



**Scotland's Railway
Annual Stakeholder
Report 2020 – 21**



Foreword

Welcome to our Annual Stakeholder Report.

Alex Hynes, Managing Director,
Scotland's Railway

This has been a year unlike any we've ever seen in our lifetime.

We faced unprecedented extreme weather and the many challenges this creates for Scotland's Railway. We've also been impacted by a pandemic which swept across the world and across our nation. But the most impactful has been the immense tragedy we suffered at Carmont, which touched the communities we care about and every part of our railway family.

The date of 12 August 2020 will be seared into the memories of many of us forever, and we continue to mourn the loss of train driver Brett McCullough, conductor Donald Dinnie, and passenger Christopher Stuchbury.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy we saw the best of our people – the emergency services who responded, our staff and contractors who stepped-up and the community who came together to support us. We are grateful to everyone who stood with us at this immensely difficult time.

As well as the investigations into what happened, we have looked more widely at how we can better understand and

manage the impact of climate change on our railways through two expert-led reviews. We have already made changes to the way we work and respond to increasingly frequent extreme weather events and we stand ready to act on the outcome of these expert reviews to reduce the chances of anything like this ever happening again.

Like every aspect of our lives, the railway has had to change as a result of COVID. Staff that can work from home are doing so but many colleagues remain on the frontline – at stations, depots and on work sites. Coming to work now means temperature checks, physical distancing, new processes and practices, and additional safety equipment. New behaviours, new norms but still playing a vital role in maintaining our nation's critical infrastructure.

Our teams worked hard to ensure key workers, like nurses and carers, and vital freight, moved safely across the country – we got people and goods to where they needed to be to help the nation at this tough time.

We also worked hard to introduce new ways of working with our stakeholders

– from virtual meetings and briefings to online community drop-in sessions for our planned work, including new stations. We harnessed technology to ensure that our vital relationships remain strong.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of staff across Scotland's Railway who have done an outstanding job delivering and managing the change we have faced.

Since March 2020, Scotland's Railway has supported the country during these most difficult times – both in terms of fulfilling our day job but also in many other ways too. In this time of crisis I am once again humbled by the staff who work for Scotland's Railway – those who volunteered in their local communities, supported local projects or came forward with ideas to help the NHS, homeless people, local food banks and schools.

During the pandemic we have adapted quickly to changing travel patterns and public health guidance, reviewing the timetable, making sure we are supporting passengers who need to travel. We have been working hard to ensure that at each phase, we are matching capacity with demand.

We also reviewed our enhancement and renewals programmes to make sure we are developing and evolving our approach so, when the time is right, we can continue to invest in our infrastructure as Scotland's Railway plays its part in the wider post-pandemic recovery.

None of this could have been achieved without close working partnerships with colleagues from across the rail industry, transport and government, including Transport Scotland, ScotRail and our cross-border train and freight partners, Trade Unions, British Transport Police and

Police Scotland, and Transport Focus. And we mustn't forget the significant part our local authority regional transport partners, chambers of commerce and local communities have played, and continue to play, in supporting our vision for the people of Scotland.

Passenger numbers are down by 90 per cent compared to the same time last year. We don't know fully how people will use the railway in the future but they are likely to have very different demands and we must respond to this. Whether it's new ticket types, different timetables, smarter ways of delivering improvement works as people move away from the daily commute, or better technology, we know that the railway needs to match the transformed expectations of our stakeholders, customers and passengers.



We do not underestimate the scale of the challenge ahead. We do though look forward to continuing to work closely with our stakeholders and partners as we prepare Scotland's Railway to play an integral role in our nation's post-pandemic recovery.

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Introduction



Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

The last 12 months has been unprecedented on ScotRail's Railway and for our cross-border train and freight operators.

The tragic derailment at Stonehaven shocked the entire rail industry and the local communities it serves, and it is something that will live with us all for many years to come. Our thoughts continue to be with the friends and families of those who lost their lives. And once again, I can reaffirm our commitment to supporting the lessons learned from this tragic event as the industry takes steps to help prevent this happening in future.

The wash-out on the main Edinburgh to Glasgow line, when the Union canal burst its banks, shows how climate change is impacting our everyday lives. The increasing frequency of extreme weather impacting our railway and communities is changing how we design and manage the rail network. These events reinforce the urgency of meeting our ambitious climate change goals, and decarbonising Scotland's Railway by 2035 is central to achieving this ambition.

As I reflect on the past year, it is clear that every section of our society has been

affected by COVID-19 – our communities, our businesses, the activities we enjoyed, the things we all took for granted.

The Scottish Government has worked with all sectors of the economy and communities to stop the spread of COVID-19, support those who need our help and plan for our economic recovery. And vital to this recovery will be the rail industry in Scotland.

I want to say a special thank you to everyone in the railway family who has kept Scotland's essential workers and goods moving during the pandemic – the front line workers, controllers, signallers, track workers and station staff, as well as passenger and freight operators and the supply chain. The industry has shown how it can come together to support the nation at this very challenging time.

We are committed to improving the economic well-being of communities, providing good quality employment opportunities across Scotland as we plan for our post-COVID recovery.

We must look to the future and seize the opportunity to rebuild – stronger and greener.

And while we are looking to our post-pandemic economic recovery, we need to recognise and promote the key role our railway can play in this. Not only in getting people where they need to be but promoting the railway as a sustainable transport option. And by investing in our infrastructure we will fuel the recovery in the construction sector and across the supply chain. But the investment choices we make are also crucial and our commitment to decarbonise our railway by 2035 means we must take the right steps now to hit that target.

And we will continue to expand our network. This year has seen us take steps to deliver three more new stations – Dalcross, East Linton and Reston – following the recent completion of Kintore and Robroyston. New stations connect communities and bring people closer

to opportunities, loved ones and social interaction - which has never been more important as we look to the future.

I welcome the launch of the Scotland's Railway website – a hub for local communities and stakeholders to engage with Network Rail Scotland on future enhancements. Technology to bring people together has never been so vital. While we may not be able to be present in the same room, those same conversations are taking place and Network Rail's commitment to stakeholder engagement through virtual community drop ins, online briefing sessions and the development of the Scotland's Railway hub is welcome.

