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**From:** [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 23 January 2017 10:55  
**To:** Minister for Transport and the Islands  
**Cc:** [Redacted]

[Redacted]

**Subject:** EDC A81 Corridor Study - Summary for MTI - 23 January 2017

Minister,

Please find attached a briefing and draft response relating to East Dunbartonshire Council's A81 Corridor Study for your consideration.



EDC A81 STAG -  
Briefing for MT...

Happy to discuss.

Kind Regards,

[Redacted]  
Major Transport Infrastructure Projects  
Technical Analysis Branch  
T: [Redacted]



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Transport Scotland, the national transport agency  
*Còmhhdhail Alba, buidheann nàiseanta na còmhhdhail*

From: [REDACTED]  
MTRIPS  
23 January 2017

Minister for Transport and the Islands

### **Purpose**

1. To provide an overview of the A81 Corridor STAG appraisal commissioned by East Dunbartonshire Council and undertaken by consultants WSP.

### **Priority**

2. Routine – East Dunbartonshire Council are keen to receive our response to inform updates to the report and feedback to their elected members.

### **Overview**

3. Following a number of years of discussion, correspondence and calls for a new rail station at Allander, the consultant team **instructed by East Dunbartonshire Council** (EDC) have prepared a draft transport appraisal report. This considers the issues and options for improvements to transport links in and around the A81 corridor through Milngavie and Bearsden. Transport Scotland officials have offered advice on the approach and technical content of the appraisal.

4. This report is titled 'A81 Transport Options Appraisal Study - Final Draft Report - December 2016'.

5. It recommends that options to consider additional parking and improved access to existing stations at Milngavie and Hillfoot should be considered further and that a new station at Allander should not. The station option is not recommended due to its poor alignment with the transport planning objectives developed as part of the study, relatively low BCR, risks and uncertainties around rail infrastructure costs. A new station and associated park and ride facility is also likely to have a potential adverse impact on the A81 corridor and the local road network which would provide access to the site.

6. A copy of the proposed response to the study which would be issued by Transport Scotland to EDC and their consultants is provided at **Annex A**.

### **Sensitivities**

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

7. The A81 corridor lies in the constituency of Mr Gil Paterson MSP (SNP) and he has voiced support for the new station proposals. Mr Paterson asked the following in Parliament during general questions on 11 February 2016:

***Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP):*** To ask the Scottish Government what impact the closure of the Glasgow Queen Street tunnel will have on commuters in the Clydebank and Milngavie constituency. (S4O-05562)

***The Minister for Transport and Islands (Derek Mackay):*** The ScotRail alliance has developed a temporary timetable for the Queen Street tunnel closure that minimises the impact on all commuters and allows the vast majority of customers to continue to travel to and from Glasgow by train. Four services will continue to operate each hour from Milngavie to Glasgow, and customers using Clydebank will experience a reduced service from four to two trains per hour. During the tunnel closure, there will be twelve trains each hour connecting the west of the city with Glasgow Queen Street low level and Glasgow Central low level.

***Gil Paterson:*** With the upgrading works taking place at Queen Street to enhance our railways, will the minister, after the works are carried out, look at the possibility of a feasibility study for a rail halt at the Allander leisure centre, located on the branch line between Hillfoot and Milngavie, in order to increase capacity?

***Derek Mackay:*** I understand that the council is carrying out an appraisal of that in line with our guidance. I am happy to look at the matter and to give it due consideration through, for example, the Scottish stations fund.

8. Bearsden North & Milngavie Community Councils have also been strong advocates of a station at Allander, commissioning an independent consultant in 2014 to review technical aspects of delivering a station. The report focused on the gradient of the track at the proposed location and the timetable at the time and concluded that these issues would not preclude delivery of a single platform station.

## Recommendations

The Minister is invited to

- Note the detail and findings of the appraisal commissioned by East Dunbartonshire Council.
- Note the sensitivities associated with the history of the study.
- Confirm that he is content that the proposed response from Transport Scotland can be issued.

Contact: 

**A81 Transport Options Appraisal Study  
Final Draft Report - December 2016**

Report commissioned by East Dunbartonshire Council and Completed by WSP

**Transport Scotland Response**

**17 January 2017**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the A81 Transport Options Appraisal Study report which is, in general, well laid out and presented in an easily readable manner.

**Previous Comments**

This report follows the previous studies of the A81 corridor commissioned by East Dunbartonshire Council and undertaken by AECOM in 2008 and 2015. Transport Scotland comments at the time of the 2015 study noted that the potential scale and impact of the interventions being considered required that a more robust evidence based rationale needed to be established.

The current report provides a stronger basis from which to consider decisions and addresses many of the key issues which we have previously highlighted, including the refinement of the issues/problems and the links to appropriate and SMART TPOs. The following comments expand on those discussed at the meeting of 15 December 2016.

**Executive Summary**

We note the overview of the studies undertaken to date and the key outcomes of the updated appraisal and suggest that this could benefit from some updates to include a narrative on why there is no mention of bus based interventions along the route, if indeed these have been sifted out completely at this stage. It is understood that there may be limited potential for significant bus interventions within the area of study. However, as discussed at the meeting, there may be potential to unpack some of the smaller scale options in the appraisal (such as SCOOT, passenger information etc.) as these may provide benefit in their own right.

