

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

ScotRail written submission, 11 November 2025

Background

ScotRail's current Intercity services were designed to connect customers across Scotland's cities – Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, Stirling, Perth, Dundee, and Aberdeen, prior to the designation of Dunfermline as a city in 2022. The services also provide journey opportunities for communities in and around Stirling, Perth, Dundee, and Fife. With a fixed number of trains, the timetable has been designed to provide competitive end-to-end journey times, while also accommodating intermediate stations.

The service at Dunfermline City has been designed to provide a service to Edinburgh, as passenger data shows that this route accounts for approximately 80 per cent of customer journeys from this station. The proportion of journeys between Dunfermline City and Edinburgh is higher than what we typically see from other stations in Fife, in general, approximately 60 to 80 per cent of passenger journeys on the ScotRail network are to or from the closest city.

When designing a train timetable, ScotRail must take a number of factors into consideration. This includes journey time, journey opportunities, the position of fleet, traincrew availability, passenger numbers, and the line speeds of the infrastructure.

Challenges of adding Dunfermline City to Intercity services

Rerouting Intercity services to stop at Dunfermline City would have a negative knock-on impact on other stations in Fife, as these services would no longer be able to call at Kirkcaldy. While diverting services between Dundee and Edinburgh to call at Dunfermline City would provide more capacity, it would reduce services and capacity from Kirkcaldy, which is a much busier station. In 2024/25, Dunfermline City station saw 647,000 single passenger journeys, while Kirkcaldy saw 997,000 single passenger journeys. Ultimately, this change would result in a reduction of services to/from Kirkcaldy, whilst creating a journey opportunity that we would not expect to be as busy.

These services would also be less competitive, with the longer route via Dunfermline adding around ten minutes to the journey time between Dundee, North Fife, and Edinburgh. In addition to the increased distance of this service, services via Dunfermline would also be impacted by slower speeds on the railway line and, with the additional traffic, would require services to be more spaced out.

These changes may also present a wider negative impact on train timetables through Fife and north of Dundee, and around Edinburgh due to the changes to the times they would arrive at key junctions on the network. Our Intercity services from Edinburgh, for example, use the busy East Coast Main Line which accommodates ScotRail trains, as well as cross-border and freight operators. Services on this route are carefully planned to avoid a bottleneck at the busy terminus station, Edinburgh Waverley.

Conclusion

We recognise the significance of Dunfermline's city status, which is an important mark of its rich history and the distinct cultural and economic contribution that it makes to Scotland and the current timetables for the station are based passenger data about the journeys people make.

ScotRail regularly reviews its timetables and make changes where possible to provide a better service for our customers. Timetable changes are made twice per year, in spring and December, and coincide with when other train operators across Britain make changes to their timetables. This industry-wide approach ensures that timetable changes do not impact negatively on busy rail routes across the country.

ScotRail will continue to monitor passenger journeys to/from Dunfermline to Scotland's cities to ensure that we provide a service which meets the needs of customers and will work with our owning group, Scottish Rail Holdings and Transport Scotland.