



*The City and Royal Burgh of
Elgin Community Council*
Roads & Transportation Committee

Rail 2014 – Public Consultation
Transport Scotland
“Buchanan House”
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Thursday, 16 February 2012

Good Day to whom it may concern:

It is the overall view that this Community Council supports the Scottish Rail Network for passenger and freight upgrades, now and in future years that will help drive the Scottish economy forward.

We at the City & Royal Burgh of Elgin Community Council ask you to consider the following as our contribution to Rail 2014 – Public Consultation.

Infrastructure upgrade –

- To enable closer paths on the Edinburgh – Aberdeen main line, re-instate the middle road at Cupar and use as bi-directional express road.
- Re-instate Platform 3 at Arbroath, to be used as a refuge road off the main line, and turnaround for late running, with main line rail connections N & S/B.
- Make sure that enough crossovers are in place for flexibility of operation to accommodate any train breakdown between Aberdeen and Edinburgh.
- Glasgow – Perth: Re-instate the two middle roads at Larbert Station to allow express running between Glasgow and Perth non-stop, N & S/B. This to service the North, the Highlands and the NorthEast with faster point-to-point schedules.
- At Dunblane Station, use Platform 3 as the commuter route platform for S & N/B. Connect the south road of Platform 3 to the up and down main line that will do away with the north shunt to enter Platform 1 for Central Belt commuter trains S/B. This will allow entry from the south to Platform 3, a dwell, then a leave, all from the same platform, thus avoiding interface with a main line shunt.

Signalling upgrades –

- Aberdeen- Elgin – Inverness single track main line: Build into the signalling system for this single track main line that a following train can leave e. g. Elgin for Keith E/B prior to a train leaving the platform at Keith E/B and be controlled by the Home signal at Keith Junction. This will be the design for all stations on this line, thereby allowing closer paths in the same direction that will allow more robust flexibility and help late running. This design will be applied W/B also.

At present, an E/B train cannot leave Elgin until a previous E/B train has cleared the starter signals at Keith Signal Box.

- Make Keith Junction Signal Cabin the control cabin for the entire Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness line. Exactly the half way point on this route.
- Upgrade to electronic token system between Elgin and Nairn.

Types of long distance trains within Scotland.

- Develop a new branding called – “**InterCity – Scotland**”.
- Sell this new branding as upmarket.
- Purchase new inter-city trains dedicated to an Inter City network.
 - These trains be in 4 coach rakes, well appointed internally for longer distance journeys compared to a commuter train’s interior layout.
- They be appointed for comfort, many tables at large windows, similar to Class 170’s but of a higher standard. They be designed for corridor connect when two sets run in tandem.
- Contain secure luggage racks.
 - Have a secure private Guard’s compartment mid-train.
 - Offer a coffee shop / buffet in one coach with seating.
 - These trains will be flexible to couple to their own Class, and a variety of other Classes for flexibility, including breakdown.
 - Continue with First Class compartments, advertised and sold as business upmarket.

Caledonian Sleeper Services.

- Expand routes for the Caley Sleeper Services
- Look at attracting new customers by elongating routes or creating new routes.
- Start the east coast service to / from Elgin, via Aberdeen to London.
- Elgin yard can accommodate sleeper coach servicing.
- Flood alleviation project within Elgin will be completed.
- Start a new sleeper service from Oban, connecting with the Ft William service at Crianlarich.
- Consider a new sleeper service, Perth - London
- Invest in new coaching stock with interior layout as upmarket
- Consider HITACHI dual propulsion unit trains – electric overhead and under floor diesel power: Similar to the unit trains being developed to replace the Class 125 long distance trains by HITACHI near Newcastle.

Rail Stations.

- Offer up all Scottish Railway Stations to the public as clean, functional, well signed / posted, with amenities where practical.
- Signage in blue and yellow combination colours presents a clean-cut look.
- Re-instate a station at Kintore.
- Create a new station at Inverness Airport.
- Support an expanded "Friends Network" to care for floral displays at as many stations as possible throughout the Scottish rail network.

New Rail Routes.

- Re-instate the Strathmore line between Perth / Stanley Junction and Kinaber Junction that will serve Couper Angus, Forfar and many towns and districts in Angus and Perthshire. This route being a much more direct from Aberdeen to Glasgow.
- Create a new route to connect Inverurie / Oldmeldrum / Turriff / Banff / Buckie to Elgin that will service a large part of NorthEast Scotland's towns and villages.

Fares.

