



David Middleton
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By Email to: chiefexecutive@transportscotland.gsi.gov.uk

28th April 2014

Dear Mr Middleton,

Borders Railway Service Reliability

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our concerns about the detailed design and service reliability of the Borders Railway with your officials at the two meetings convened by Claudia Beamish MSP this year.

With construction works well advanced and the railway due to reopen in little over a year's time, this seems the right moment at which to clearly re-state – for future reference – our concerns about infrastructure provision, before concentrating our campaigning efforts on preparing for the arrival of the railway and encouraging the strongest possible support from the travelling public.

Our primary concern remains the vulnerability of the service to delays originating out with the Borders Railway itself (i.e. at the interface with other services on the network). Our other main concern is the relaxation of overall journey times from a 55-minute maximum, as specified in the 2009 DBFM pre-qualification documents, to a draft timetable in which 55-minutes is the minimum (for all Edinburgh-Tweedbank services, and all but 9 out of 33 Tweedbank – Edinburgh services).

The decision to cut the length of double track provision has reduced the capacity to absorb delays to a very small margin, yet there are still no funded proposals to tackle the likely source of some of those delays – namely congestion and pathing constraints between Waverley and Newcraighall, including the single line junction at Portobello.

CBR's objective is a fast and highly reliable service for the Borders Railway as this will be essential to achieve modal shift amongst commuters and thereby secure the success of the line.

If, despite the reassurances given by Transport Scotland and Network Rail, reliability proves poor, we will expect urgent remedial infrastructure works to remedy the problem. Further relaxation of journey times to provide additional recovery time should not be contemplated. As a further assurance we request that you publish the recovery plan for perturbed running.

CBR would also ask Transport Scotland to set a clear aspiration for a 55-minute maximum journey time in both directions between Waverley and Tweedbank, as a key output from the possible programme of capacity enhancements between Waverley and Newcraighall. We urge you to strongly promote these works in your dealings with industry partners and can assure you of our full support in pursuit of this goal.

Finally, I can assure you that CBR remains committed to promoting the line and doing all it can to ensure it is the success it deserves to be.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Walton

Simon Walton, chairman
The Campaign for Borders Rail
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