The spirit of collaboration that I've seen across the rail industry will continue to grow and strengthen. Innovative steps to work with communities, businesses and partners will embed Scotland's Railway as a railway for the nation. And one of which we can all be immensely proud.



Our Commitment to Stakeholders

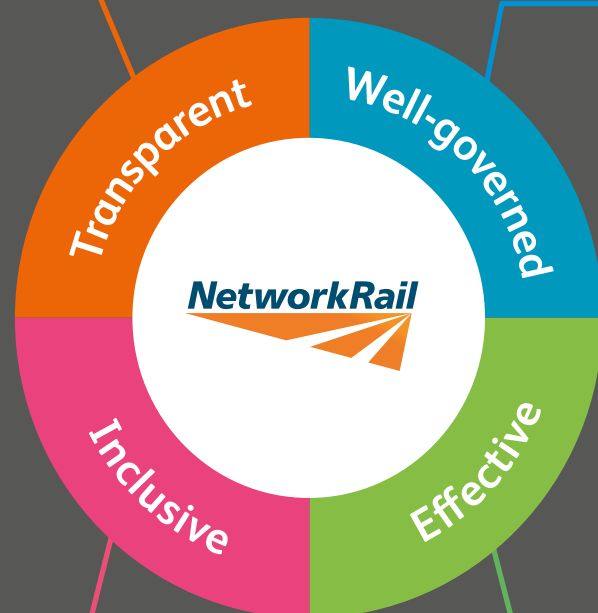
Our stakeholders matter to us. From our customers and passengers to our funders, suppliers, partners and lineside neighbours working together we will build the best railway Scotland has ever had.

We will be transparent in our dealings with stakeholders

We will provide good quality information to our stakeholders

We will employ governance over our engagement with stakeholders

We are committed to continuously improving our engagement with stakeholders



We will act fairly and not discriminate

Our engagement will be proportionate

We will respond to the needs and opinions of our stakeholders

We will engage effectively on decisions that impact

Putting Passengers and Freight First

In 2019/20 we implemented major changes across the organisation to embed a customer and passenger service mindset. As this year evolved, we've completed the final changes and worked with our people to instil this new approach.

We now have more expertise and capability in Scotland to deliver a sustainable railway, fit for the future. Although COVID-19 has posed immense challenges for the rail industry, the recovery programme presents a unique opportunity to deliver for Scotland.

By empowering our people at a local level to use their knowledge and expertise, we make better decisions for our customers. Our new structure unlocks this capability and enables our people to better align themselves with the needs of passengers and freight users.

To be accountable, collaborative and customer driven. To think passenger. To speak passenger.

One of the key structural changes has been the introduction of a Passenger Experience team, with a focus

on striving for daily excellence for our passenger and freight operators. The team, which includes a number of new roles including a programme manager for planned disruption and a customer service manager, has been empowered to do the right thing for those who use the rail network.

Our new programme manager for planned disruption will improve the needs of passengers are considered with respect to all elements of planned disruption – a champion for passengers across the business, ensuring their voice is heard and understood. A better understanding of the needs of our passengers will inform how we undertake work on the railway. It's vital that we think differently about how we deliver work on the railway and this team will be critical in instilling this thinking across Scotland's Railway.



Empowered to
ACT



Always
safe



Care about
people



Teamwork
is key



On the side
of passengers
and freight
users



Easy to engage
with, efficient
& dependable
partner



Instinctive
industry
leader



Proud to work
for Network
Rail



Listening and responding to our customers and stakeholders more effectively is already delivering tangible results. It has enabled the return of timber freight to our railway and is informing the location of the stations on the new Leven rail link – amongst other positive impacts.

With more decision-making capability and accountability at a local level, we can respond more swiftly and in a way that better reflects the aspirations of our stakeholders.

Looking ahead we have ambitious plans:

- Working towards our railway becoming carbon net-zero
- Exciting enhancement proposals
- An extensive and diverse programme of renewal

Scotland's Railway will play a central role in the social, leisure and economic life of our country and its recovery from this pandemic.

We've also developed our Network Rail story to share with our stakeholders our vision and

journey. And our story continues. We will continue to challenge ourselves, be accountable, collaborate and be customer driven as we work to deliver a great service for all the users of Scotland's railway.

This is what we want people to say about us...

"My train's on time"

"It's easy to work with Network Rail and we are good neighbours"

"Network Rail helps keep me safe and well"

"Network Rail plans for the long term future of the whole railway"

"Network Rail is a responsible and environmentally sustainable company"

"I do everything I can to keep myself safe and colleagues safe"

"Network Rail deliver what they say they will, for the price promised"

"I have a really good journey... Because my station is nice, safe and if things go wrong I'm looked after"

"I get the service I am promised"

"My Manager cares about me & I'm proud to work for Network Rail"

"Network Rail is efficient & value for money"



Performance

Since the beginning of 2020/21 we have worked hard to steadily increase our Public Performance Measure Moving Annual Average (PPM MAA) and we are delighted that we have achieved our regulatory target of 92.5 percent.



Scotland's Railway delivered its 'Autumn Operational Plan' for the second year in a row. Our focus was on delivering improved performance during a period of the year that is traditionally very difficult. Working together with our stakeholders and customers across the industry we developed the Autumn operational plan. By increasing our use of innovative technology and developing targeted timetable amendments, we delivered the best Autumn performance on record.

This year, we continued the Performance Improvement Fund. The £1m fund enables the performance team to rapidly respond to performance improvement initiatives suggested by stakeholders from across the industry. This ranged from purchasing temporary pumps for multiple flooding sites which increase our weather resilience to ensuring we have stores for essential parts at key junction locations across the network.



Building Back Better

This summer a cross-industry working group, from the Rail Recovery Task Force, was mandated with 'Building Back Better' – to implement a higher performing timetable in Scotland than we had prior to COVID-19.

