



Newburgh Train Station Group  
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## Comments

02/07/15 17:27

### Proposed Action Programme 2015 (24/04/15 to 03/07/15)

Comment by	Newburgh Train Station Group ( Nigel Mullan)
Comment ID	ACTION2015_17
Response Date	02/07/15 17:26
Consultation Point	Proposed Action Programme May 2015 ( <a href="#">View</a> )
Status	Submitted
Submission Type	Web
Version	0.1

#### Files

#### 1: All comments on the Proposed Action Programme (2015)

Please make all of your comments on all parts of the Action Programme you wish to comment on in this space below.

To help us clearly understand your representation please do the following:

1. Add at title and reference using the page number(s) and the name of the Action you are commenting on.
2. Then tell us whether you are seeking a change or supporting something as written.
3. Then tell us what part you support/seek a change to and your reasons

#### Example

Title: Page X, Action Y ?Name of Action?:

'Support as written' or 'Seek a change(s)'

Where it says ' XYZ etc etc '

'This is because...'

**Commenting on more than one part** If you are commenting on more than one part of the Proposed Action Programme (2015) please repeat this approach using the space below.

Please **DO NOT** write 'see attached' as this makes it difficult for us to understand your response.

#### What is it that you wish to say and why do you think this?

Page 32.

Project/Proposal Action 15.

Undertake a transport appraisal for the Newburgh area.

Medium Priority.

Timing 1st 12 years.

**CHANGE THIS TO HIGH PRIORITY.**

**ADD** under other delivery bodies, **NEWBURGH TRAIN STATION GROUP (as a fully constituted community group).**

**CHANGE** Funding not identified to

**POSSIBLE FUNDING IDENTIFIED AS THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S SCOTTISH STATION'S FUND (for community station initiatives).**

### **Responding Comment By Newburgh Train Station Group To Justify The Changes And Addition Proposed.**

Since the 2008/2009 Scottish Government's Strategic Transport Review there has been a change of government and a developing context that requires attention when considering the Rail Halt for Newburgh. There has also been a reawakening of considerable support for a reopened rail halt in Newburgh, a renewed interest that has translated into an active engagement, which is part of a wider effort by the community in Newburgh to explore, deepen and create initiatives that can assure it of meaningful developments, shared beneficially and equally by its population, to secure a better future.

Work carried out by the Newburgh Community Trust through Sustainable Newburgh identified both an appetite and a need in the local community for a reopened station halt, reflective of something widely long felt in Newburgh. Both an extensive analysis and report by Sustainable Newburgh, published in 2011 and another Newburgh Community Trust commissioned study from the Deltix rail consultancy also in 2011, show clear advantages, benefits and support for the Newburgh station halt and robustly indicates its feasibility (see [http://newburghtrainstation.org.uk/?page\\_id=34](http://newburghtrainstation.org.uk/?page_id=34) for direct links to these reports ).

Moreover, in 2011, on the back of these Newburgh Community Trust initiatives, as well as genuinely widespread popular support in Newburgh town, the local community created a group to campaign for the station closed down in 1955 to be reopened in terms of provision for a basic rail halt in Newburgh. The Newburgh Train Station Group has consistently worked through politically elected representatives on a cross-part basis at local authority and Scottish Parliamentary levels, as well as all the relevant transport agencies (see <http://newburghtrainstation.org.uk/> ). It also made a commentary submission in 2011 to the last cycle of the Tay Plan.

The last Tay Plan approved by Scottish Ministers and published in 2012 included a greater priority for the consideration of a station halt at Newburgh through the provision of a full transport appraisal for the area.

In 2012 the new Scottish Government announced the Scottish Station's Fund, an initiative to provide guidance and support for local communities with an interest in improving their connections to the rail network.

The Scottish Government and Transport Scotland are now aware of the efforts to reopen the station at Newburgh by the community and the support given to this, which has recently translated into SESTRAN and Fife Council commissioning a small scale study (along with Perth and Kinross Council and TACTRAN) to look into the various transport issues and solutions for the area. This could well see a full transport appraisal (STAG) following on from this in the near future.

At a meeting of the Scottish Parliament on the 25th September 2014, Nicola Sturgeon MSP was asked in question time by Roderick Campbell MSP whether the Government retains an interest in the ongoing matter of a new rail halt for Newburgh and whether it would consider a full STAG study should the current small scale study be positive. The reply was that the Government was willing to consider rail-based interventions that receive a positive appraisal under the Scottish transport appraisal guidance and if the current small scale study gives reason to the local authorities and regional transport partnerships to decide that new stations fit with their transport strategies, they will of course consider undertaking a STAG appraisal, which will explore all possible transport solutions (see <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=9529&i=86351&c=1735487> )

Demand for a new station has already been proven in Newburgh and in its immediate catchment area and does not exclusively need the possibility of new housing to bolster this. This has been shown through the survey conducted during 2010 by Sustainable Newburgh on a 23% return of posted survey sheets and the subsequent, statistically more impressive, door step to door step survey conducted since 2012 by the Newburgh Train Station Group, that has so far directly surveyed over 80% of households in Newburgh town and its immediate rural hinterland, and unequivocally shows 90% of households would use a train service running from Newburgh as well as giving a quantitative picture as to how households would use the service and how frequently (see Newburgh Train Station Group Tay Plan Commentary Appendices attached to this submitted commentary). For example, there is a substantial indication that Newburgh folk would use the train service for regular commuting to work, places of education and leisure and, moreover, leave their cars behind.