- Continue to offer advance fares bookings at a much-reduced cost.
- The Over 55 fares are very popular: Keep these on offer.
- Continue with the Seniors Rail-Card.
- Reduce the number of fares on offer to simplify the process for the public that will ease confusion.
- Train booking staff at all Scottish stations to be well acquaint with all levels of fares: Re-train where necessary when the system changes, and practical to so do.
- Fares should at all times be rationalised with cost of product and fair treatment of the passenger.
- Advance Tourist tickets, sold on the overseas market, as well as within Scotland and the UK. Should be well marketed, and governed by the buyer producing an overseas travel agents tour bundle, an airline / inter country rail, bus / passport / ticket.

Seamless Journeys.

- Wherever possible, seamless journeys should be the norm on the Scottish rail network
- It is considered a negative part of a journey if a passenger has to de-train and re-board a second train within any give time lapse on routes that clearly can benefit from through routing.
- On a very much upgraded InterCity Scottish rail network, seamless journeys have to be the ultimate challenge for route planners.

- Express running to and from the Central Belt from Perth to Glasgow and Dundee to Edinburgh S/B & N/B should become the norm, thereby allowing for much faster schedules from Elgin – Aberdeen and Inverness on through routed services.
- Through routed services to and from Scotland's NorthEast via Aberdeen and Inverness to the Central Belt must be seen as paramount to introduce as we move forward to the 2014 new ScotRail franchise.
- By supplying through routed services as part of an upgraded InterCity schedule, seamless journeys will become the norm. For example, Inverurie is a step in the right direction on the Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness main line for through routed services to and from the Central Belt, however, a large body of people exist between Inverurie – Elgin and Inverness presently relying on a trickle of through service. Serving a wide area such as Scotland's NorthEast and the Highlands, the people of these regions can be enticed out of the automobile to the train by offering through routed, faster service, which in turn are seamless journeys.

Freight Services.

- To give an important push for a modal shift of freight from road to rail, the Scottish Government must be seen to fully support this important issue, on environmental grounds, as well as take pressure off our road network and thus reduce the need to keep building super fast highways.
- Key towns and cities must be identified as distribution centres by the Scottish Government in co-operation with the rail freight industry and the road haulage fraternity: These will operate in harmony with the rail freight industry being responsible for the long haul, and the road haulage industry being responsible for the shorter collection and distribution of rail freight.
- For example, Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness are well placed geographically for the NorthEast and the Highlands to handle freight transfer from road to rail and rail to road.
- Create robust infrastructure at key distribution points within the Scottish rail network that will compliment quick handling of freight.

Cross Border day services.

- Edinburgh and Glasgow are well served by EastCoast and WestCoast express services to and from London, including CrossCountry. If the frequency and standards can be upgraded as part of these services, then this should be an ongoing matter with the passenger in mind.
- CrossCountry services must be maintained to a standard that offers the passenger flexibility of interchange with other CrossCountry network services, and or local services, keeping in mind the time involved for a transfer by a passenger.
- Consider a morning day cross border Class125 type service from Inverness - Elgin - Aberdeen to London with a mid day return from London on the East Coast main line to service Scotland's NorthEast.

- Consider routing a Cross Country service from Elgin – Aberdeen - Birmingham to Southampton, thereby offering a long distance service to a wide area of the NorthEast.
- It is indeed important that the Aberdeen and Inverness cross border day services are secured: Presently run by Class 125 trains.
- The layout and comfort of these Class 125 trains are of a good robust quality, and this quality of train interiors must be maintained in future new train builds.
- HITACHI are the preferred builders of the dual propulsion cross border day trains that will replace the aging Class125's, and will be built in the UK near Newcastle. It is important that these new trains get a very thorough testing in Scotland, especially on the Highland main line between Perth and Inverness to analyse their performance on the Drumochter and Slochd gradients. If snags occur, then these should be robustly pointed out by Transport Scotland / NetworkRail to the builder so that a successful remedy can be achieved, even if a more powerful engine unit is the solution.
- The interior design of the present CrossCountry fleet is not what is required. Packing people into small airline seats, with few tables in each coach is not pleasing for the passenger on a cross border long distance journey.

We conclude by suggesting that change / upgrade by the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland for the entire Scottish passenger and freight service network is very necessary to encourage that ever important modal shift from road to rail, within Scotland and cross border, with freight services going beyond into the Euro Zone.

Due to the constraints that the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland are under in putting the new Rail 2014 franchise out to bid, it is our hope that a homegrown Scottish rail company can secure this important franchise, especially where jobs are of extreme importance to the Scottish economy.