Through an effective working group with representatives from ScotRail, Transport Scotland, Transport Focus and Network Rail, that met regularly to evaluate the quality of the timetable, the industry was able to act quickly and introduce any amendments or enhancements that were required. By making key amendments, to both the plan and to specific stations, we were able to deliver safe journeys for passengers whilst also maximising journey reliability.

December 2020 timetable change

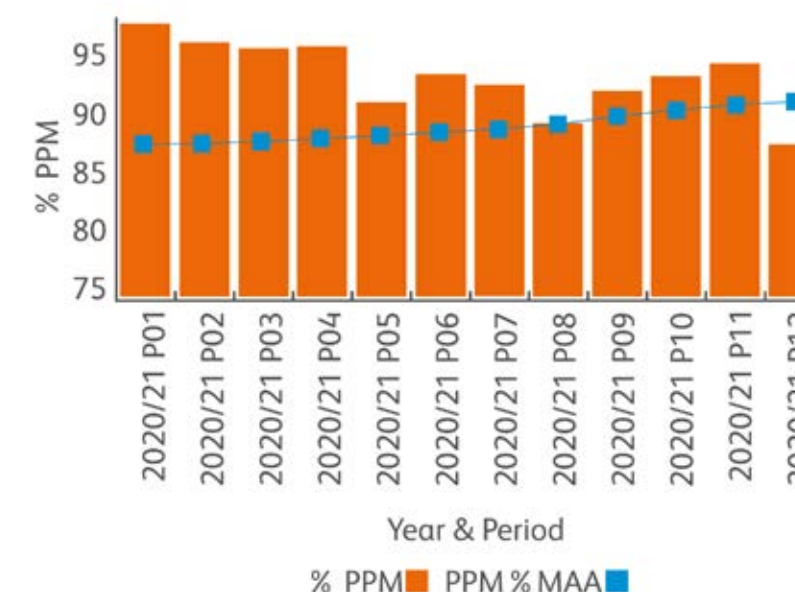
To ensure that the December 2020 timetable change delivered improved performance, a number of changes were introduced. These ranged from taking practical steps on the network to address issues such as 'unexplained delays' (when a train is later than scheduled without a visible reason) and changes to how long a train stops at a station, to amendments to the timetables for the most populous sectors on the network.

Putting passengers first

Performance improved considerably this year but, this was not the case for all areas of the network. Our performance in rural areas was not as good as we wanted and we are clear that we must act to improve our service to passengers along these routes. Changes to how we manage forecast weather warnings has increased the use of speed restrictions on the network when heavy rain is forecast. This has meant that an increasing proportion of performance failures result from speed restrictions and we are working closely with industry colleagues to identify how we can improve the service for our passengers. Work is also underway to understand what colleagues in other disciplines are doing to improve resilience in other areas such as fleet, infrastructure or geotechnics.

Next year

Improving performance remains our key focus for the coming year. Across the industry we have worked hard for passengers and our plan for 2021/22 is to continue to build on the performance improvement momentum achieved this year. We want to keep making Scotland's Railway better for passengers, freight customers and our Stakeholders in the coming year.



Scotland's Railway and COVID-19

This year workplaces across Scotland changed and adapted to COVID-19. Since March 2020, our frontline colleagues have been ensuring that key workers and essential freight are getting to where they need to be. Our colleagues in stations, signallers and teams maintaining and renewing the network have been keeping Scotland moving.

As well as the standard precautions to protect our staff we've also trialled some creative solutions to keep our teams safe. To reduce the exposure of our workforce whilst undertaking work in locations away from their home, we developed Bunker Bins. These self-contained units contain sleeping space and washing facilities, to ensure that teams could stay in a COVID-safe environment. Our Bunker Bins were used during the delivery of a bridge renewal at Sodom on the West Coast Mainline and at a number of sites around the West Highland and Mallaig Lines.

As well as adapting our work practices during COVID-19, Scotland's Railway has also been utilising the opportunities provided by reduced services on the network. Teams have been able to gain additional access to undertake essential maintenance on a number of key routes including the busy Edinburgh – Glasgow line. Teams have delivered a range of extra work – 100,000m of fencing, additional work to prepare the network for autumn, 32 emergency sites were rectified during the August storms, and we introduced 94 portable toilet and welfare units for staff working in remote locations.

Our COVID "Call to Arms"

The Scotland's Railway team has also been supporting Scotland and our communities during COVID-19

- Through our staff volunteering programme, teams have been collecting and distributing PPE provisions to 11 NHS regions in Scotland.
- We've introduced a socially distanced assembly line at Edinburgh Delivery Unit to pack and distribute 10,000 care packs to mental health community partners.
- We've supported the Simon Community through weekly collections from their warehouse in Glasgow to the 2 hotels in Edinburgh which accommodated approx. 120 homeless people in Edinburgh.
- After many months of planning and collaboration, on Christmas day we worked with the Sikh Community in Glasgow to provide meals to homeless people at Glasgow Central Station. Over 40 meals were provided, making a real difference for Glasgow's homeless population.

After a difficult year, Scotland's Railway has worked with Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnerships to deliver "Coorie in for Christmas" booklets. Coorie comes from the Scots word 'coor' which means to nestle or snuggle. The booklets have tips for keeping well during the festive season with craft and recipe ideas plus support information. Along with the booklets, wellbeing packs with sweets and toiletries were distributed. The booklets were delivered to a number of mental health units though we also extended this to other partner agencies including the National Farmers Union (NFU) who had raised that farmers in remote locations were struggling with their mental health, largely due to imposed isolation. Booklets were shared with NFU's Regional Manager for distribution.



Highlights from Year 2

No one would have believed that 2020/21 would challenge the railway in the ways that it did.

No part of our railway family was left unmoved by the tragic events at Stonehaven. This will be forever in our memories and we will learn lessons for the future.

No aspect of the rail industry was left untouched by COVID-19. It changed the way that we had to work to keep our people safe and the railway open.

Despite passenger numbers plummeting, the railway became ever more crucial to moving key workers and to ensuring freight continued to flow.

