

David Beckett

It is disturbing to read of proposals affecting rail services in Scotland from 2014: even more disturbing that the "consultation" has been so low-key and so poorly publicised.

I refer specifically to the proposal that all rail services from south of the Border should be forced to terminate at Edinburgh (and presumably also Glasgow?) This would be to the serious detriment of at least three groups of traveller:

- 1 The residents of Fife, Angus, Kincardineshire and Aberdeen, who would suddenly discover that a service available to them since Victorian times had been withdrawn for no convincing reason.
- 2 Those who study or work north of the Forth. The line from the Forth Bridge to Aberdeen serves five universities. For those whose work involves travel to the hub of Scotland's oil industry, the inconvenience and delay caused by being turned out at Edinburgh would almost certainly make air travel a much preferable option.
3. The tourists, on whose impressions of Scotland so much depends for our future wellbeing. People visiting Britain are often familiar with European trains which provide seamless journeys through several different countries. Life is difficult enough for those who work in our tourist industry, without visitors taking home and spreading unfavourable reports of their Scottish experience.

Whatever the future holds for post-referendum Scotland it is surely vital that we are perceived as a forward-looking nation - an image that we will not achieve by tipping all rail passengers on to the platform at Waverley. There is little point in complaining that Scotland is not to enjoy a high speed rail link if we then pull up the drawbridge and sever the link we do have. If these negative proposals are implemented it will certainly not be because the public believes they will provide a superior service, but because the "consultation" process has been so stealthy and so poor.

Please do not inflict this damage on the wellbeing, the prosperity, and the image of 21st century Scotland.