

# **PE2133/A: Expand ScotRail's InterCity routes to include Dunfermline**

## **Scottish Government written submission, 13 February 2025**

The proposal put forward by Mr Wedge through this petition is a reasonable one and it has been given detailed consideration over recent years by ScotRail, Network Rail and Transport Scotland. Existing services are kept under review to identify and maximise opportunities to improve punctuality, reliability, journey times and connectivity within our existing resource such as availability of train drivers, rolling stock and the capacity of the rail network infrastructure.

In 2022, ScotRail proposed an hourly Edinburgh to Perth via Dunfermline service as part of its “fit for future” timetable ([East of Scotland | ScotRail](#)). However, this received negative local response due to the impacts that would have on journey times, such as between Edinburgh and Perth, and loss of other connectivity in the region, such as from Kirkcaldy to Perth, and therefore the proposal was withdrawn. This illustrates the trade-offs that are created by amending existing services. Options to develop and enhance rail connectivity in Fife will continue to be kept under review as travel patterns evolve and rail patronage continues to increase.

Scottish Ministers have specified that Network Rail will continue to maintain the Alloa-Dunfermline route which is currently used by tourist charter trains and as a diversionary route for rail freight. The Scottish Government is aware of the housing development along the route and recognises that it may create opportunities in the future to help strengthen a business case for the re-introduction of passenger services.

The reopening of the Alloa to Dunfermline line for passenger services was appraised as part of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2), with the final recommendations published in December 2022. While the transport appraisal that supported the final STPR2 recommendations did not find sufficient evidence to include this within the set of national priorities for rail investment, there remains a path of local or regional rail schemes to come forward subject to a strong business case being developed and suitable funding being available. Transport Scotland can provide details of the Alloa-Dunfermline appraisal should this be helpful to the Committee, and will continue to keep this under review to consider if it should be given priority in future.

To give due consideration to the extensive impacts this proposal would have across the rail network and substantial implications for ScotRail resource, a business case would be required to be developed and evidence supporting the case for change considered.

There continues to be significant budget pressures in relation to funding the existing rail network and services in Scotland. The financial situation facing the Scottish Government is, by far, the most challenging we have faced since devolution, requiring tough decisions about how to prioritise spending across all of our public

services. Given these challenges, as well as the need for a formal business case to be developed and the scale of this proposal, we are unable to give this priority at this point in time.

More generally, a number of steps have been taken by ScotRail to improve the service for rail passengers travelling to and from Fife, not least the new railway to Leven opening in 2024. Since December 2024, newly released rolling stock from some of the intercity routes are now serving Fife, increasing fleet resilience, and additional stops will continue to be made at Dalmeny and Burntisland to reduce pressure on busy morning and evening Leven services. In 2025, it is expected that Dunfermline is to gain an hourly service to Leven, providing Leven's second train per hour to and from Edinburgh.

Plans for a new fleet for the Fife, Borders and Glasgow suburban routes are currently in development. This is closely linked to our plans for the decarbonisation of the Fife and Borders routes through partial electrification, with the first stage of this between Haymarket – Dalmeny already under construction.

I hope this information has been helpful and I look forward to continuing to support the Committee in its consideration of this petition.

Yours sincerely,

**FIONA HYSLOP**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Transport**