The concluding paragraph indicates 'Do Something 1' as the preferred option but we suggest that it should read 'Do Something 1A'. This also occurs in Chapter 8 'Preferred Option' and should be changed for consistency. Paragraph 7.2.1 the 'Do Something 1A' scenario is referred to when it should be the 'Do Minimum'.

**Problems, Opportunities, Issues and Constraints**

The problems identified have largely been based on the previous studies but have been rationalised and used to inform the Transport Planning Objective more directly. We note that the links between the problems and the TPOs have been more robustly evidenced and relate to specific issues along the A81 corridor.

### **Option Development, Sifting and Refinement**

As discussed at the meeting of 15 December, the packaging of some options for improving bus services may have led to the early sifting of smaller scale interventions such as SCOOT and passenger information. However, the way in which the options have been packaged is welcomed, providing a scale of options including a range of interventions.

As noted in our previous responses, the rail options which consider double tracking could have potential wider network benefits. However, these potential benefits would be unlikely to directly impact the A81 corridor or address the TPOs for this study. It is therefore considered that the detailed consideration of these complex interactions is not required as part of this study. Acknowledgement is given in the text to the potential additional considerations and it may be useful to note that any benefits to the wider network which may emerge from double tracking some or all of the line from north of Hillfoot to Milngavie, would be offset to some extent by the inclusion of a new station with additional stopping time and potential timetabling impacts.

### **Option 1A - Expansion of Milngavie Station car park and extension of the Bears Way**

The concept of improving access and adding additional car parking at existing local stations could increase the attractiveness of rail on this corridor. Better accessibility at and around the Milngavie station and town centre may help with balancing demands and creating a more connected place overall. We note the appraisal suggests further consideration of this option.

### **Option 1B – Option 1A with in the inclusion of parking at Southern Kilmardinny**

As above, providing better access to the station and facilities around Hillfoot could address the TPOs outlined in the appraisal for the corridor. It is recognised that the options for parking provision are limited but there may be merit in further consideration of the remote provision as a park and choose site with the options of access to the bus network on the A81 and access to Hillfoot station and other local amenities at and to the north of the station.

### **Option 2A – Single track platform railway station at Allander**

While the new station option is potentially an opportunity to increase the use of rail the relative lack of housing within an acceptable walk-in catchment area works against it and hence the park and ride element needs to be fully understood. It would be useful if a simplified summary of the single platform rail option cost assumptions was included within the appendices or the main body of the report along with a basic explanation of the factoring which has been used to get to the BCR.

The appraisal notes that the car parking on the site has been tested at 150 spaces and 550 spaces but it is made clear that no assessment has been made of the negative impacts and potential additional mitigation costs associated with traffic travelling along the A81 and entering / leaving the site.

The potential for additional levels of traffic on the A81 route as a result of a larger car park could have significant negative implications. In light of this, the significant cost and low BCR levels, we note that the appraisal suggests that this option should not be considered further.

**Option 2B – Double platform railway station at Allander and double tracking between Hillfoot and Milngavie**

As with Option 2A, while a new station option is potentially an opportunity to increase the use of rail, the relative lack of housing within an acceptable walk-in catchment area works against it and hence the park and ride element needs to be fully understood. It would be useful if a simplified summary of rail option cost assumptions for the double platform option was included within the appendices or the main body of the report along with a basic explanation of the factoring which has been used to get to the BCR.

The appraisal notes that car parking for the park and ride has been tested at 150 spaces and 550 spaces but is made clear that no assessment has been made of the negative impacts and potential additional mitigation costs associated with traffic travelling along the A81 and entering / leaving the site, as with Option 2A.

The BCR calculation in Table 7-15 needs to be updated as the capital costs for Option 2B have been noted as being the same as Option 2A but the appendix notes that they should be circa £2million higher.

As noted previously the wider benefits of rail track doubling are unlikely to be realised within the study area and therefore are not seen as particularly relevant to this study. Track doubling of a certain length would be required to achieve a two platform station and offset some of the additional stopping time and timetable issues and we note that an allowance of £20 million has been made for this. However, even considering a sensitivity test based on removing the £20million allowance, the option still returns BCR values of around 0.67 (150 spaces) and 1.04 (550 spaces) based on the information in the report and again without considering the off-site impacts and potential additional costs.

Similarly to Option 2A, the study has highlighted there are limited benefits and potentially significant implications in providing a double track double platform station at this location. We note that the appraisal suggests that this option should not be considered further.

**Summary**

Transport Scotland acknowledges the work undertaken on the appraisal of transport issues around the A81 corridor through Milngavie and Bearsden and the recommendation to take forward more detailed work on options for additional parking and improved access to existing stations. Transport Scotland notes the comments around the significant costs with risks any new rail station development.

Transport Scotland would be happy to work with EDC and their consultants in taking forward or refining the outcomes of the appraisal and look forward to continued engagement.