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Friends of the Far North Line



SCOTLAND'S RAILWAY
BETTER IN THE MAKING

About me



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- Director Engineering and Asset Management for Scotland's Railway.
- Responsible for the safe, reliable and effective operation of the mainline rail infrastructure assets including maintenance and asset capital investment programmes.
- I have 40 years in the rail industry, involving various leadership roles across maintenance strategy and delivery, capital programme delivery, innovation, and signalling.
- My first role in the railway was as an apprentice on the Far North Line.
- Previously the Director Sponsorship and Business Development, accountable for the efficient and effective delivery of the circa £2bn capital investment programme for Scotland's Railway.

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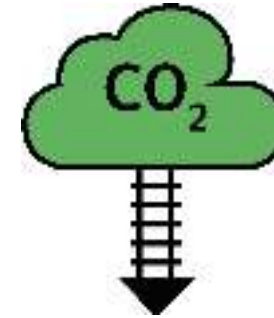
Five priorities



Reduce net cost



**Run a reliable
railway**



**Taking climate
action**



**Everyone home
safe every day**



**Track and train
working together**

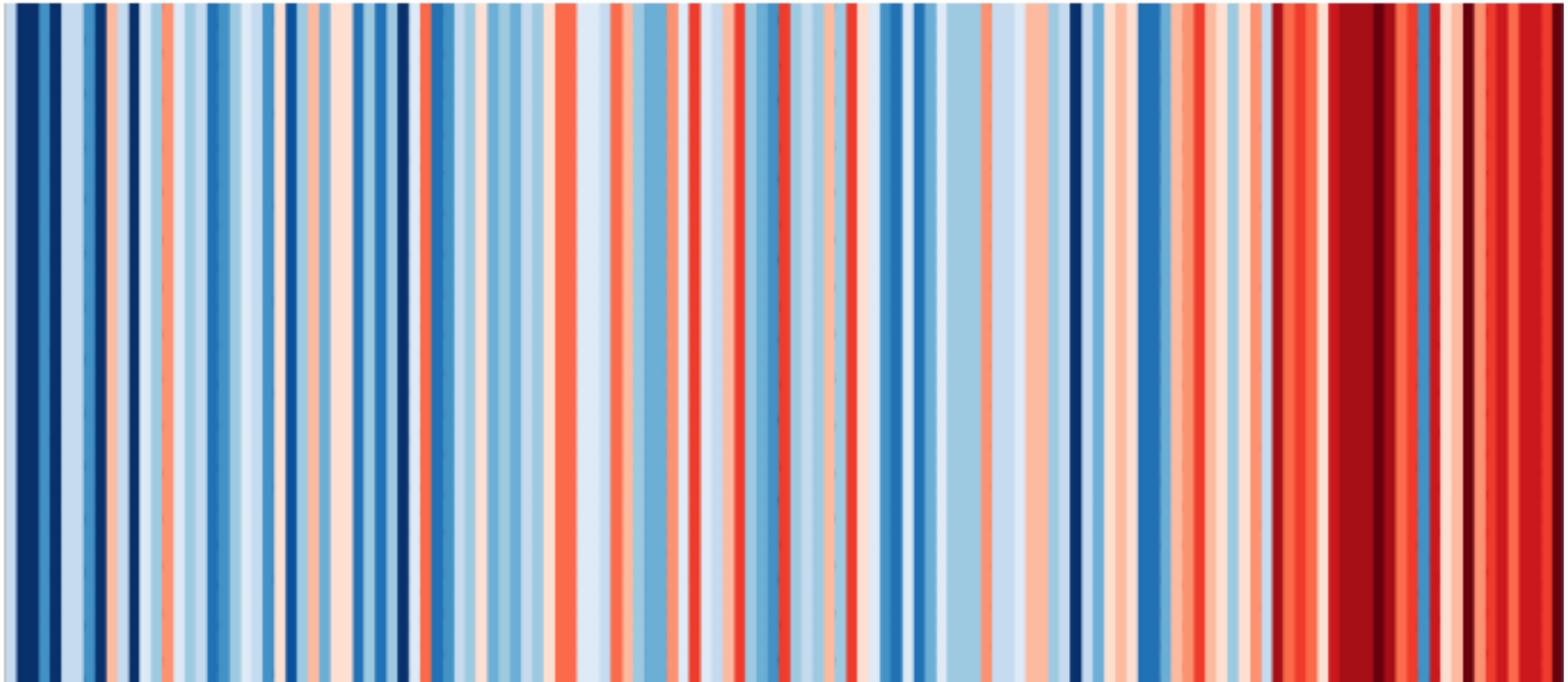
Putting priorities into practice

- £4.8bn will be invested across Scotland over the next five years. We'll deliver on our objectives set with government, which include:
 - Improve punctuality
 - Reduce delays and
 - Build resilience in the face of our changing weather
- Includes over £2bn of investment in renewing key infrastructure
- Over £1bn of investment in maintaining Scotland's Railway
- Climate mitigation plans
- Reduce costs