The standard required within the 2014 new franchise should be high and robust for Transport Scotland and the franchisee.

On behalf of my colleagues, may I thank you in advance for your consideration of our contribution to your Rail 2014 - Public Consultation.

Yours faithfully,



George P Littlejohn
Chair – Roads & Transportation Committee
C&RBoECC.

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Thursday, 16 February 2012

Subject: - The upgrading of the Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness main railway line for both passenger and freight service.

Although this paper has already been received by Transport Scotland, the content herein does fall within the remit of the 2014 Rail 2014 new ScotRail franchise

The above subject matter is of extreme importance to the NorthEast of Scotland and the Highlands.

The Beeching era from 1968 onwards has seen the demise of the NorthEast rail network that has left the passenger and freight-carrying railway routes of the region down to a skeleton of what they used to be. Consequently, the people of Scotland's NorthEast have had to cope with an inferior single line rail route service for a very long time.

The lifting of the double track between Keith and Aberdeen just after 1968 dealt the severest blow to this stretch of main line.

As we move to resurrect a much improved passenger and hopefully freight service for the Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness rail corridor, we offer considerations herein what we see as necessary rail upgrades to meet our 21st Century requirements in the following bullet form, which will indeed tie in with the new 2014 ScotRail franchise.

- Provide the necessary infrastructure to allow for an hourly service upgrade between Aberdeen- Elgin & Inverness, coupled to through routed service schedules for the Central Belt, either end.
- Provide infrastructure that will allow for a half hour service between Elgin and Inverness.
- Continue with local service to from Inverurie / Montrose & or points beyond.
- Cease the need for manual token exchange between Elgin & Nairn.
- Provide passing loops within platform parameters to allow trains to pass with a single dwell at platforms, thus eliminating present double dwell operation

necessity at Keith Junction and Forres stations due to passing loops that are outside single platform operation. (There is no need to move the platforms from where they are at present: Re-design, elongate or double them up to accommodate an 8-coach rake.)

- Construct an 'on the move' extended passing loop at or near Orbliston / Orton that will accommodate relief for a trapped schedule due to the longest single track mileage between 2 stations, Keith and Elgin, being 18 miles, taking an average of 23 minutes to travel each way on the present schedule, thereby interfering with schedule flexibility on this single track section of line.
 - Increase the length of all station platforms on the Aberdeen / Elgin / Inverness main line to accommodate an 8-coach train, that will be user friendly to a future double coupled 4-coach standard train.
 - Invest in a new design of 4 coach long distance trains that are fit for purpose - of interior design for the comfort of passengers on extended journeys within Scotland; and of a much higher standard than a commuter train, that will include ample secure luggage space, and a built in snack bar with some seating.
 - Introduce a new branding called, **InterCity - Scotland**
 - Introduce circular routes between Edinburgh and Glasgow to Scotland's NorthEast and the Highlands:
 - Edinburgh / Glasgow to - Aberdeen - Elgin - Inverness - Edinburgh / Glasgow, anti-clockwise.
 - Glasgow / Edinburgh to - Inverness - Elgin - Aberdeen - Glasgow / Edinburgh, clockwise - as new circular routes.
 - Circular route trains be scheduled to give a 5 minute dwell at Aberdeen & Inverness each direction for internal litter / toilet cleaning and crew change. More thorough cleaning can be done at Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh Waverley.
 - Consider splitting and attaching trains mid-route, such as at Perth and Dundee that will give further flexibility for trains working in tandem.
 - It is seamless journeys that the Scottish Rail travelling public aspire to, as the Scottish Government we trust will recognise and offer on longer distance routes that serve the NorthEast and the Highlands, to and from the Central Belt.
 - The aforementioned will negate the need for train transfer at Aberdeen and Inverness, which will support seamless journeys for the people of Moray, the NorthEast and the Highlands, south and north bound, thereby reducing travel time on these main rail routes.
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- At present, the people of Scotland's NorthEast have only 2 through routed trains west of Inverurie, to and from our Capital City Edinburgh, Mon / Sat, with transfers to / from Glasgow along the route: They are an early morning train, lv Elgin at 05.34 via Aberdeen, and an Edinburgh / Inverness through routed service via Aberdeen lv. Edinburgh at 19.28 arr. Elgin 23.20. Business travellers and the general public welcome these through routed trains.
 - Through routed trains, 7 days per week, is the future for correct utilisation of rolling stock - integrated with passenger needs for the people of Scotland's NorthEast and Highlands, incorporating a single schedule for the entire circular routes from / to our 2 main 'Cities.

