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virgintrainseastcoast.com

22 June 2015

Dear David,

RE: Virgin Trains East Coast (VTEC) Section 17 Application

Thank you for your email dated 7th April 2015. The purpose of this letter is to respond to your comments. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding to you.

Fast journey times

It is correct that journey times on the Inverness and Aberdeen services between London and Edinburgh will increase (between 0-10 minutes) but it is important to note that end to end journey times actually reduce (between 3 - 22 minutes). Furthermore, all these services benefit from increased connectivity from May 2020, with a revised calling pattern including Peterborough, Doncaster and Durham in addition to the current calling patterns. A key complaint from the introduction of the May 2011 timetable structure was the removal of the Peterborough call in these services - we believe the new calling pattern will prove popular with customers.

Current (May 2014)	10:00	12:00	14:00	16:00
King's Cross to Edinburgh	4h20	4h22	4h23	4h22
King's Cross to Aberdeen / Inverness	7h06	8h06	7h13	7h10
Proposed (May 2020)	09:30	11:30	13:30	16:30
King's Cross to Edinburgh	4h27	4h24	4h23	4h32
King's Cross to Aberdeen / Inverness	7h02	7h44	6h58	7h07

For customers travelling between London and Edinburgh, there are 11 services per day with a journey time of 4 hours(h) or under, and a further 14 services under 4h06. This represents a significant improvement on today's timetable.

Connectivity

It is correct that in a limited number of circumstances, connectivity is reduced between two East Coast Main Line stations. The reason for this is to improve journey times to core markets - this is achieved by improved Super Express Train timings and a reduction in station calls from the "Fast services". In terms of relative sizes of these markets, for example, Peterborough <> Newark Northgate is 2% of the Edinburgh <> London market.



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Conclusion

VTEC does not believe there is any significant disbenefit to any existing flow, indeed we believe that our holistic package of services meets the needs of passengers to the greatest possible extent, with a mixture of improved journey times and better connectivity to the vast majority of stations.

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In terms of the reduced frequency between York and Edinburgh, there are two additional services (in each direction) between York and Edinburgh (Monday to Friday) in May 2020 compared with today's timetable, equating to 46 direct VTEC services per day. We believe that this high frequency service will meet the passenger demand for this important flow.

We will continue to develop and refine the timetable to improve the offer to customers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Dawson".

Phil Dawson
Regulation & Track Access Manager

cc Mark Garner, Network Rail
David Reed, ORR