proposals outlined in TERS. In particular, we will examine how the priorities of TACTRAN align with the Scottish Government's national priorities as outlined in the Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR). We will be happy to work with TACTRAN to help our understanding of the assumptions they made in the study.

The STPR is an evidence-based, robust analysis of Scotland's transport system which considers the predicted changes in land use, population, economic performance and emissions to address Government objectives of improving journey times and reliability, journey quality and reducing carbon emissions. It recommends 29 transport interventions that will deliver an efficient integrated transport network.

This Government is committed to ensuring that investment in transport is focused on making better connections across Scotland as well as contributing towards the Government's Purpose of sustainable economic growth for all of Scotland. The STPR provides Ministers with the basis to make informed decisions about future transport spending beyond the current programme and serves as a forecast for transport development in Scotland for the next 20 years.

Other rail transport interventions which contribute to the Government's objectives will be considered at the time of future franchise specifications and High Level Output Specifications.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Middleton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

DAVID MIDDLETON