



Cllr: David Parker
Leader, Scottish Borders Council
By Email

4th July 2014

Dear Cllr. Parker,

Bus – Rail Integration

With the commissioning of the Borders Railway Project only a little more than a year away, we are pleased to acknowledge the strong commitment of Scottish Borders Council to the value of integrating rail and bus services as the key to delivering high quality public transport in the region. We particularly note the presentation made by Jonathan Hepton and other Council representatives at the recent meeting of potential stakeholders in the proposed community rail partnership. We are writing now, to reiterate our commitment to cooperating with the Council in reaching those same aims, and to ask in greater detail what the Council is doing, in partnership with other agencies and operators, to ensure there is a good level of integration between rail and bus services.

The new transport interchange now being built at Galashiels is a welcome and very important initiative, but we also believe that robust timetable and ticketing arrangements must be put in place to make combined bus/rail journeys as seamless as possible. This is vital both to the success of the Borders Railway itself, and to ensure its benefits are shared by communities beyond the immediate catchment area of the route.

In our view, satisfactory integration of bus and rail services should include the following elements:

1. A recast of bus timetables to give robust connections to trains at Galashiels. A robust connection means no less than 10 minutes, but extended waits of more than 15 minutes should also be avoided.
2. Whilst delaying train or bus services to guarantee an advertised connection may be impractical throughout the day, we believe that exceptions should be made for the last bus departures from Galashiels in the evenings. Bus operators should be required, as a condition of operating from the new interchange, to delay departure for late running connecting trains to ensure passengers are not left stranded. Communication protocols between bus operators and train operators should be established to assist in managing situations of this sort.
3. A combined Borders bus and rail timetable leaflet should be produced and updated on a regular basis. It should be available online, and also in printed form from staffed stations, the transport hub, tourist information centres, libraries and other public buildings.

Simon Walton, chairman
The Campaign for Borders Rail
one of the most successful grassroots rail campaigns in Great Britain
www.campaignforbordersrail.org
01578 760686 / 07540 313018
Chairman.bordersrail@uwclub.net



4. A 'BUSPLUS' ticket option; an add-on allowing rail passengers onward/unlimited travel on local bus services within a defined zone around Galashiels, Tweedbank and Melrose at a reduced rate.
5. Towns not directly served by the Borders Railway such as Selkirk, St Boswells, Earlston, Hawick, Kelso and Jedburgh to be included as rail ticketing destinations allowing through bookings by connecting bus from any other rail destination in Great Britain. As part of this, for certain journeys Galashiels - Carlisle and Galashiels - Berwick bus services should be designated as 'permitted routes' in the railway industry's National Routing Guide.
6. A Borders travel discount card; an annual card giving reduced fares on bus services throughout the Borders, including to Carlisle and Berwick; and on off-peak rail services between Tweedbank and Edinburgh.
7. A Borders rover ticket; a range of passes (with options for day, week, etc) giving unlimited travel on bus services throughout the Borders, including to Carlisle and Berwick; and on rail services between Tweedbank and Edinburgh.
8. An exploration of the potential for bus/rail connections at Tweedbank, as this would be the logical interchange point for Melrose, Borders General Hospital and St Boswells. Interchange would be easier as there would be no road to cross and overall journey times could be quicker. We would like to see the new bus service between Gala - Tweedbank - BGH and Melrose call at the station once it opens. A bus link from Lauder to Stow could also be looked at.

Some of these measures may concern matters under direct council control; for example, where bus services are subsidised or run under contract. Others may require cooperation with a number of stakeholders, coordinated by the council as lead-partner.

The Campaign for Borders Rail stands ready to assist in any way it can and we look forward to further dialogue on this subject.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Walton', written over a horizontal line.

Simon Walton

cc Cllr. Gordon Edgar
Jonathan Hepton

Executive Member for Roads and Infrastructure
Borders Railway Liaison Officer

Simon Walton, chairman

The Campaign for Borders Rail

one of the most successful grassroots rail campaigns in Great Britain

www.campaignforbordersrail.org

01578 760686 / 07540 313018

Chairman.bordersrail@uwclub.net