This year we've been working hard to deliver the most punctual and resilient network, to be ready for when our passengers return.

We've also continued to invest in the railway to benefit our customers, for today and for tomorrow, as we support Scotland's green recovery from the pandemic.



Freight timber trial

Across the freight and timber sectors there has long been an aspiration to return timber to the railway in Scotland.

The Scottish forestry sector is estimated to contribute around £1bn to the national economy each year, with around three-quarters of that coming from forestry and timber processing, and this is expected to grow in coming years as the Scottish Government increases forest planting to support its climate change ambitions. Working with a range of partners including the freight and timber sectors, Scottish Government and Regional Transport Partnership HITRANS, and with funding awarded from the Strategic Rail Freight Fund, Network Rail enabled a trial which both supported the aspiration of the industry and met modal shift objectives.

The trial ran for six weeks; enabling up to three trains a week between Caithness and Inverness, with a capability of moving around 6,000 tonnes of timber which would take around 250 lorries totalling 55,000 lorry miles away from Scotland's roads.

During the trial we worked proactively with the government, freight industry and partners to demonstrate how timber could be moved on the network, and also to identify what steps would be needed to support a full commercial operation.

We are confident that this trial has proved that rail is an environmentally sustainable way to transport timber over long distances and we are committed to continuing to work closely with our industry partners to support the development of viable timber on rail traffic as part of a sustainable and green economic recovery from the current health crisis.



Light it Blue

'Light it Blue' was a platform to deliver our message of thanks to NHS front-line staff and our own key workers.

The importance of the NHS and keyworkers grabbed the minds of so many across the UK, with Thursday nights at 8pm becoming a national event as we came together to show our appreciation.

Our contribution was to light up some of the iconic structures and stations across Scotland's Railway in blue.

By sharing our 'Light ups' on social media people had the opportunity to see our

structures in their splendour. Initially we wanted to reach NHS staff, our passengers, colleagues and our wider stakeholders. But it became very clear that our live streams were being enjoyed and appreciated not only across the country but around the world.

We secured great local media coverages, particularly in on-line editions and twitter went wild for the live streams – across April and May, we reached more than 1.3m and engaged with over 52,000 people.



Slochd flood management

In November 2020 work was completed on a final phase of embankment and drainage work at Slochd between Perth and Inverness on the Highland Mainline. The project will help protect against landslips and rockfall and addresses a known flooding risk area which has caused delay and cancellation to passenger journeys twice.

This £4.8 million investment will protect the infrastructure and enhance the resilience and reliability of Scotland's Railway on this line.

The project utilised 11,000 tonnes of stone to regrade more than 400 metres of railway embankment over 840 metres of concrete lined drainage channels were installed.

Across Scotland we are proactively replacing and increasing the capacity of drains and culverts to manage larger volumes of water coming onto the railway from adjacent land. Surrounding drainage and embankments are future-proofed to protect the railway from the impact of increasingly unpredictable weather.



Edinburgh – Glasgow line recovery

Following unprecedented rainfall in August, a section of the Union canal near Polmont burst its banks. Thousands of gallons of water flowed into the railway, partially washing away sections of track and undermining railway embankments.

In six weeks, engineers completely rebuilt the foundations of the line, replacing over 15,000 tonnes of soil and stone beneath the track.

A kilometre of new double-track railway was laid. We used more than 4,500 metres of new rails, 4,424 concrete

sleepers, 10,000 tonnes of new ballast and over 3,000 metres of signalling cable was re-laid and two new twin track overhead power gantries installed.

The damage to this route was huge and engineers worked around the clock to restore this vital link and get customers moving again as quickly as possible.

During the work ScotRail operated a rail shuttle service between Linlithgow and Edinburgh to keep customers moving. Our thanks to our passengers who showed great understanding and patience.



Renewing Scotland's Railway

This year over £450 million was invested in the rail network through 407 renewals projects.

These projects ranged from renewing some of our iconic structures in Scotland to station platforms and railway. Our renewal work is essential to support a safe, resilient and reliable railway for our passengers.

Teams have been busy at sites including the Clyde Bridge in Glasgow where work continues on a £13m renovation project over the River Clyde on the approach to Glasgow Central. We've also been busy on a £7.5m project to refurbish the iconic Forth Bridge – a UNESCO world heritage site. Once complete this will protect the bridge for up to two decades.

And for our passengers, work on a £2.2 million platform upgrade at Garrowhill station,

in the East End of Glasgow will provide them with more modern and easily maintained surfaces which will improve safety. We also worked on the drainage at the station which will eliminate the risk of puddles gathering on the platform after heavy rain – which is all part of our commitment to further improve performance on the Edinburgh to Glasgow line.

We've also been busy across Scotland, from Bridge of Orchy on the West Highland line, to the busy Glasgow to Edinburgh line.

Often these works can be noisy and cause some inconvenience, so we are extremely grateful to our lineside neighbours and local communities for their patience.

Renewal works protect and enhance the life span of Scotland's Railway and, most importantly, keep it safe.

This year we -

Refurbished
13,486m²
of underbridge
structures

Renewed
221.7 Linear km
of plain line track (track that
doesn't have any junctions,
crossovers or points)

Renewed
**104 Switches
& Crossings units**
(the sections that guide
trains from one track to
another and allow them to
cross paths)

Delivered
936 earthworks sites
(each approximately
100m long)

Working with Passengers

It's our role to run a safe, reliable and efficient railway, serving customers and communities. Across Scotland's Railway our teams have been working hard listening to our passengers, to better understand what they want so we can introduce changes to improve everyone's experience of using the railway.

From our major enhancement programmes and stations to how we communicate, we have made many changes this year. Our dedicated Network Rail Scotland Twitter team are now available to answer any queries our passengers or stakeholders may have. This year our social media team has handled 25,000 tweets.

Our stations have also seen some big changes this year. At Edinburgh

Waverley station we are investing £1.8m in upgrading passenger facilities – by renovating the station toilets we will provide a brighter, modern, environmentally friendly and more comfortable experience for passengers.

