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3 December 2018

Dear Keith,

Thanks for your recent correspondence regarding the upcoming timetable changes. Alex Hynes, our Managing Director, has asked me to thank you for your letter of 12 November, and to reply to you on his behalf. As you may be aware, I've now joined ScotRail as Operations Director, and it is good to be dealing with you again.

I can confirm that journeys between Stirling and Edinburgh will see significant change next month as we introduce the first phase of our Revolution in Rail.

Between now and the end of 2019, we are making a series of changes to improve journeys for customers travelling from Stirling. We are making changes to the timetable, the stations that the trains call at, and the trains that we operate on these services. ScotRail has worked closely with Transport Scotland, Sestrans, Tactran, West Lothian, Falkirk and Stirling Councils in developing these plans.

These changes will make the best of the significant investment in electrification and our new Hitachi class 385 electric trains. The introduction of the new trains will offer improved comfort and offer small journey time savings. However, feedback from our customers tells us that to make rail more attractive for commuting and leisure trips, journey times to Edinburgh must be much faster. To make significant improvements to journey times, we must make structural changes to the timetable.

For customers travelling to Edinburgh, our current morning peak timetable offers six journey opportunities arriving before 09:15, but has an irregular pattern, a long gap between arriving at Edinburgh at 07:32 and 08:17, with the next service arriving only a few minutes later. The consequence of this is that a large proportion of commuters from Stirling travel on the same train, the 07:31 from Stirling to Edinburgh, arriving into Edinburgh at 08:20.

In the evening peak, customers from Edinburgh to Stirling are more evenly spread and the 17:27 Edinburgh to Dunblane limited stop service does not have the same attraction despite the faster journey time.

Furthermore, services between Stirling and Edinburgh are busy with the substantial number of customers who board at Polmont and Linlithgow. Polmont and Linlithgow customers account for 40% of customers on this corridor.

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To offer a better service for customers along the whole route, we are splitting the service so that customers from Stirling will no longer catch the same train as customers from Polmont and Linlithgow for most of the day.

Services between Stirling and Edinburgh will no longer call at Polmont and Linlithgow during the day. This frees up a large number of seats on every train and allows the journey time to Edinburgh to be reduced. A new half-hourly service between Glasgow, Cumbernauld, Falkirk Grahamston and Edinburgh will call at Polmont and Linlithgow. This train will be less busy than the current services from the Stirling area, leaving more seats for customers at Falkirk, Polmont and Linlithgow travelling into Edinburgh during peak periods.

A small number of customers, around 210 single trips each day, travel between Stirling, Polmont and Linlithgow. We will continue to provide a direct service between these stations in the evenings but during the day, customers will have to change trains at Falkirk Grahamston. We recognise this is inconvenient, but the change provides more seats for all customers and allows more than 5,000 people per day travelling to Edinburgh to benefit from faster journey times.

As part of these changes, we want to make the service between Dunblane, Stirling and Edinburgh operate on a regular half hourly interval throughout as much of the day as possible. This means changing the times of some peak services but also means more early morning and late evening services.

Completion of the electrification of the route between Dunblane and Edinburgh allows us to introduce a new timetable on this route. Except for services that start or finish in Perth, all services between Dunblane, Stirling and Edinburgh will be operated by electric trains. Unfortunately, due to delays in the delivery of our new class 385 Hitachi electric trains we cannot introduce all elements of the new timetable at once.

Whilst the morning and evening limited stop service no longer runs there will be regular journey opportunities providing an arrival into Edinburgh every half hour in the morning peak and arrivals into Stirling every half hour in the evening. The final timetable will provide consistent journey times, with a journey comparable to today's limited stop services being offered throughout the day, saving between five and ten minutes. This will make rail much more competitive with road at all times of the day and encourage more people to use public transport – reducing congestion on the M9 corridor.

We recognise the new timetable may be slightly poorer for those who have built their working day around the times of the existing limited stop services and are happy with today's timetable, but the new timetable will provide a much improved choice for those who were constrained to using these services because they were the only viable options in the peaks.

Due to delays in the delivery of our new Hitachi electric trains, we have not been able to introduce our final timetable in December as originally planned.

An interim timetable will operate between December 2018 and May 2019. This provides more seats for customers, but average journey time savings are modest at only two minutes. The majority of services will be operated by our four carriage class 365 electric trains from December, with a small number of diesel trains continuing to operate between Stirling and Edinburgh, until we have

sufficient Hitachi class 385s next year. From December we will be able to offer more than 4,000 additional seats on this corridor.

We recognise that this interim timetable may be poorer for many customers who currently travel between Stirling and Edinburgh in the peaks. We apologise for this but have responded to the overwhelming requests from customers on the corridor that the priority is providing more seats as quickly as possible.

We hope that you and your constituents will recognise our plans will deliver a material improvement for the vast majority of our customers and that we have worked to limit the impact of the reduction in direct services between Stirling, Polmont and Linlithgow by retaining a direct service in the evenings when customers are more conscious of their personal safety and security. We are confident that the May 2019 timetable will resolve the majority of complaints.

We are happy to consider further changes between Stirling and Edinburgh in 2019. However, with the additional services between Falkirk Grahamston and Edinburgh, there is insufficient capacity on this corridor to run more services into Edinburgh on this corridor.

Thank you for taking the time to write. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Happy to meet if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

David



David Simpson
Operations Director, ScotRail