

Dear Sirs

Rail 2014 — Public Consultation

I am responding as an individual who lives, and whose business is based, in St Andrews to this consultation and, in particular, about the East Coast Train Service and questions numbered 29 and 30 of the consultation. Those questions seek views about whether cross-border services should continue to go north of Edinburgh to Aberdeen. There are currently three trains per day which run, each way, between Aberdeen and London Kings Cross and London Kings Cross and Aberdeen.

2009 National Planning Framework

The consultation cites the 2009 National Planning Framework ("NPF") as a "useful document". This underplays the significance of the NPF which recognises the "prime economic importance" of cross-border rail links, the need to improve journey times and frequency of services and the need to improve the connectivity of knowledge centre clusters on the east coast and to improve the international profile of St Andrews. It states that the Scottish Government will work with the UK Government and others to strengthen cross-border transport links.

Further, it recognises that:

- o the East Coast corridor between Aberdeen and Newcastle offers opportunities to develop the knowledge economy based on the expertise associated with the energy and offshore industries and the Universities of Aberdeen, Dundee, St Andrews, Edinburgh and Newcastle; and
- o there is potential to build upon the international profile of St Andrews as a leisure destination and as a centre of excellence in academic endeavour and scientific research.



An underutilised service?

My impression of using East Coast Rail north of Edinburgh is that it is not an underutilised service. This is notwithstanding the fact that East Coast trains leaving Aberdeen for London at around 07:50; 09:50 and 14:50 and Edinburgh for Aberdeen at around 14:30, 18:30 and 20:30 are not likely to be attractive times for those travelling to intermediate stations to and from Aberdeen.

It may be that looking at ticketing alone does not provide the full picture. For instance, it is sometimes cheaper to buy tickets between London and Edinburgh and Edinburgh and a destination north of Edinburgh than a ticket between London and that destination. Further some train concession tickets do not allow use of some East Coast Services.

Reducing connectivity on the east coast by rail between London and the north of Edinburgh would not meet the requirements of many. For instance, Scotrail trains do not have adequate capacity to deal with substantial luggage of those (tourists, students and others) travelling to and from London, and elsewhere, to the north of Edinburgh (including Leuchars for St Andrews) and there are limited first class rail facilities at Edinburgh (for those who needed to change there).

It is inevitable that if there were a need to change train at Edinburgh for cross-border rail travel many would choose to travel by other modes of transport, in particular by aircraft.

Cross-border services continuing north of Edinburgh?

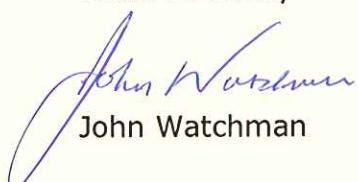
Existing cross-border services should continue, and an enhanced service provided, between Aberdeen and London.

Cross-border rail services should not terminate at Edinburgh. The actual time penalty in having to change at Edinburgh arising from the withdrawal of the three daily direct services would not only mean a shift to aircraft use (and it appears such aircraft services are in the process of being, or will be, reduced).

Further, proposals to withdraw the current, limited, cross-border rail service between Aberdeen and London Kings Cross will also undermine the National Planning Framework strategies about:

- o developing the East Coast knowledge economy; and
- o developing St Andrews as an international leisure destination and as a centre for academic endeavour and scientific research.

Yours faithfully



John Watchman