We are also installing a Changing Places facility for passengers at Edinburgh Waverley. This facility will support those passengers with complex care needs and increase opportunities for people with a range of disabilities, as well as their carers and families, to access rail travel. Once complete, our three busiest stations in Scotland - Glasgow Central, Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Queen Street – will all have Changing Places for our passengers.



In another first our station teams at Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Waverley received Guide Communicators certificates (Level 1) following completion of the first-of-a-kind training, which enables the customer service teams to improve the level of support provided to passengers with visual or hearing impairments. Network Rail is the first major organisation in the country to undertake Deafblind Scotland's bespoke four-week virtual training course.

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“Awarding the Guide Communicators certificates represents a landmark moment for both Deafblind Scotland and Network Rail, as it is the first time any company has committed to undertake this level of accredited training with us. It shows a genuine regard for the challenges that people with sensory loss face... It was evident from the start that they could see the real value training such as this provides. For the deafblind community, knowing that both stations have trained Guide Communicators on hand to provide support and understanding helps make rail travel possible for so many.”

Isabella Goldie, Deafblind Scotland chief executive

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Some other highlights include –

- improved bike parking and wayfinding for cyclists
- in partnership with Samaritans & Breathing Space a Suicide Awareness mural at Glasgow Central
- developing a new passenger assistance app
- a Breathing Space bench at Glasgow Central
- station staff have access to app with instant train information to transform how we interact and support passengers
- plans underway for a new Passenger Management Centre
- improved WiFi being installed May 2021 at Glasgow Central
- working with the Trussell Trust locally to donate surplus food
- forgotten bikes at Waverley refurbished by staff and donated to good causes
- contactless donation point for our charity partner – Railway Children
- free advertising space on station information screens – this year we have highlighted issues such as domestic violence, county lines and suicide prevention
- provision of coffee cup recycling facilities

Working with Partners

A key focus for this year has been on increasing our collaboration with partners. From funders to regulatory, public and infrastructure bodies, our engagement and close working with these partners has enhanced what we have delivered for Scotland. At times we've come together to develop solutions to an unplanned event on the railway, on other occasions our collaboration has increased over years, culminating in key milestones for enhancements on the network or exploring new opportunities and markets. By listening, understanding, adapting and collaborating we are building a national railway to be proud of.

Inverness Airport Station takes off

The Inverness Airport Station project, also known as Dalcross, has been working with partners to build a facility that will serve the airport, the rail network and residents in the local community.

Broadening the range of skills and expertise around the table in the planning and development of the project has been beneficial for all partners and the project overall in finding ways to maximise the use of resources.

Improved communication with partners has enabled better interaction across the organisations involved and has informed the development of the project. Local involvement has allowed us to develop proposals for a facility which will better meet the needs of the community it will serve.

Early engagement and ongoing communication has given us the chance to create an informed group in the area. Through this group we will be able to access more channels to engage with to the wider community.

Local partners and the community are invested in making Inverness Airport a success. Since 2017 Network Rail has been developing proposals. Prior to this HITRANS led on the station development which was incorporated into a previous planning application.

The project will see the development of a new two platform station (with step-free access via footbridge with lifts) adjacent

to Inverness Airport. It will include a new double-track loop through the station.

As well as car parking, including electric charging facilities, the plan includes proposals for active travel links and transport interchange. The application has been submitted to Highland Council who will make the final decision on permission for the new station at Inverness Airport.

From the outset to commissioning, the intention is to continue to build on very positive early engagement and retain all of our partner's expertise and knowledge throughout delivery to help us get the best outcomes from the project.



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HITRANS has very good communications with Network Rail [from Scotland's Railway MD down]. This is in part to do with longevity resulting in an understanding of how the regulated infrastructure provider operates and having many contacts in a number of rail disciplines.

In the case of Inverness Airport Dalcross the scheme sponsor has been easy to work with over a number of years and hopefully this will bear fruit soon.

Frank Roach HITRANS

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Working with Partners

Our supply chain partners are essential to deliver the goods, work and services that keep Scotland's Railway running. They work across a number of areas and disciplines to support a wide variety of projects. Their expertise, innovation, dedication and drive, safely and efficiently supports us in the delivery of maintenance, renewals and infrastructure enhancements projects across Scotland's Railway.



This year has seen Network Rail Scotland and our supply chain partners working collaboratively to deliver complex engineering works following a number of challenging weather incidents. Across the network, from Polmont in the Central Belt to Lochailort on the West Highland Line, our supply chain mobilised at short notice and worked with us on the recovery of the network. Teams from Network Rail and our supply chain worked around the clock, often in atrocious weather, to get passengers and freight moving again as soon as possible.

But collaboration and teamwork are not just limited to times of crisis. On these occasions our ability to mobilise and work together so quickly and successfully was possible because of the strong relationship we've built together - relationships based on clear

communication, shared understanding and a desire to collaborate and deliver for Scotland's Railway.

Our vision is simple - we aim to foster a spirit of collaboration and partnership. Effective communication and a clear understanding of what our partners need from us is essential for a strong, collaborative relationship and through a number of initiatives this year we have focused on how we can enhance this two-way communication. These range from our SME Action Plan and a supply chain engagement forum with our strategic partners to wider sector engagement through industry bodies and groups such as the Rail Supply Group and the Rail Cluster Builder Project. On a day to day level we have improved visibility of our work bank for our strategic suppliers and developed a collaboration feedback tool for them. Looking ahead to next year, work is already underway for our SME Engagement Route Map.

By working together, we can add value in a safe, efficient and sustainable way and we will continue to focus improving engagement with our supply chain and focus on our ambition to create a diverse supply chain in Scotland which also supports the Scottish Government's plans to achieve a more productive, cohesive and fairer country to live and work in.

A Ticket to Net Zero – online decarbonisation of rail event

The past year has seen a marked increase in activity and interest in Scotland around decarbonisation of rail. The Scottish Government has tasked Scotland's Railway to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2035 and across the network we have been busy making this happen. From undertaking investigative works to help inform the development of a portfolio of key electrification projects to identifying options for building or converting track for electric capability, we are supporting a greener Scotland.

