



Councillor Ben Williams

The Moray Council
High Street
Elgin
Moray IV30 1BX

23 May 2022

To: Alex Hynes, Managing Director, Scotrail
CC: Jenny Gilruth MSP, Minister for Transport

Dear Mr Hynes,

Changes to ScotRail timetables

I am writing to you to express my considerable concern with ScotRail's temporary timetable, effective from today.

As you will be aware, Moray is currently served by three stations on the Aberdeen – Inverness line: Forres, Elgin, and Keith. My own ward is situated between Elgin and Keith stations. The service along this line has never been particularly good – with trains spaced far too far apart, and too often short-formed, delayed, or cancelled. Under your new timetable, the last timetabled train from Inverness to Keith departs at 18:05, while the last train to Moray from Aberdeen departs at 18:18.

I am gravely concerned that these alterations in service will have a disproportionate impact on workers with irregular shift patterns or jobs that do not take place during the '9 to 5' working day. Such workers tend to be younger and less affluent, and may not have access to alternative forms of transport.

In addition to regular commuters, I am concerned about the impact on connecting services. As a student at the University of Glasgow, I am reliant on connecting trains from Aberdeen and Inverness to get home to Moray. As undergraduate university terms are coming to an end, I know that a great many students in Scotland will be affected by this, including their ability to work during the summer months.

Finally, as the summer approaches, and with no end date for this 'temporary' timetable specified, I am also concerned about the impact these service cuts will have on tourism in Moray. My ward contains a number of Moray's most popular tourist attractions. While many tourists stay in Moray or Speyside, many also base themselves around Inverness or Aberdeen, visiting Moray for the day. With only three trains departing from Moray for Aberdeen between noon and 6pm, including a gap of almost three hours, it seems likely that visitors will be deterred from coming to Moray if it so difficult to get back to their place of accommodation.

I am, therefore, writing to you to ask you when you intend to end this 'temporary' timetable and restore services to pre-Covid levels? I would also be interested to know how you intend to improve service levels here in Moray above and beyond pre-Covid levels which, as I intimated above, were never particularly satisfactory to begin with.

I would appreciate a reply at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Williams
Scottish Labour Councillor for Fochabers Lhanbryde