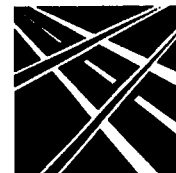


Strategy and Investment

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CÒMHDHAIL
ALBA

TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND

Your ref:

Our ref:

Date:

18 May 2010

Alison Watson
Assistant Clerk
Public Petitions Committee
TG.01
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Ms Watson,

Consideration of Petition PE1115

Thank you for your letter of 22 April in relation to Petition PE1115, which supports the reopening of Blackford railway station.

Your letter asks Transport Scotland to take account of the findings from the Business Case and Market Demand for Station Re-opening Final Report and Non-Technical Summary recently published by AECOM, on behalf of COBRA when considering the findings of the Tay Estuary Rail Study (TERS).

Transport Scotland has fully considered both the AECOM report and the TERS study. We have concluded that the TERS proposals illustrate a pattern of service improvements that could bring a degree of benefit to the rail network. We are concerned however that the proposals do not fully integrate with the current and committed operation of the network. Transport Scotland will continue to work with Tactran to examine which improvements can be delivered through the next ScotRail franchise, without adversely impacting on strategic priorities, such as delivering improvements to the Highland Main Line.

There are significant costs associated with rail projects and delivery will therefore be based on our investment hierarchy of maintaining and safely operating the network, making best use of our existing network, and targeted infrastructure improvements subject to funds becoming available. As such, making best use of current services and stations to achieve optimum utilisation of the existing network should be considered before the opening of new stations or former rail links.

I hope this is helpful.

FRANCES DUFFY
Director of Strategy and Investment