Building a greener railway is not just about electrification. Meeting the decarbonisation challenge requires a flexible approach – one that capitalises on new technology such as battery and hydrogen trains, as well as working in partnership with our train operating colleagues to deliver low carbon travel options and enable modal shift. Embracing a variety of rail technologies is particularly important for more rural parts of Scotland's rail network.

At the end of January 2021, the Network Rail Scotland communications team

hosted a special, online decarbonisation of rail conference event for colleagues in Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, ScotRail and Network Rail Scotland. The event showcased the work under way to decarbonise Scotland's Railway in a highly ambitious timeframe. With over 300 attendees, this 'trilateral' approach was perfect for information sharing and facilitating discussion.

Looking ahead to COP26 – an international event on our doorstep – we are working closely with the Scottish Government, UK Government in Scotland and Cabinet Office to showcase Scotland and its rail industry when the world arrives in Glasgow later this year.



Working with Customers

An overnight success

The lines between Glasgow and Edinburgh are some of the busiest across the entire GB network. The cities are linked with five different routes which are in constant use and require a lot of maintenance. This often means that a large part of Scotland's Railway is out of use for periods of time overnight whilst teams undertake essential maintenance.

To ensure that the network is resilient for passenger and freight users, Scotland's Railway's Access Planning team worked with colleagues in the Maintenance Delivery Units and our partners, GB Railfreight, to improve the performance and operation of the Caledonian Sleeper, particularly in the Edinburgh area.

Access between Scotland's two major cities is key for the Caledonian Sleeper service and the Network Rail teams planned for their essential maintenance work leaving at least one route open between the cities each night.

With all five routes between Glasgow and Edinburgh now electrified, this modernisation has enabled the Network Rail Delivery Units to develop an overnight access strategy between Glasgow and Edinburgh for the first time, which still allows teams to undertake critical maintenance activities.

This new approach shows what can be done when we work collaboratively with our stakeholders with an open mindset. Our teams listened to the request from a key customer and successfully delivered a solution. Looking ahead these extra paths for our customers will also increase the resilience of the timetable.

The successful initiative was also welcomed by Caledonian Sleeper and GB Railfreight, with the Lowlander service re-commencing November 2020.

“

“A thank you to everyone at Network Rail for instigating this proposal for having a route available between Edinburgh and Glasgow to facilitate the movement of a Class 92 across the Central Belt to aid an even more robust operation of the Caledonian Sleeper services.”

Ian Kapur, Head of Strategic Access Planning,
GB Railfreight

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Rail recovery taskforce

Collaboration is key to effective communications during a pandemic for Scotland's Railway

Due to the unprecedented circumstances of early 2020 it became evident that there was a need to deliver a coordinated industry response to help manage the challenges facing Scotland's Railway.

The rail recovery taskforce was formed to provide a platform where Network Rail, ScotRail and Transport Scotland could work together to communicate the changes needed to keep passengers safe and the railway running during a public health crisis.

Working together, a programme of targeted and timely communication was developed to update internal and external stakeholders on any adjustments Scotland's Railway needed to make in response to Scottish Government guidance.

Initially the communications activity showcased the work of frontline rail staff in keeping passengers moving whilst also managing the implementation of safety measures.

The communications evolved with each step change in guidance.

As public health procedures and government restrictions in dealing with the virus advanced, so too did the taskforce's communication response to this.



By working collaboratively and sharing information, we coordinated media, social media and stakeholder briefings.

Through the rail recovery taskforce, we were able to speak with one voice when the need to engage with passengers, colleagues, freight and train operators has never been greater.

“

The partnership working through the rail recovery taskforce has been vital to delivering a reliable service for customers, particularly key workers, during the pandemic. The cooperation between ScotRail, Network Rail, Transport Scotland, British Transport Police, and Transport Focus has allowed us to implement necessary timetable changes quickly and efficiently.

“The taskforce has set a new standard in collaborative industry working and we'll continue to use this group as a key forum to develop our plans to welcome customers back when public health restrictions allow.

David Simpson, Operations Director, ScotRail

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Other highlights include –



Being flexible to deliver for freight

Our flexible approach to the ScotRail timetable enabled us to accommodate extra freight moves on highland routes with limited capacity. As part of the taskforce, teams were able to work flexibly and quickly to agree and implement amendments to temporary timetables to accommodate essential freight services operating to and from Aberdeen via Inverness in the aftermath of the Stonehaven derailment.

Our joined-up approach to serving communities on shared lines of route

As part of a sub-group, chaired by Network Rail, train companies regularly reviewed their collective train plan changes and worked together to ensure communities reliant on a mix of train companies to provide station stops had an appropriate level of service. For stations such as Dunbar, this involved train companies agreeing extra stops in some services to cover for the fact other services were fully cancelled, or the selective running of local services to fill in gaps in long distance services' stopping patterns.

“

The team at Network Rail Scotland proactively convened a taskforce bringing together Scotland's train operators and cross-border operators, the Infrastructure Maintainer and Transport Scotland. The weekly touch point has proven to be invaluable from a CrossCountry perspective, allowing us to understand the developing situation in Scotland and plan accordingly well in advance of if we had found out about (for instance) changes to local restrictions through more normal channels.

The opportunity to share information and intelligence on matters such as emerging issues and timetable strategy has also been massively useful and has allowed us to plan and predict issues that may also affect us. The level of insight provided has extended well beyond the Scottish border, with discussions around timetable levels, reservation policies and demand providing a useful insight in to travel across Great Britain and allowing us to collectively ensure we're providing adequate capacity in a robust and cost-effective manner.