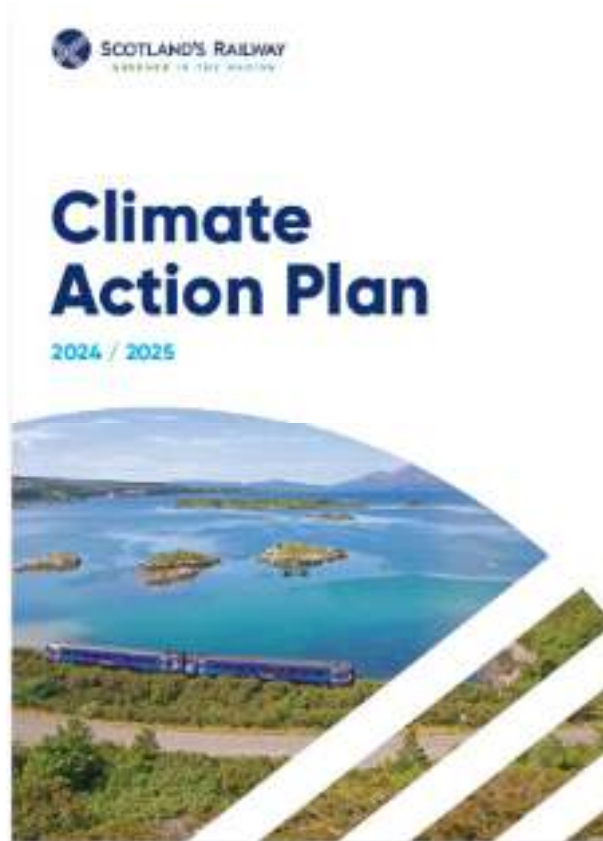
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Scotland's changing climate



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Resilience



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Far North Line Seawall



- In 2023, storms caused extensive damage to a section of the seawall protecting the railway at Lothbeg, between Brora and Helmsdale.
- This caused 18 metres of wall to be washed away in two locations
- As this is a Site of Specific Scientific Interest, we worked closely with NatureScot and specialist track machines were used to replace the stone

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Renewals on the Far North Line

We are delighted that the Far North Line has now reopened following £11.5m renewals. This included...

- Refurbishing a five-mile section of track between Brora and Helmsdale, some of which dated back a century
- Replacing nearly nine miles of ageing rail between Invergordon and Fearn
- Changing around 2,500 sleepers
- During 3-week closure, 6,720 hours were worked by NR staff
- Colleagues also took part in 49 hours of volunteering in the local community



Request-stop kiosks



- We have increased the number of request-stop kiosks along the Far North Line
- Kiosks were installed at Kinbrace, Kildonan, Rogart, Invershin, Culrain, Scotsalder in 2022
- Altnabreac and Dunrobin Castle have taken total to eight
- Roll-out was part of a broader £5m investment in the line's radio signalling system.

Inverness and beyond

- Inverness is the gateway to the Highlands and we have ambitious plans to make rail the preferred method of travel
- We're developing a strategy alongside stakeholders to create a vision that will improve experiences for passengers travelling to Inverness and how this will impact the Far North Line
- This includes speaking with tourists as part of our Tourism Strategy, and exploring the benefits of charters for the rail industry, the economy, and rural areas as part of our Charter and Heritage Strategy



Far North Line Passengers

Through the mobile network data payment, card data and other sources, eight markets have been identified along the Far North Line

1. **'Inverness to Alness'** – Relatively short distance commuting and leisure market from nearby residential area to Inverness
2. **'Inverness – Tain'** – Middle distance market on the route, marking the extent of commuting to the central belt on this corridor, but also including some leisure travel
3. **'Inverness – Wick//Thurso'** – A longer distance market beyond Tain serving leisure journeys and lifeline journeys to Inverness, such as specialist hospital visits.
4. **'Inverness, Beauly, Muir of Ord'** – Commuting and leisure journeys between these three areas.
5. **'Inverness, Beauly, Muir of Ord, Conon Bridge – Dingwall'** – Commuting and leisure journeys between these settlements and Dingwall
6. **'Dingwall - Alness'** – Local Journeys in this part of the corridor
7. **'Alness – Tain'** – Local Journeys between these settlements
8. **'Thurso – Wick'** – Local Journeys between two urban areas in the north of the corridor.

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Timetabling for improved performance



- We continue to learn more about our passengers and the markets on the line
- From this information, we can begin to establish travel patterns and look at how we can improve passenger experience
- Work is ongoing on Focus Journey Time improvements and analysing comparative journey time across other modes of transport to identify rail's competitiveness

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Thank you



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Any questions?

