

PE2133/C: Expand ScotRail's InterCity routes to include Dunfermline

Transport Scotland written submission, 30 April 2025

Thank you for your letter of 21 March where you ask specific questions relating to this petition following the meeting of the Committee on 19 March.

- whether the proposal to reopen the Alloa to Dunfermline line for passenger services will be reviewed in light of “significant housing development” in the West Fife area

While it has been noted that the reopening of the Alloa to Dunfermline rail line to passenger service was not recommended by the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), this does not preclude responding to local or regional opportunities or need, as they arise.

It is recognised that there may be regional priorities and there remains a path for regional or local rail projects to come forward, subject to a strong business case being developed and suitable funding being available.

Transport Scotland, in their role as a Key Agency, routinely works closely with local authorities in the preparation of their Local Development Plan and would welcome any future discussions relating to rail infrastructure and land use planning, particularly in the very early stages of plan preparation. This ensures that the necessary process is followed and appropriate colleagues are involved early in any discussions. If sufficient future travel demand from West Fife is identified, then Transport Scotland would consider this within the appropriately developed business case for re-opening of the line for passenger services.

- what consideration has been given to using existing connections to provide rail services linking Dunfermline with Glasgow and Stirling, without the need to go via Edinburgh.

ScotRail previously operated a direct service from Kirkcaldy to Glasgow during the peak times, however, following electrification of the Edinburgh Glasgow line, it is as convenient for passengers to travel via Haymarket and change onto an electric train there. This has the additional benefit of delivering more journey opportunities, rather than the previous offer of a single Kirkcaldy to Glasgow commuter train per day.

The railway in Fife is not yet electrified, meaning that any direct services running between Fife and Glasgow would need to run diesel trains on a majority electrified route. This would have a negative impact on the speeds and reliability of the electric service and require additional diesel rolling stock, which is in short supply. Additional diesel rolling stock would need to come from other routes in Fife or other parts of the diesel network.

The connection at Haymarket for passengers from Fife is high quality, both fast and reliable, and this is reflected in how well it is used. However, the question of a direct service could be revisited once decarbonisation (partial electrification) of the Fife route is further advanced.

I trust this is helpful.

Rail Directorate