David Slater, Head of Train Service Delivery, CrossCountry

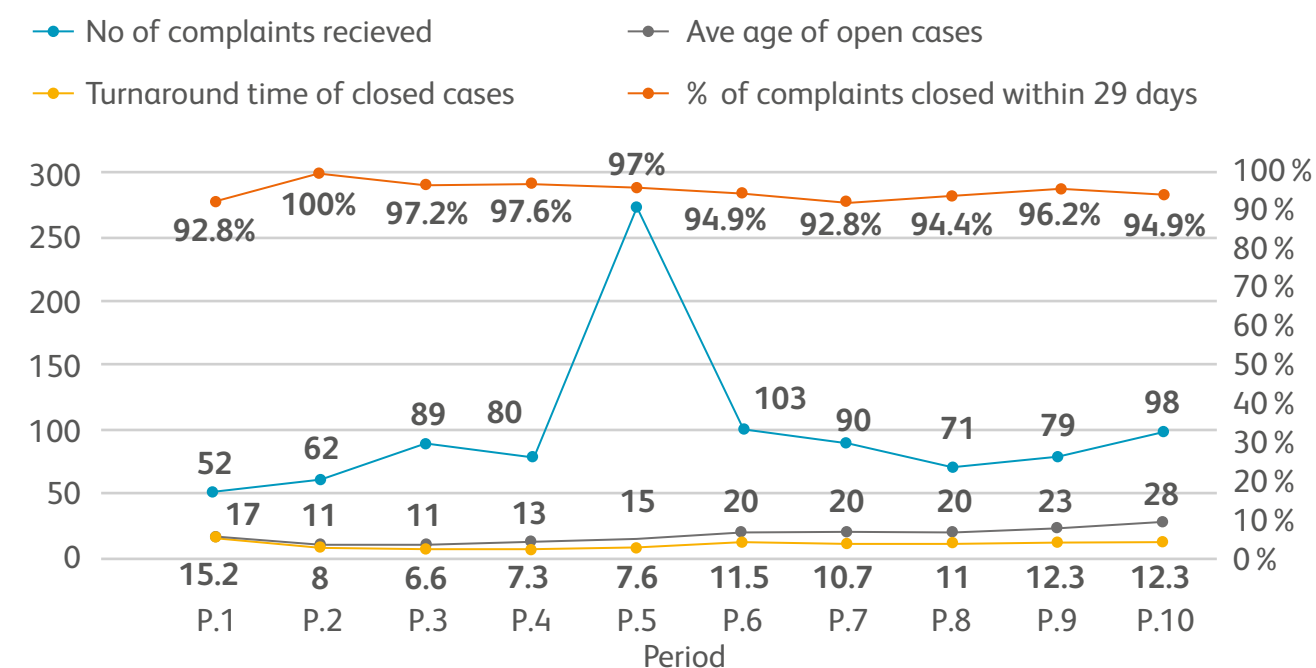
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Working with Communities

Keeping our customers and lineside neighbours informed and updated regularly is very important to us. Every day our Community Relations team respond to questions from members of the public. Our aim is to resolve these within 29 working days.

This year we've been working hard to reduce our response times and there's been a substantial improvement in the percentage of cases closed within our 29 day target. Every period this year, apart from one, we were better than last year. And next year we will be working hard to reduce even further our response times.

Scotland's Railway - Enquiries & Complaints 2020/21



How we are improving

Nearly every night of the year there will be a Network Rail Scotland team out on-site across the railway working to support a safe, reliable and resilient service for passengers and freight. At times our work can be noisy and cause an inconvenience to lineside neighbours.

As well introducing our code of conduct which details how we expect employees and contractors to treat customers and communities, we also try to give residents as much notice as possible about our planned works. This year we've notified 1,464 different locations across Scotland in advance of our planned works. But if we do fall short, we want to know. We will always listen to concerns and will fully investigate complaints or reports.

This year we are working hard to address two issues which our lineside neighbours raise with us: worker behaviour and pre-

notification letters. Although Scotland's Railway sends out more pre-notification communications than any of the other Network Rail regions we can further improve this process. For all planned works we notify local communities at least 10 days before commencing work.

We are introducing further quality controls to the notification process. This will involve additional briefings to planning and delivery teams as well as notification audits to identify areas of the business that need to get better.

Despite ongoing briefings across the business and with our supply chain partners, incidence of poor worker behaviour remains too high. We will establish a working group to look at how we can better address worker behaviours' impact on our lineside neighbours.

Engaging through social media

This year we've been working hard to build advocacy for Scotland's Railway and Network Rail Scotland through our followers on social media. Our feed has demonstrated the work we've been carrying out and its benefits for people in Scotland and Scottish taxpayers.

In the past year our social media team has handled 25,000 tweets – a marked increase on the year before – which has driven up our engagement rates. We've created educational, eye catching, and shareable

content, and have taken a more proactive approach, joining in the conversation and adding value where we can.

By developing unique content from work sites across Scotland, and marking moments of railway history - our social media team has shared unprecedented insights with our followers.

Our social media engagement has enabled us to respond more promptly and directly to stakeholder suggestions and ideas.



Building strong lineside neighbour relationships

Our relationship with our lineside neighbours is extremely important to us but we don't always get things right. Poor communication and misunderstanding can frustrate and complicate any relationship however with clear dialogue and openness we can correct this. As an example, over the past two years we've worked closely with our lineside neighbours at Kildun Farm, Dingwall, to resolve a number of issues which had been ongoing for years.

Through improved dialogue between both sides, a better understanding of the issues and constraints on both parties, and co-operation on matters of common interest, we not only addressed the issues raised,

we developed a mutual partnership to improve the spawning grounds for sea trout and salmon last Autumn.

The Ussie burn passes under the railway bridge at Dingwall and runs through Kildun farm in an artificial channel. It is an important spawning ground for sea trout and salmon and connects Loch Ussie to the River Conon. Led by our lineside neighbours at Kildun, Network Rail Scotland, SEPA and Cromarty Firth Fisheries all worked together to rescue the fish and undertake the necessary works to the burn and bridge. Used railway sleepers were used to build weirs to create spawning and resting areas for sea trout and salmon.

“

We had several years of issues with Network Rail over lack of maintenance of rail side ditches causing significant flooding on our farm. Following a meeting arranged by our MSP Kate Forbes both parties gained an understanding of the constraints and issues we were facing. I am pleased to say we have gone on to build a very constructive relationship with

Network Rail. This has allowed them to carry out significant maintenance work on their bridge and at the same time work with us on a conservation project. I would hope this becomes the model for future relationships elsewhere.

