

## Members' Library Service Request Form

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Additional information:

Report necessary to formally add development roads to the list of public roads for maintenance purposes

Authorised By	Tom Reid
Designation	Head of Infrastructure
Date	13/08/21

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**REPORT TO:** Members' Library Service

**MEETING DATE:** August 2021

**BY:** Executive Director for Place

**SUBJECT:** East Coast Main Line – May 2022 Consultation

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the impact of the proposed changes to train services on the East Coast Main line by LNER, Cross Country and TransPennine Express.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To note the benefits of the proposed changes:
- There will be ten LNER stops on weekdays and a better LNER morning service call to Edinburgh at 07.57, 8.31, and 9.38.
- 2.2 To note the disadvantages:
- There will not be a 17.30 weekday LNER service from Edinburgh to Dunbar;
  - Sunday services will decrease from 9 to 6; and
  - Potential further service loss to accommodate Reston Station.
- 2.3 To note East Lothian Council's recommendation is that the consultation be deferred for a minimum of 6 months to evaluate the impact of the changes on East Lothian commuters and the wider impacts on ScotRail service recast, which is being re-evaluated separately. It is considered incongruous to move forward at pace this level of change without understanding the National interdependencies and consequences to Regional and local rail services particularly to local communities North Berwick, Dunbar and the implications on future station development and opening service timetables to East Linton and Reston.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The purpose of the consultation is to provide feedback from users, stakeholders, and local communities on the rail industries intended enhancements to long distance - high speed (LDHS), regional and local

services alongside potential freight paths to encourage alternative haulage routes, resulting in timetable changes.

- 3.2 The timetable changes follows a detailed rail capacity forecast of demand carried out in 2016 subsequently approved by the Office of Road and Rail (ORR). The timetable changes are the stated collaboration across industry that are designed to capture a decade of investments and improvements to the East Coast Main Line's infrastructure. The May 2022 East Coast Main Line timetable consultation is being undertaken independently by all operators. What is not included is ScotRail's May 2022 recast, which is necessary to understand the full impact on local services. Without fully seeing the entire service recast, fear is that paths will be lost within the context of other operator schedules and that no programme of government is in place to expedite rail capacity improvements.
- 3.3 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, on the transport sector has been stark with Scottish Rail patronage falling 95% following lockdown on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.
- 3.4 Consequently, the Scottish Government placed emergency funding to maintain service levels to support the rail industry. Operator insight and research confirms peoples' commuting patterns will change. Going forward, National Transport Authorities, should design services that meets the needs of future travel demand, be robust, defensible, cost efficient and sustainable. It is therefore, appropriate to review the evidence before decisions are made. It is unsound to base these timetable changes of forecast made 5 years ago, principally now during a period of recovery and renewal.
- 3.5 It is accepted, that the local services are important to provide social cohesion and intra-regional connectivity. It is also clear government wants to accelerate rail decarbonisation. Following Covid, the sharp lenses of financially sustainable has focused to reduce the taxpayer burden, so reviewing the balance of local services, LDHS and freight.
- 3.6 However, by cutting services, reducing availability will undoubtedly migrate users to other less sustainable modes. What makes the train attractive is journey time and frequency particularly for medium trip lengths. What makes it unattractive is price, unreliability, inaccessibility and onward connections. Removing intercity stopping patterns at Dunbar achieves the latter.
- 3.7 In respect to key drivers it is understood customer focus on reliability, adaptability, provide services when needed, reduce longer distance journey times and improved connections, in combination with operational efficiencies different weekday and weekend and summer and winter service levels, better utilisation of staff and trains, better access for infrastructure maintenance and enhancements, are all considered locally. It is difficult to see how this translates to this timetable refresh.
- 3.8 In the context of economic development, East Lothian Council is a significant area of growth. The East Lothian Local Development Plan 2018 (LDP) sets out an ambitious plan for the delivery of circa 17,000 homes (plus circa 400 hectares safeguarded for further housing delivery). A further 200 hectares of land is designated to support economic development providing opportunities to help grow and diversify East

Lothian's economy and to create jobs in the area.

- 3.9 Regionally, this enables a rebalance of regional economic growth, towards the south east of Scotland introducing a new axis around the ECML east of Scotland's capital city region and strengthen our relationships, cross border opportunities and collaborations with the north of England and beyond. This timetable change will not support this strategy.
- 3.10 Locally, within the context of regional growth enhanced rail service provision could contribute to and stimulate business opportunity, increase local job density, reduce car dependency, commuting and transport emissions. Enhancing accessibility through local rail services will be key to attracting new businesses to locate and to enabling greater sustainability. These factors will become increasingly important to UK productivity, collaborations and resilience in future.
- 3.11 East Lothian is faced with multiple challenges to improve economic growth and has developed a suite of strategic goals to achieve this, primarily focusing on become Scotland's most sustainable local economy. Investment in clean, sustainable high speed transport solutions to give access to job markets and education opportunities within and beyond East Lothian's growing communities is a key opportunity. Changes to the train services will detract from this ambition.
- 3.12 It is accepted that pressure on the industry has never been greater, with government subsidy unlikely to be maintained indefinitely. It is accepted that the industry needs to adapt and change, and that East Lothian's needs will not be paramount in the wider UK business case. It is nevertheless, appropriate to reflect on the loss of local services across rail and potential mitigation necessary across other modes.
- 3.13 It is clear a balance needs to be struck between local government growth ambitions and our aspiration to increase mode share on mass transit solutions rather than unsustainable road traffic increases. It is also evident that the rail industry has an unapologetic attention to freight demand driven by the need to deliver UK / Scottish Government Climate Change Targets. This intertwined with a desire to proving competition with the aviation market by increasing capacity and improving performance with flexibility for late running services. Clearly, the ECML is incapable of meeting all user needs.
- 3.14 Accordingly, as a matter of urgency, we would welcome clarity on ECML rail capacity improvements planned in the short – medium and longer term and any further mitigation appropriate to address the impact identified.
- 3.15 Rail clearly has a significant role to play in moving people across the UK, especially if we are to achieve a net zero carbon target within society. However, the industry should be working with local government to make a material change, mode shift from car to rail and that central government will require to introduce policy changes at a local and national level. Fundamentally, consideration as to how public transport is enhanced, competitive, how car use can be discouraged, and consider how rail fits into the public transport network is now clearly vital.

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The consultation response is in line with the core objectives set out in the approved East Lothian Council Plan 2017-2022 and the intent, themes and outcomes as set out in the East Lothian Plan 2017 – 2027.

#### **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – Not Applicable.  
6.2 Personnel – Not applicable.  
6.3 Other – None.

#### **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 None.

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<b>DATE</b>	4/8/21