- We support the re-opening of Kintore Station, and a new build station at Dalcross for Inverness Airport.
- Double track between Aberdeen and Inverurie for further flexibility: This is and will become an ever-busier stretch of track on the Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness main line, Inverurie / Aberdeen now established as a well-used commuter route.
- Re-establish the through middle road at Inverurie Station, with bi-directional signalling that will allow trains to run non-stop from Dyce to Inverurie, and Inverurie to Dyce, thereby speeding up this section of line for longer distance commuters and general passengers alike, leaving the Aberdeen- Dyce-Inverurie section to be serviced by stopping trains. Schedule the non-stopping trains alternately within the full schedule during the a.m. and p.m. commuter rush.
- We must also be mindful of future freight paths required on this same track, coupled to our environmental obligations.
- Build a new road over-bridge at Inveramsay thereby allowing larger road freight vehicles to use the A96 in its entirety, negating the need for the present detour due to a restricted height low road under-bridge, which carries the main rail line.
- Bring back Platform 8 into use at Aberdeen Station to augment flexibility for trains / passenger boarding and alighting. This will include both S/B and N/B movements in and out of either end of this platform. Re-designing of the Aberdeen Station train Wash-rack track at the south end, the entire track moved over to Platform 9, full length N/B, which will enable Platform 8 to be fully utilised from the North and from the South via new north and south throat's and connecting track.
- Re-introduce the mid-scissors crossing between platforms 6 and 7 north and south at Aberdeen Station that will allow further flexibility for train movement, given to 4 separate through platforms, or 2 long through platforms as required.

The aforementioned upgrades to the Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness main line, integrated with a through routed schedule to and from the Central Belt will, we feel, benefit the entire population of the NorthEast and Highlands of Scotland.

We have for a long time seen rail upgrades for the Central Belt: -

- The 3rd route between Glasgow and Edinburgh completed.
- The re-opening of the Stirling / Alloa route.
- The ongoing electrification between Edinburgh Waverley and Glasgow Queen Street and beyond.
- The future build of the Borders Rail Route.

We at the C&RBoECC support these important rail upgrades.

Surely it is now time for the Aberdeen – Elgin – Inverness main line to receive a much-needed upgrade of track / signalling / stations and superior long distance trains?

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the content in this missive.

On behalf of my colleagues,

Yours faithfully,

George P. Littlejohn.
Chair, Roads & Transportation Committee.



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Friday, 17 February 2012

**Subject: - Re-locate / re-design Perth and Inverness Rail Stations to allow for
joined up interchange and through running of trains.**

Good Day to whom it may concern,

Both these important stations on the Scottish Rail Network are in great need of re-location and re-design to attain maximum ease of use for the passenger, flexibility and through routing of trains.

Perth Station –

- The present design is far from ideal due to the fact that from the south, the north platforms run in straight and the Perth / Dundee platforms run off into a curve, thus separating any close common passenger interchange, but as importantly, does not allow for splitting and re-connecting trains at a platform. The same applies for trains entering from the north and east.
- To rectify this problem, re-site this important interchange station further to the south of the present building that will allow all trains from the north / east and south to use the same common platforms for passengers, plus train splitting and re-connection.
- Build a mix of long through platforms, with terminating platforms for the north and the south.

By carrying out this re-build of Perth Station, the passenger, the train and operation flexibility will be well catered for.

Inverness Station –

- Move Inverness Station further east to accommodate combined through running platforms for the north and south services. At present, trains entering and leaving Inverness Station from / to the south and east use common platforms – 1 to 4. Trains going to / from the north use 3 platforms on a severe curve to the north side of the station which completely separates them from the others regards to quick flexibility for trains and seamless through running – 5 to 7.
- By relocating the entire Inverness Station east of its present site, train flexibility can be achieved to run through services from the Kyle, Wick or Thurso to / from Aberdeen, Glasgow or Edinburgh without any time consuming shunt that is now necessary to do.
- Equally, good passenger interchange will be maintained, as well as still being close to downtown Inverness.
- Build in a mix of through running and terminating platforms.

By moving these two important rail stations at Perth and Inverness to be better placed with modern infrastructure for the passenger and train operation, the entire Scottish Passenger Rail System will be much enhanced.

On behalf of my colleagues, thank you in advance for your consideration of these suggestions that we offer herein.

Yours faithfully,



George P Littlejohn
Chair – Roads & Transportation Committee
C&RBoECC