Alasdair Macnab, Kildun Farm, Lineside Neighbour

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“

I realise farming is a tough industry so I'm always keen to help farmers in my constituency. A number of issues stemming from a lack of maintenance by Network Rail had gone unresolved with Alasdair Macnab struggling to have these looked into. I took up the case for Alasdair and was pleased that, after inviting Network Rail to Kildun Farm to see the problems first hand, there was acknowledgement of past failures and an agreement to work constructively towards solutions.

Kate Forbes MSP for Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch and Cabinet Secretary for Finance

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Community engagement during COVID-19

At the outset of any project, building links within the community is an important first step. However the unprecedented circumstances created by the pandemic led us to approach community engagement activities in a new way. Harnessing technology enabled us to engage and communicate with local communities and provided an opportunity to meet the project teams and share their views with us.

We also developed and maximised the use of the Scotland's Railway website, creating 12 dedicated online hubs to support the promotion of our projects and to facilitate direct contact between Scotland's Railway and communities.

Since its launch in March 2020, the website and the project hubs have received

57,907
page views –

including
43,368
unique views –

from
20,120
users

The website provides information about our projects on a larger scale than ever before. It includes animations, images and videos while allowing new opportunities for engagement between Scotland's Railway and communities.

The most significant opportunity that the website has created has been the ability to facilitate online public drop-in sessions.

By attending these events online, members of the public have been able to speak to members of a project team at once – something that hasn't always been possible at in-person events.

By using these methods of communication, we have been able to establish if projects are welcomed and supported by local communities while also being able to focus in on some of the key issues raised.

For all our enhancement projects our teams are also continuing to engage with communities and stakeholders via email, social media and traditional media. Ensuring that we are listening to communities, being as transparent and inclusive as possible, and that we have effective processes to encourage and support our engagement is essential to us. Although COVID-19 removed our ability to engage in some ways, it has pushed us to review and re-examine how we can engage smarter, and moving forward we now have an effective tool to do that.



Leven stakeholder engagement

Our Leven project team used Microsoft teams to showcase their proposals during 36 appointments with members of the public over three evenings. The places were bookable on the Levenmouth pages of the Scotland' Railway web site. The quality of the engagement was excellent. Those who attended the online sessions had a good knowledge of the project and an active interest in our plans.

The Leven team has also worked hard to build links with local elected members – MPs, MSPs and councillors. Recognising their important role in representing their constituents and working for their communities, we will maintain and enhance our links with this group throughout the project.

As well as engaging with the local community on the project plan we have also been able to give something to the community – from our vegetation clearance we were able to support a

local community group by donating logs and chippings which will be used by The Bayview Men's Shed to work with members to share and develop skills and provide social interaction and support.

The positive sentiment towards the reinstatement of the line has given us a solid foundation for the next steps. In 2021 we are looking forward to meeting the community in person and conducting further engagement as the project evolves and develops.

For our enhancement projects, this year we –

Held
12 virtual briefing sessions
with elected reps

Developed briefing notes for stakeholders on
63 different issues

Participated in
28 local community and stakeholder meetings

Issued notification letters for
42 activity updates

Launched our web portal with nearly
60,000 page views



Kintore Station back on the rail map

In October Kintore station re-opened to passengers after an absence of more than five decades. Network Rail worked closely with Aberdeenshire Council to provide a £15m station interchange, with bus links, bicycle storage facilities and integration with the A96 cycle path. The station provides step-free access between platforms and also has the largest electric vehicle charging location in the north east of Scotland.

Throughout construction, we worked closely with lineside neighbours and stakeholders - sharing information, responding to any issues and questions, and holding site visits with local elected representatives.

Our focus on maintaining good communication with our lineside residents and local neighbours in the Kintore area, especially those who needed extra help to get to know the new station, led us to host a 'familiarisation' event.

Several local groups, including the Central Aberdeenshire access panel and the Kintore Additional Needs Parent Support Group (KANP) joined us for the session.

We also hosted an Emergency Services visit on site with Fire Scotland, Police Scotland, the Ambulance Service and British Transport Police. This was an opportunity for our Emergency Services to familiarise themselves with the new station and have a guided tour before it opened to the public.





was shared in classrooms and we challenged local pupils to create a rail safety poster. The winning posters were proudly displayed locally in Kintore and the successful pupils and schools received prizes.

We are delighted that the new station has been so well received and is already viewed as an important addition to the community and transport links in the north east.

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We found the visit very beneficial before it opened as it gave us a chance to see how accessible it is. We felt it was a good station and to see it before it opened to the public allowed us as the Access Panel for the area to report to our local community on how accessible it was. We took a video on the day and posted it on our Facebook page.

Kirstie Black, Aberdeenshire access panel

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During these unprecedented times making sure everyone was safe and followed protocols was essential.

This included a COVID-19 declaration form 24 hours before the visit and wearing masks and gloves and maintaining physical distancing.

During the project we developed a rail safety presentation and video which



Engagement with elected representatives

Each year Scotland's Railway engages with our elected representatives through a variety of channels. From our twice yearly appearance at the Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee to our quarterly drop ins at Holyrood and Westminster, we recognise it is vital to update Scotland's MPs and MSPs on our plans and activities and be available to answer any questions they may have.

And this year has been no exception. Through a range of virtual and online meetings we have appeared before the

Scottish Parliament's Rural Economy and Connectivity and COVID-19 Committees, held five drop in sessions for MPs and MSPs as well as a full meeting programme with elected representatives covering issues from our enhancement programme and delivering services during the pandemic to our plans to decarbonise the rail network and weather resilience.

These sessions are always informative and invaluable – providing us with insights from local communities and constituencies, as well as challenging us to strive to improve what we do and how we do it.



Contact

If you want to get in touch please contact us by:



03457 11 41 41



for **Typetalk** dial **18001** followed by **03457 11 41 41**



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