

ECMA Update

1.	Introduction
	<p>The purpose of this report is to update members on the latest discussions of the East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA) consortium and it is based on an Officers' Working Group teleconference held on 29 January and a consortium meeting which took place on 17 February 2020, in York.</p> <p>Minutes of both are attached at Appendix 1 and 2, respectively.</p> <p>Comment on a further meeting entitled "ScotRail Alliance – Lothians Regional Roundtable" is also relevant to the ECML and included in the discussion below.</p>
2.	Discussion
2.1	<p><i>ECMA meetings;</i> Of particular note in the minute attached at Appendix 1 is:</p>
2.1.1	<p>Network Rail's future investment plans and that ECMA will be a consultee. Not included in the minute but also discussed was Network Rail's intended approach to their Investment Plans which will be in 3 phases; Phase 1 to gather data on past reports, analyses and previous "problem statements", Phase 2, a series of workshops looking at short, medium and long term priorities. All of this will lead to a "Decision to Initiate" at Phase 3. ECMA will be invited to take part in the workshops.</p>
2.1.2	<p>ECMA's communications update and proposed identity refresh. Work is underway in this respect with proposals to be put to the next Officers' Group meeting in April.</p>
2.1.3	<p><i>ECMA budget – 20/21</i> A table was presented which indicated a significant carry over from the current year amounting to around £93000 and with receipt of full subscriptions for 20/21 this would provide a budget of approximately £173,000. Prompted by likely RTP budget allocations assumed for next year, there was a suggestion that either a "subscription holiday" or a subscription reduction be considered for next year and this was reiterated at the Consortium meeting. It was decided that proposals will be brought to the Consortium's next meeting, in June.</p>
2.1.4	<p>Also not included in the minute was an earlier request from LNER to receive from officers on the Group their aspirations for improvements associated with the anticipated December 2021 timetable change. The RTP aspirations have been submitted and copies are attached at Appendix 3.</p>

2.2	ScotRail Alliance – Regional Meeting (January 2020)
2.2.1	<p>It was noted that there had been an improvement in performance since the period November 18 to May 19 as a result of a Remedial Plan. There had been particular issues with the availability of train crew and a significant recruitment process has since taken place. It was also noted that the new Hitachi trains are substantially more reliable than the units they replace and all of this has contributed to improved performance.</p> <p>10 of 26 new trains on order have been delivered and delivery of all is critical to release rolling stock for fife and the borders lines and this should be achieved by the end of the year.</p>
2.2.2	<p>Operational issues through the four seasons were discussed; noting that autumn was the most challenging with falling leaves and increased passenger demand. In order to tackle the very real problem of leaves on the line, many trees have been felled and additional specially equipped trains to remove the built up leaves on the lines have been mobilised.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the current franchise will end on 31 March 2022 and the conclusions of the Williams Review is awaited to help inform the way forward, thereafter.</p>
2.2.3	<p>Aspirations for the future were discussed and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be decarbonised by 2035 • a 15 year electrification programme • the 7 cities network • replace all HSTs • carry out battery and hydrogen train trials • make double all single track • carry out a 15 year investment plan
2.2.4	<p>With particular reference to the ECML, it was noted that it is still anticipated that the limitations associated with the Portobello Junction will be addressed in CP6, the second platform improvement at Dunbar is complete and work is continuing on the Scotland East to England Connectivity (SETEC) project.</p>
3.	Recommendations
3.1	Members are asked to note the report.

Jim Grieve

SEStran Partnership Director (RTP Representative on ECMA Officers' Group)

February 2020



ECMA - 2021 ECML timetable consultation

Authority

Tactran

ECML Stations in within geographical boundary

Montrose
Arbroath
Dundee
Pitlochry
Perth
Gleneagles
Stirling
(Blair Atholl; Dunkeld & Birnam, Dunblane)

Current offer (December 2019)

Montrose, Arbroath, Dundee

Southbound: 3 trains per day (tpd) to London, 1 tpd to Leeds

Northbound: 3 tpd from London, 1 tpd from Leeds

Pitlochry, Perth, Gleneagles

Southbound: 1 tpd to London

Northbound: 1 tpd from London

Stirling

Southbound: 2 tpd to London

Northbound: 2 tpd from London

Blair Atholl, Dunkeld & Birnam

Southbound: **Sunday Only** 1 tpd to London

Aspirations for December 2021 ECML timetable

Tactran emphasises that direct trains from Tactran stations to/from England are highly valued. Currently as set out above LNER operates a limited amount of services that provide these direct links. Although there is a 30 minute frequency of services between Edinburgh and London, there are only 3 direct trains per day in each direction between Aberdeen and London, 2 direct trains per day between Stirling and London and 1 direct train per day Inverness and London.

There is also a disparity in train speeds and therefore journey times between Edinburgh and London and north of Edinburgh, which investigation shows that average train speed between Edinburgh and London is approximately double the average train speed north of Edinburgh. This disparity will become even greater once the new Azuma trains are fully integrated into the LNER timetable.

In general, Tactran is content with the current stations at which the services call (except Sunday London to Inverness, see below comment).

