

Transport Scotland
Rail 2014 Public Consultation
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

20th February 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to your calls for rail users and stakeholders to take part in shaping Scotland's rail services please find my response to the Rail 2014 public consultation below.

Additional Rail Halts and Parking

The East Dunbartonshire area needs a number of new rail halts with adequate park and ride facilities to meet the demand of increased rail users and housing.

From 2004 to 2010 the 6 stations in the area witnessed a 31 per cent increase in rail passengers.¹ Communities within East Dunbartonshire have grown to such an extent that many people are no longer within a short distance of the railway station. As a result more and more people are driving to the stations. The strain on the existing network continues to rise. The Strathkelvin Retail Park has become fully occupied and the full size Low Moss prison is opening in the spring. There are a number of new housing developments being built including 550 new homes in the Kilmardinny redevelopment and the 900 being built at Woodilee. The situation will only continue to get worst in terms of availability of parking.

For this reason I am calling for new stations to be added at the Allander in Bearsden, Westerhill in Bishopbriggs and Woodilee in Kirkintilloch. These new stations/halts should have adequate space with parking for cars, bicycles and buses linking with the train service.

Need to improve park and ride facilities at current stations

The area would also benefit from the expansion of existing car parks. Current car parks at Milngavie, Hillfoot, Bearsden, Westerton and Lenzie are full well before the morning commute is over. In addition the absence of a car park in Bishopbriggs has put stress on the park and ride capability at Lenzie station making the situation here a serious problem.

¹ Office of Rail Regulation <http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/server/show/nav.1529>

In short our existing stations need improved car parking, sheltered waiting areas and CCTV.

Caledonian Sleeper

Now that the Caledonian sleeper train service, which stops at Westerton station, is secure due to extra funding from the Coalition Government and Holyrood it is important that the frequency and route is preserved. There should be no reduction in the provision of sleeper services, either through removing the Highland or Lowland service, or by running the Lowland services to and from Edinburgh only. In addition the sleeper services should continue to be specified and not be left as a purely commercial matter for a train operating company.

Protecting Current Stations and Routes

It is important that any new rail halt does not come at the expense of existing stations.

As part of the Edinburgh-Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP), Network Rail is undertaking timetabling option analysis. One of the options under consideration includes altering service patterns between Lenzie/Bishopbriggs and Stirling at certain points during the day. While there may be possible benefits for Lenzie commuters to Glasgow in altering service, it has raised questions about other direct station-to-station trains to destinations such as Edinburgh and Stirling. People value these direct routes and they should be maintained. The number of services making use of interchange stations should not be increased to reduce the number of direct services.

We need a viable parking solution for our already existing stations. We need to protect our current stations and routes. And finally we need more rail halts with adequate parking. I would therefore be grateful if you could ensure that these issues are taken into account in your considerations.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Swinson MP