

Subject: FW: PRESS RELEASE: Queen Street tunnel to close for 20 weeks

From: Louise Walsh

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To: communications <communications@scotrail.co.uk>

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QUEEN STREET TUNNEL TO CLOSE FOR 20 WEEKS

- **Major publicity campaign launched to ensure that customers have the information they need to keep moving during the closure.**
- **Trains will continue to run in and out of Glasgow, but journeys will take longer.**
- **Work will support the introduction of faster, longer, greener trains to Scotland's rail network.**

The ScotRail Alliance today launched a major publicity campaign to ensure that customers have all the information they need to keep moving when Queen Street tunnel closes for twenty weeks between 20 March and 8 August 2016.

The £60m project will renew nearly 2km of ageing slab-track through Queen Street tunnel and enable faster, longer, greener trains to operate on Scotland's rail network from later this year.

The closure of the tunnel will mean that trains that would normally run in and out of Queen Street High Level will be diverted to either Queen Street Low Level or Glasgow Central. This will mean changes to existing timetables and, in many cases, longer journey times.

A dedicated webpage (www.scotrail.co.uk/QueenStreetTunnel) launches today to give people information about the impact on their own journey. This will be supported over the coming weeks with advertising, business briefings and customer information at stations, on train and online.

Additional carriages will be added to services that are running to provide as much extra capacity as possible, and queuing systems will be in place at Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh Waverley at peak times.

Phil Verster, managing director of the ScotRail Alliance, said: "Glasgow Queen Street is one of the busiest stations in Scotland. Every day, tens of thousands of people travel through the station on their way to work, to college or university or to visit friends. People will still be able to do that while the tunnel is closed - the railway is still very much open for business. However, they will see changes to their normal journey. We want to make sure that everyone understands what these change mean for them.

"That is why we are launching our biggest ever public information campaign. In the run up to the closure we will be speaking directly to our customers, to businesses, and to public bodies to give them the information they need and to answer any questions that they might have.

"Upgrading the tunnel will allow us to run faster, longer, greener trains in the future. This will mean more seats, shorter journey times and less impact on our environment. The long term benefits of this investment will be considerable, not just for our railway, but also for the country."

Transport Minister Derek Mackay said: "This is a significant milestone in our £5 billion programme of investment in Scotland's Railway which is helping to reverse decades of under-investment and substantially modernise our rail infrastructure.

“This is a once in a generation project and one of the most ambitious ever planned on the Edinburgh-Glasgow route. The works will support the introduction of a new generation of faster, quieter and greener electric trains on routes across the Central Belt next year.

“Although I understand that this work will cause some inconvenience to passengers, the ScotRail Alliance is working to ensure that services are maintained where possible, disruption is kept to a minimum and that passengers are kept well informed throughout the work.

“I would like to thank passengers in advance for their cooperation and understanding during the tunnel closure.”

Customers can check their own journey online now, with full timetables available to download from 20 February.

Tunnel/engineering/project enquiries

Nick King: 0141 555 4109 / 07825 766 364

Customer/timetable enquiries

Clare Todd/Louise Walsh: 0141 335 5152 / 0141 335 4506 or email communications@scotrail.co.uk

NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS

Summary of amended services during the tunnel closure

Aberdeen/Inverness - Glasgow

These services will retain their existing number of trains each hour. However, services will be diverted to Glasgow Central where there are more retail facilities and more space for customers who have luggage or are travelling in groups. This also gives ScotRail more time to prepare the trains before departure with seat reservation labels and catering trolleys. Services to Edinburgh from these locations are unaffected.

Journey times for those travelling to Glasgow will be between 30-40 minutes longer. However, those travelling in either direction north of Stirling, will find their journeys substantially unaffected, barring minor timetable alterations.

NOTE: Last service from GLC to Aberdeen departs between 20-30 minutes **earlier** than it would normally leave from Queen Street.

Arbroath / Dundee / Perth – Glasgow

Some of these services will use Glasgow Queen Street, others Glasgow Central, depending on where the journey originates. Customers should check their journeys in advance so they know their arrival station. Some services that currently terminate at Dunblane will be extended to Perth during the tunnel closure, providing additional options for customers in the Perth area.

Edinburgh – Glasgow (normally via Falkirk High)

- **Fastest option:** Customers travelling ‘end to end’ between Edinburgh and Glasgow should use the route via Bathgate and Airdrie, which will have four trains per hour throughout the day, taking around 70 minutes. Almost every train on this route will be the maximum six carriages. Customers travelling end to end between Glasgow and Edinburgh should aim to travel on these alternative routes between 7am and 7pm each day.
- **Diverted option:** Customers who travel from **Linlithgow, Polmont, Falkirk High and Croy** will follow a diverted route to and from Glasgow Queen Street Low Level. Two trains per hour for all except Croy which will have four. *This is a reduction for Falkirk High customers from four to two.* Journeys will take approximately 25 minutes longer. Note: ‘end to end’ customers may also use this route but it is not recommended.
- **Other options:** Two trains per hour go via **Shotts/Carstairs** to Glasgow Central taking between 1hr 18 and 1hr 31. There is also one train every two hours between Glasgow Central and Edinburgh via Motherwell and Carstairs, with a journey time between 1hr and 1hr 10.

Stirling / Alloa / Dunblane / Larbert – Glasgow

Customers will have a half hourly service to both Edinburgh and Glasgow. Monday- Saturday, customers from these areas will be diverted into and out of Glasgow Queen St Low Level. Journeys will take approx. 25 minutes longer.

The following two routes are combined during the tunnel closure to give a new, hourly Falkirk Grahamston – Anniesland service via Cumbernauld and Springburn.

