

From: McLean, Allan [Allan.McLean@virgintrains.co.uk]
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To: Scotrail Franchise Mailbox
Subject: ScotRail franchise consultation response

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Here is the Virgin Trains response (below) to the franchise consultation document.

Our answers to the Respondent Information Form are on a following email.

ALLAN McLEAN
Communications Manager, Scotland & North England
VIRGIN TRAINS
Floor 5, Caledonian Chambers
87 Union Street
GLASGOW G1 3TA

Phone: 0141 335 4705
Mobile: 07771 827 855

These are comments from Virgin Trains on elements raised in Appendix A of the consultation document.

“Operation of Kilmarnock half-hourly service and recast of Ayr-Girvan and Stranraer-Glasgow services”

Comment: Hopefully this would provide also a recast of timings to enhance connections at Carlisle for customers travelling between London and Gretna, Annan, Dumfries and Kilmarnock. There are missed connections from December 2008, when the Dumfries line timetable remains much as before, presumably not being involved in the recast by all other operators associated with other intermediate connection points along the West Coast Main Line from 14 December 2008, pending the completion of Barrhead/ Kilmarnock capacity enhancement in 2009.

“The operation of additional morning services to provide connections to London”

Comment: The new connection at Haymarket from the new 0510 from Perth and stations in Fife via Kirkcaldy into the first Virgin train of the day from Edinburgh to Birmingham from December 2008 is very welcome. The train from Perth is presumably aiming to connect with National Express East Coast at 0700 from Edinburgh to Kings Cross, but it is also worth noting the benefit of connecting for North West England and the West Midlands. Unfortunately there is no similar improvement at Glasgow Central in the December 2008 timetable. The first trains to England with any connection from the Ayr and Gourock lines are the First TransPennine Express service at 0710 from Glasgow Central to Manchester Airport and the Virgin service at 0735 from Glasgow Central to London Euston. Earlier departures by Virgin, National Express East Coast and CrossCountry Trains for a range of English destinations have no similar connections at Glasgow. There are also issues at Carlisle re connections with the Dumfries line, as mentioned above.

“Q13 Where should we concentrate our efforts in improving the Anglo-Scottish sleeper services? In particular please consider:

- The number of locations served
- Facilities on trains or at stations
- Arrival and departure times
- The provision of airline-style overnight seats
- Catering
- Staffing.”

Comment: Enhanced lounge facilities for Sleeper passengers should be considered, not only at key stations in Scotland but also at London Euston where it would help if Scottish funding were permitted so that facilities there can help customers using the Scottish Sleepers, as well as promoting tourist travel to Scotland and the Sleeper concept among other users of lounge facilities.

VIRGIN TRAINS November 2008

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