



Claremont House, 130 East Claremont Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4LB, Tel: 0131 524 5150

Chairman: Cllr Russell Imrie Partnership Director: Alex Macaulay

19 February 2013

Our Reference: SES-Rail

Ms Valentina Licata
Office of Rail Regulator
1 Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4AN

Dear Ms Licata,

ORR; SEStran comments on Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan (SBP) for Control Period 5 (CP5)

SEStran welcomes this opportunity to comment on this document.

SEStran (South East Scotland Transport Partnership) is the statutory transport partnership covering the eight local authorities in and around Edinburgh. The area has a population of more than 1.5 million people which is around 30% of the Scottish population but the Region's relative importance to the Scottish economy extends well beyond this figure.

The growing importance of rail to the SEStran economy is clearly demonstrated by the NR estimate that rail usage in the SEStran area is anticipated to double by 2024/25 (based on 2008/09 figures) which is more than twice the growth estimated for the rest of the Scottish network.

We would suggest that the SBP for Scotland aptly reflects the Scottish Government's HLOS statement although we must express disappointment that the Government decided to scale down the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Project (EGIP) from what was originally proposed. We therefore welcome the inclusion of electrification of the lines to Dunblane and Alloa within CP5 (originally part of the 1st phase of EGIP). This would not only rationalise the train operations into both Edinburgh and Glasgow but should also enable the construction of a 100% private developer funded station at Winchburgh. Equally, the electrification of the Shotts line between Midcalder and Holytown junctions will improve the local services into Edinburgh and Glasgow.

We note that the completion of Borders Railway is part of CP5 which will considerably enhance the connectivity within the SEStran area. The operation of Borders Railway would be further enhanced with the improvement (doubling) of Portobello junction. It is not clear if this latter scheme forms part of EGIP (due to the location of a new electric rolling stock depot at Millerhill) but we would strongly argue for this improvement.

We welcome the additional projects “not specified in HLOS but will deliver required outputs in CP5”. The electrification of the Edinburgh South Suburban Line would link the East Coast Main Line (ECML) with the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and the electrified network in the Central Belt without the need for electrically hauled trains to operate through the increasingly congested Edinburgh Waverley Station. Combined with the gauge upgrading of the ECML as well as the construction of the ‘electric spine’ in England (electrify the linkages between the south coast, WCML, Midland Main Line and ECML), this will create a step change in respect of rail freight opportunities between Scotland and England. This will be further enhanced with relevant improvements (passing loops etc) on the WCML north of Preston.

The upgrading of the Carstairs junction is long overdue. A speed restriction of 15 mph for important intercity routes between Edinburgh and Manchester / Birmingham is unacceptable although we are concerned and disappointed that the improvement may only raise the speed to 45 mph. Considering that in the longer term, High Speed Rail services between Edinburgh and the south will utilise this junction, a higher speed specification should be prescribed for this junction improvement project.

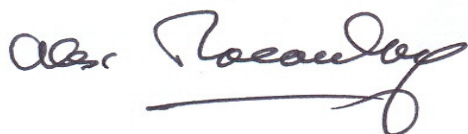
In addition to the ‘electric spine’ and WCML freight improvement schemes mentioned above, there are also other schemes highlighted in the England & Wales SBP that will positively impact on Scotland and we welcome the improvements to support the operation of the new Intercity trains to be introduced on the East Coast.

Finally, we would urge that the schemes outlines in the SBP to resolve ‘Outstanding capacity gaps identified in the Scotland RUS Generation 2’ are included in the finalised Network Rail Business Plan

I trust that this response will be of assistance.

Should you wish to discuss the issues further, please contact myself alex.macaulay@sestran.gov.uk tel 0131 524 5152, or Trond Haugen trond.haugen@sestran.gov.uk tel 0131 524 5155.

Yours sincerely



Alex Macaulay
Partnership Director

CC. Russell Imrie, Chairman of SEStran