

DUNPENDER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CHAIR: JUDITH PRIEST, 83 HIGH STREET, EAST LINTON

5 January, 2009

Consultation
Rail Performance Team
Transport Scotland
7th Floor
Buchanan House
58 Port Dundas Road
Glasgow G4 0HF

Dear Sirs

SCOTRAIL FRANCHISE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

I write on behalf of Dunpender Community Council, which covers the landward area to the north of Dunbar, a main line station run by National Express. I am the community councillor whose special interest is public transport.

Firstly I found this consultation document difficult to access. It was not possible to answer the questions on-line, nor was it listed in the consultations currently taking place by the Scottish Government. This must have inhibited members of the public who might have wished to respond. Please consider having future consultation documents more interactive which is the norm nowadays.

At Annex A, Core Services, none of the initiatives were costed. It would surely have been possible to give some approximate costings in order to answer the questions relating to future priced options. I was not able to know if there would be sufficient funding to develop any or all of the list given. This is a major omission, given that some of the services mentioned are likely to require a considerable amount of funding. They are referred to as Priced Options but their cost is not apparent. The ScotRail franchise Extension Agreement is not easily understood by the layman, and the impression is that the consultation is not designed to be understood other than by those in the rail industry.

At Q4, we would support additional services between Edinburgh and Dunbar, but it is not clear from the document if funds would be available for this to take place.

At Q5, a bone of contention locally is that ticket machines installed by First Scotrail on the Edinburgh-North Berwick line will not accept East Lothian Council travel passes. We have been told that the machines will not be modified to allow this, so passengers who cannot obtain a ticket via the machines or on the train where the train is crowded, are forced into long waits on the platform to buy a ticket from staff, through no fault of their own. As none of the stations are staffed, this is a real problem to an ageing population who wish to use their travel passes on the train.

At Q7, station environments could be improved by sufficient staffing at main line stations.

At Q10, the Park and Ride service at Newcraighall is notoriously unreliable, to the extent where commuters to the nearby shopping centre at Fort Kinnaird are becoming unwilling to use it as a means of getting to work.. There is also no Sunday service. It would make sense to have existing Park and Ride services in full working order before considering further services.

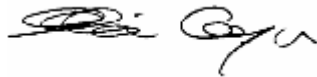
Travel interchange at stations for our community is chiefly at Waverley Station. There is no dedicated waiting room at Waverley and women travelling alone or travelling at night face waiting in an uncomfortable and potentially dangerous environment. I would like to see a dedicated waiting room near a staffed area – surely not an unreasonable demand in our capital city's main station.

At Q12, luggage space can be poor on long distance trains, as TOCs try to gain the maximum number of seats. This can make a journey hazardous and uncomfortable for all travellers and staff. Carriages should have a larger amount of space dedicated for luggage.

There were many questions which could have formed part of this consultation, but did not. I would suggest questions on views of passengers on new services; local views on priorities in individual areas; questions as to views on long distance services from Glasgow and Edinburgh and others of a similar nature. Travellers with young children are not mentioned, or the difficulties in manoeuvring buggies and small children off and on trains. You rightly include reference to access for disabled people, but completely omit facilities for younger travellers. There is a complete lack of catering facilities for this age group, both in stations and on trains. Baby changing facilities should be available on all trains instead of taking young children and babies into dirty over-used toilets. Cleaning of trains and stations is also not referred to.

There are many aspects of rail travel relevant to the extension to the franchise which could have been included in this consultation. It is disappointing that they have not.

Yours faithfully



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