Therefore, in terms of aspirations for December 2021 ECML timetable Tactran would wish to see:

Journey Times

North of Edinburgh

A significant reduction in journey times north of Edinburgh to make the service north of Edinburgh as attractive as the fast journey times between Edinburgh and London. In particular Tactran would wish to see a minimum of a 10-minute reduction in journey times between Edinburgh and Dundee/Perth. Tactran is concerned that the lack of investment in rail infrastructure north of Edinburgh puts this area of Scotland at a significant economic disadvantage.

Service Frequency

Aberdeen to London

Ideally Tactran would wish to see a two-hourly frequency of direct services throughout the day, but recognises that without investment in rail infrastructure north of Edinburgh there will be capacity issues achieving this. Therefore, for 2021 Tactran would aspire to retain the existing number of calls at Tactran stations plus the additional following direct services:

Weekday Southbound

An additional early morning service calling at Montrose, Arbroath and Dundee stations to arrive in London between 12:00 and 13:00.

An additional later departing service to London calling at Montrose, Arbroath and Dundee stations, departing around 18:00, possibly replacing the 18:18 Aberdeen to Leeds service.

Weekday Northbound

An additional early morning service from London calling at Dundee, Arbroath and Montrose, to arrive in Aberdeen between 12:00 and 13:00.

An additional later departing service from London at around 18:00 calling at Dundee, Arbroath and Montrose.

Saturday

Saturday services should be similar to Mon to Fri services calling at Tactran stations in quantum and journey times.

Sunday

Additional late afternoon departures northbound from London and southbound from Aberdeen calling at Tactran stations to provide direct services.

Inverness to London

Ideally Tactran would wish to see a two-hourly frequency of direct services throughout the day, but recognises that without investment in rail infrastructure north of Edinburgh there will be capacity issues achieving this. Therefore, for 2021 Tactran would aspire to retain the existing number of calls at Tactran stations plus the additional following direct services:

Weekday Southbound

An additional service calling at Pitlochry, Perth, Gleneagles and Stirling, departing Inverness after 12:00.

Weekday Northbound

An additional early morning service calling at Stirling, Gleneagles, Perth and Pitlochry, departing London around 08:00.

Saturday

Saturday services should be similar to Mon to Fri services calling at Tactran stations in quantum and journey times.

Sunday

An additional afternoon departure southbound from Inverness to London and an additional morning departure northbound from London to Inverness. Also it is noted that the current 09:40 southbound service from Inverness to London calls at Blair Atholl, Dunkeld & Birnam and Dunblane stations, but the 12:00 northbound service from London to Inverness does not. It would be good to have a direct service to these stations in both directions on a Sunday, particularly given the tourist nature of the stations.

Name and Contact Details

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ECMA - 2021 ECML timetable consultation

Authority

Nestrans, the Regional Transport Partnership for Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire

ECML Stations within geographical boundary

Stonehaven
Aberdeen

Current offer (December 2019)

Stonehaven and Aberdeen

	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
Southbound:	3 trains per day (tpd) to London, 1 tpd to Leeds	3tpd 1tpd	3tpd 1tpd
Northbound:	3 tpd from London, 1 tpd from Leeds	3tpd 1tpd	1tpd 1tpd

Aspirations for December 2021 ECML timetable

Nestrans would wish to emphasise the significance of the East Coast Main Line and the LNER and Cross-Country services both in terms of the importance of the competition and market share between Stonehaven and Aberdeen to Edinburgh and also the critical significance of direct through trains connecting Nestrans' stations to/from England, particularly north east England with substantial numbers employed in the area and also links to London.

Despite the significance and the demand, there are only three direct trains per day between Aberdeen and London. Journey times are between 6hours 58 and 7hours 24minutes – with the journey between Aberdeen and Edinburgh timetabled as up to 2hours 38 southbound/2 hours 42 north bound (an average journey speed of less than 50mph).

Journey times and speeds between Aberdeen and Leeds are also slow, with journeys timetabled as up to 6hours 27minutes – just 56-65 mph on average.

In general, the stopping pattern with all LNER trains stopping at Stonehaven and terminating in Aberdeen is acceptable and should be maintained.

Therefore, in terms of aspirations for December 2021 ECML timetable Nestrans would wish to see:

Journey Times

North of Edinburgh

A significant reduction in journey times north of Edinburgh to make the service north of Edinburgh as attractive as the fast journey times between Edinburgh and London. In particular Nestrans would wish to see a minimum of a 10-minute reduction in journey times between Edinburgh and Aberdeen. We are concerned that the lack of investment in rail infrastructure north of Edinburgh puts this area of Scotland at a significant economic disadvantage – in particular the single-track section of the route at Usan, near Montrose is a constraint and impacts on journey times and resilience.

Service Frequency

Aberdeen to London

Ideally, we would wish to see a two-hourly frequency of direct services throughout the day, but recognise that without investment in rail infrastructure north of Edinburgh there will be capacity issues achieving this. However, for 2021 Nestrans would wish consideration of an early morning departure from Aberdeen, which could enable arrival in London in time for lunch/afternoon meetings (eg an 0552 departure, arriving in London Kings Cross before 1300).

Similarly, early and late departures northbound would make the service much more attractive, especially for business travellers.

Sunday

It appears that there is only two northbound direct trains on Saturday and one northbound direct train on a Sunday (1400, arriving in Aberdeen at 2116). This should be changed to replicate at least the Monday-Saturday frequency of three direct trains between London-Aberdeen in both directions.

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