Falkirk Grahamston / Cumbernauld - Glasgow

Falkirk Grahamston customers should change at Cumbernauld or Springburn for a connection to Glasgow.

Cumbernauld / Greenfaulds / Stepps / Gartcosh customers – Glasgow will be reduced to two services per hour all day (normally three) - one direct and one requiring a change at Springburn.

Customers are advised to use the ScotRail app or the journey planner on the ScotRail website to work out what works best for them.

Anniesland – Glasgow (via Maryhill)

Reduced to hourly – normally has two trains per hour all day. Passengers from Ashfield, Possilpark and Parkhouse, Gilshochill, Summerston, Maryhill and Kelvindale will have a choice to make (Mon-Sat):

- travel west towards Anniesland (hourly service) – changing trains there - to reach Glasgow Queen Street; or
- catch an eastbound train towards Falkirk Grahamston, changing trains at Springburn for Glasgow Queen St Low Level.

Customers are advised to carefully check which journey opportunity gives them a shorter journey.

On Sundays, services between Anniesland and Glasgow Queen Street will terminate and start from Ashfield. Passengers travelling to Glasgow Queen Street from Ashfield, Possilpark and Parkhouse, Gilshochill, Summerston, Maryhill and Kelvindale should travel west to Anniesland and change trains to reach Glasgow Queen Street.

Note: FirstGlasgow operate several buses in the Anniesland area, and customers may wish to check if using these buses will offer a quicker journey.

Fife - Glasgow

Two services each day currently operate directly between Fife and Glasgow. During the tunnel closure a change at Haymarket will be required:

0713 Kirkcaldy – Glasgow Queen Street – runs to Haymarket only

1733 Glasgow Queen Street – Markinch – cancelled

Mallaig / Fort William / Oban (and intermediate stations) - Glasgow

Services will use Glasgow Queen Street Low Level and take around 25 minutes longer. As these are ‘through’ platforms rather than at the end of a line, the time for getting on and off the train will be limited. Additional staff will be provided to help customers with luggage, cycles etc. Seat reservations and catering will continue to be provided.

Croy – Glasgow

All most trains from/to Stirling or Falkirk High direction will call at Croy on virtually the same frequency of four trains per hour to Glasgow and a half hourly service to Edinburgh and stations to Stirling. However, journeys will take approx. 25 minutes longer.

Bishopbriggs/ Lenzie - Glasgow

Large numbers travel between Bishopbriggs / Lenzie – Glasgow. Trains to / from Stirling, Dunblane and Alloa will continue to call at both stations every half hour. However an additional journey time of 25 minutes may make trains a less attractive option. A further factor is that peak time ‘additional’ services cannot be accommodated during the tunnel closure. Given this situation, we are working with local bus operators to run additional service buses at peak times during the tunnel closure. This will offer journey times of under 20 minutes. More details will be shared as soon as the timetables are finalised.

Helensburgh/Milngavie – Glasgow Queen St Low Level – Edinburgh

During the tunnel closure there will be new journey opportunities, different stopping patterns and fewer peak services. The average journey time between Edinburgh and Glasgow on this route will be 70 mins. The actual number of seats in the peak remains the same as now –we’ve just redistributed the carriages in a different way.

Other timetable alterations

A consequence of the tunnel closure is the need to reduce the number of local services in the west of the city. Some services will have minor alterations and re-timings on North Clyde routes, as will services that operate via Glasgow Central Low level (Argyle line). This is to accommodate the additional diverted services operating between Bellgrove/Queen Street Low Level and Anniesland. Two services per hour which normally run to/from Dalmuir via Yoker each hour will now start and finish at Anderston. Dalmuir - Cumbernauld services are extended to Dumbarton Central and one of these per hour will terminate at Springburn. By doing this, peak’ specials will not operate.

Buses

For Strathclyde area stations we have worked with commercial operators (FirstGlasgow and Stagecoach) to ensure customers continue to have choices in how they travel. We have also conducted research at key stations to check how and when customers travel. In most instances, the existing scheduled bus services have sufficient capacity to accommodate those who wish to switch to buses during the tunnel closure. Note: see Bishopbriggs and Lenzie.

Scale of the tunnel works

The planned engineering improvements, announced in 2014, are needed to address the deteriorating condition of the existing track – caused by a combination of the high number of trains using the infrastructure and by water infiltration.

During the 20-week closure, engineers will work around the clock to renew the two lines of track through the 918m-long tunnel. To do this they will need to remove 10,000 tonnes of concrete slab-track, install 1,800m of new slab-track and 4,000m of rails.

Separate to this work engineers will also take the opportunity to install equipment to carry the overhead power lines needed for the electrification of the railway as part of the Scottish Government's £742m Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Programme.

ScotRail's £475m train improvement plan

In December 2016 the ScotRail Alliance announced its largest-ever train improvement programme – pledging to deliver thousands of extra seats, new trains, improved accessibility and enhanced facilities such as at-seat power points and better wifi.

ScotRail will spend £475 million on the programme over the next seven years. This will see 75% of its train fleet either new or fully refurbished.

During the next three years:

- 180 carriages will be added to the fleet – bringing the total to almost 1,000
- Two-thirds of current ScotRail trains will be refurbished by 2018
- More than 17,000 at-seat power points will be added to trains
- 346 more trains will be equipped with free wifi
- And seven Class 320 trains will be introduced in Scotland from early 2016.

Louise Walsh

Media officer

ScotRail
Atrium Court
50 Waterloo Street
Glasgow
G2 6HQ

0141 335 4506 (o)
07841 269 495 (m)