New housing planned for Newburgh would only serve to increase this already identified present demand but that should not be the sole premise on which to base the proposal's viability. Moreover, canvassing of the locally, closely adjacent community of Abernethy through its community council and bi-monthly newspaper also indicates considerable interest and support, a particularly significant dimension that ought to be factored in and especially in light of the current partnership between Fife and Perth and Kinross Councils who have commissioned, along with the two regional transport partnerships, the aforementioned study by a transport consultancy to review this area's transport options. Abernethy, two miles from Newburgh represents an approximately equivalent population size. The combined population of the two closely neighbouring settlements should therefore represent a formidable factor in this rail-passenger-transport equation.

Many tourists and international visitors to Newburgh regularly comment with surprise on the lack of a station, a litmus test of opinion from well outwith the area. The gateway into Fife from the north-west provided by Newburgh as the northerly start of the the Fife coastal path is considerably diminished by this absence. The potential for a better destination and accompanying opportunities for tourism growth, including access to holiday homes, and the many buildings and sites of historic interest, are clearly factors to be considered.

However, the social and economic contexts for Newburgh and its area require a level of attention to development that goes a little beyond the mainstream default projections of new build housing, which current local plans highlight as the component that might lend support for a rail halt. Demand from the local population, as already stated, is very much in evidence already, and especially taken in conjunction with close lying Abernethy. The real point is that there are many glaring needs in Newburgh and its lack of opportunity to join the rail transport network is certainly a significant one amongst them and a priority. Newburgh, like many townships of similar size and location, is caught in a vicious circle of under-provision. A rail halt cum station would prove a big first step in breaking that circle. Newburgh, in terms of transport provision, especially public transport, is particularly geographically isolated. Businesses canvassed in Newburgh would welcome rail connection, particularly the new projected whisky distillery, brewery and visitors centre. Newburgh's own orchard fruit heritage with its considerable legacy and sheer number of varieties, together with the efforts to document, consolidate and reinvigorate this extraordinary asset has been recognised nationally and given notable attention at a UK level. The local fruit markets would also benefit enormously from a station facility.

Indeed, Newburgh is also an important visual arts and crafts hub with an established core of practioners. There are studios run by the national body WASPS (Working Artists Studio Provision Scotland) in the Steeple and residencies there sponsored by an RSA (Royal Scottish Academy) scheme. National and local authority policies and many various implentations recognise that the arts have proved since the 1980s as providing those vital seeds necessary for recovery, particularly in areas like Newburgh that have suffered from managed economic decline. A railway connection needs to be fully considered therefore as a key economic development tool. The Tay Plan should really up its game and give greater priority to this.

One further point also needs emphasising to conclude these comments on this part of the plan. Rail transport policy and planning reviews undertaken prior to the collapse of the boom in the last decade imagined prioritising reduced journey times between the major urban network hubs. This has lingered amongst caveats that disfavour opening smaller halts within the network, often for the sake of a couple of minutes, and ignores the trend that has emerged in the last ten years that has seen station halts and whole lines reopening in Scotland as much as across the rest of the UK. In Newburgh's case this negative presumption also ignores signalling and line improvements that have been made on the Perth to Edinburgh track, even since the last Tay Plan. Addressing this form of negative caveat,

Newburgh Train Station Group is also currently working on timetable scenarios (see Newburgh Train Station Group Tay Plan Commentary Appendices attached to this submitted commentary) that can operate within the current passenger rail timetable and which has received a positive response from Scot Rail Train Planning department managers, advising that this is a well thought out plan that addresses nodal flows and connection opportunities. The work of the Newburgh Train Station Group in this instance is still one in progress but it is pointing in the right direction and gathering depth and is, furthermore, evidence that a representative community body can be an active and productive partner in the venture of a station halt reopening alongside the relevant agencies and the local authority, opening doors to funding possibilities that might otherwise appear closed.

A station reopened in Newburgh would give back to this old Scottish Burgh networks it once needed to be a viable place to live and work. Trains will mean new bus services, taxis and minibuses. New connections will be provided and older ones renewed.

**Nigel Mullan,**

**Convener,**

**Newburgh Train Station Group,**

**<http://newburghtrainstation.org.uk/>**

**July 2015**

## **2. Attachment (Optional)**

**This is where you can attach a document if you wish.**

**Please ensure you do the following** Please complete the description box to help us understand what this attachment is.

If this attachment is relevant to the justification for your representation please identify the key points and any references in your response to Question 1 (above). Please **DO NOT write 'see attached'** for question 1 (above) as this does not help us to understand the key points you wish to raise.

Please name your attachment e.g. ' *ResearchDocTitle2014* '. It will not help us if everybody calls them 'attachment 1'.

You may only attach **ONE** document. You can merge several documents/parts of documents into one and attach this as a single document.

**Please attach your document here (MS Word and PDF format preferable)**

Newburgh Train Station Group Tay Plan 2015  
Commentary Appendices

Page 1 gives a table of results for a door to door household survey conducted in Newburgh and its immediate adjoining, outlying areas. Pages 2 -11 gives a timetable scenario which includes trains stopping at Newburgh using the existing timetable updated in December 2014 for journeys between Inverness and Edinburgh as well as including trains from and to Glasgow.