

Your Ref. JM/MG/ScotRail
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Constituency Office
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Dear John

Edinburgh – Glasgow via Airdrie line timetable

Thank you for your letter dated 8th July concerning the service between the stations in your constituent to Edinburgh.

The timetable introduced for the Queen Street tunnel closure has been the first major change in the corridor between Queen Street and Airdrie since the Airdrie to Bathgate line opened in December 2010. With the original timetable introduced, we were directed to minimise journey times between Glasgow and Edinburgh as far as possible. This led to the structure where 2 services each hour stopped at all stations and two trains were very limited stop. This also resulted in the "slow" train running immediately after the "fast train" in the eastbound direction, effectively meaning that stations in West Lothian perceived they only had a two trains per hour service in one direction, but a four trains per hour service in the other.

In planning for the Queen Street tunnel closure we assessed the actual journeys made on this corridor in detail. Most journeys were from/to Glasgow for stations as far as Drungelloch and to/from Edinburgh for stations as far as Armadale. The volume of travel between East Glasgow/North Lanarkshire and Edinburgh and from West Lothian to Glasgow has not been as high as we would have expected. Consultation with stakeholders identified that the limited stop service did not provide a broad enough connectivity, and the service which called at all stations was perceived as too slow.

We therefore developed a sustainable timetable to be introduced during the Queen Street tunnel closure which would provide faster journey times for those customers who wished to travel between the east end of Glasgow to Edinburgh and also West Lothian to Glasgow. We are keeping this timetable structure in place once the tunnel opens to assess customer reaction.

As before /

As before, the five stations in your constituency will receive 4 direct trains per hour to Glasgow and 2 to Edinburgh. Journey times to Edinburgh and key stations en route such as Bathgate and Livingston North are around 5 minutes quicker than previously. Easterhouse and Garrowhill also benefit from 2 services to Glasgow each hour being limited stop. In seeking to provide the fastest journey times for the majority of customers, we have retained the skip stopping service in the evening. Unfortunately, this means that people returning from Edinburgh require to change at Airdrie or Coatbridge.

In restructuring the timetable, this has meant that service intervals to/from Glasgow for Shettleston, Carntyne and Bellgrove are 10:20 minutes rather than the close to 15 minutes they were previously. This has been unavoidable due to constraints around timetabling at major junctions in the west of Glasgow and at Newbridge on the approach to Edinburgh.

We have received positive feedback on the altered timetable in the Helensburgh/Balloch/Milngavie – Airdrie and Edinburgh corridor from the majority of customers during the Queen Street tunnel closure. We will closely monitor feedback and passenger numbers to assess if it has been successful in encouraging more people to travel to Edinburgh from east Glasgow and North Lanarkshire.

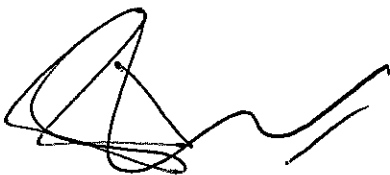
Your point about information being provided on the Customer Information Screens (CIS) at stations as well as announcements made at station and on trains about where and when to change has been noted. Interchange announcements at stations are actually specified by Transport Scotland as part of the ScotRail Franchise Service Quality Regime. Specific announcements are made on approach to certain stations where it is possible to change on to another line (e.g. at Paisley Gilmour Street where you can change from an Ayr train on to a Gourock train), or where you can change to another mode of transport (e.g. the bus and tram link at Haymarket).

The stations where we make these announcements were reviewed last year by Transport Scotland and were actually reduced as it was considered there were too many. We don't make announcements on train where it's possible to change from one train on to another with a different calling pattern. This would apply across the network on most routes. We have also had complaints about the number of announcements we do make on trains.

We will look to see if it possible to have this information displayed on the CIS monitors at stations. This would require extensive work to post on the CIS as we would need to create new rule changes for each individual station and train service.

I am grateful to you for taking the time to write to me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Phil Verster', written in a cursive style.

Phil Verster
Managing Director
ScotRail Alliance