

Newburgh Train Station Group's Convener's Report For The June 2017 AGM

The campaign is currently beginning to undertake a pre-STAG¹ appraisal with the voluntary assistance of a rail industry professional who has forty years experience. Transport Scotland will also provide assistance and guidance as will Fife Council transport officials and those from South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SESTRAN).

The study will examine the current transport picture of Newburgh and its area alongside the present socio-economic context. From this the various transport problems and options can then be examined, sifted through and pointers established for solving difficulties. The study will not pre-determine the outcome but it can be reasonably expected that the case for a station option will emerge as a strong option.

The pre-STAG appraisal study is now the focus and priority of the campaign. The pre-appraisal study will give good grounds for the station option to emerge and obviate the need for a full STAG study as well justifying the expense of such a study. This in turn will give momentum to the business case of the station as a workable and viable outcome which can then be taken forward into a commissioning stage.

With the pre-appraisal accomplished in a sufficiently rigorous way the Scottish Government, through Transport Scotland, Fife Council and SESTRAN will be more likely to see the need for a full STAG appraisal and to help match-fund it with ourselves applying for European funding through the Fife LEADER programme which is still open until 2019/20.

The pre-STAG appraisal will significantly aid our chances of raising funds from LEADER and our current application to them, given the go ahead to proceed at the

¹ Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidelines (STAG)

turn of the year, has been allowed to await the pre-appraisal study's completion. Such a transport study will also usefully do much of the work that is required by the funding application.

A new ScotRail timetable due out in December 2018 is expected to significantly reconfigure the Edinburgh and Glasgow to Inverness timetable around a fast hourly service between Perth and Edinburgh. A remaining semi-fast service on the Edinburgh-Perth route would be every two hours and give scope for a stop at Newburgh.

Cross-party political support in the Scottish Parliament has been re-established after the 2016 election and proving useful. The Newburgh Station issue has certainly begun to stick and really take hold. MSPs Willie Rennie, Claire Baker and Mark Ruskell have all helped in various ways to promote the idea of a station reopening for Newburgh and are continuing to do so. The Head of Policy for Rail in Transport Scotland and the current Scottish government minister for transport have both been complimentary about the campaign's efforts.

As the Treasurer's Report shows there are ample funds in the campaign account to continue with the modest running costs involved. A fund raiser in Newburgh's Tayside Institute and Community Centre last year helped keep the account in a healthy state. Another is planned for the end of the year.

Nigel Mullan
Convener,
Newburgh Train Station Group

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