

10 April 2024

## Report on LNER's consultation to remove Stirling and Glasgow extensions

### Summary

London North Eastern Railway (LNER) ran an 8-week consultation from 22 January 2024 to 18 March 2024 on proposals to remove its Glasgow and Stirling extensions.

The proposed amendments to the timetable will enable LNER to deliver a more efficient and reliable timetable for LNER customers.

LNER received 265 replies to its consultation on proposals to remove LNER extensions of Anglo-Scottish services that operate between Stirling and London King's Cross and Glasgow Central and London King's Cross so that these services will only operate between Edinburgh and London.

155/265 of responses were generated from two online campaigns, the Scottish Green Party Campaign - *Stop LNER's Scottish Train Cuts* ([link](#)) and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) campaign - *LNER Scotland Service Cuts Consultation* ([link](#)).

Individual replies to the consultation were mainly based on personal experience, however general themes did emerge from individual responses to the consultation.

Responses that focused on the Glasgow Central extension highlighted how the removal would mean a loss of connectivity to the East Coast Main Line from Glasgow. Responses also highlighted that the removal would have a negative impact on commuting for work between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Responses that focused on the Stirling extension removal highlighted how leisure and business travel would be adversely affected by increased journey times and having to change onto another service at Edinburgh Waverley.

Reflecting and taking into account responses to the consultation, LNER has made the decision to remove the Glasgow and Stirling extensions.

This means LNER's Glasgow Central at 06.48 southbound and 21.26 northbound; Motherwell at 07.04 southbound and 21.03 northbound; Stirling at 05.34 southbound and 20.12 northbound; Falkirk Grahamston at 10.48 southbound and 19.58 northbound will not feature in LNER's December 2024 timetable. Both Stirling and Falkirk Grahamston will continue to be served by LNER's daily Inverness service, which currently calls at Stirling at

10.34 southbound and 17.19 northbound, and at Falkirk Grahamston at 10.48 southbound and 17.03 northbound.<sup>1</sup>

Proposed changes<sup>2</sup>

Impacted Stations	Proposed changes our timetable
Stirling (and Falkirk Grahamston)	<p><b>Southbound</b></p> <p>Remove 05.34 Stirling service            Remove 05.47 Falkirk Grahamston service            Retain 10.34 Stirling service            Retain Falkirk 10.48 Grahamston</p> <p><b>Northbound</b></p> <p>Remove 19.58 Falkirk Grahamston service            Remove 20.12 Stirling service            Retain 17.03 Falkirk Grahamston service            Retain 17.19 Stirling service</p>
Glasgow Central (and Motherwell)	<p><b>Southbound</b></p> <p>Remove 06.48 Glasgow Central service            Remove 07.04 Motherwell service</p> <p><b>Northbound</b></p> <p>Remove 21.03 Motherwell service            Remove 21.26 Glasgow Central service</p>

**Background**

LNER’s vision is to become the most loved, progressive and responsible railway for generations to come. To achieve this, we need to ensure that rail travel offers good value and is reliable for everyone across the route.

<sup>1</sup> Timings of LNER’s Inverness service may change in the December 2024 Timetable.

<sup>2</sup> Timings as in December 2023 timetable. These changes mean that LNER will no longer stop at Haymarket (Edinburgh) at 06.14 and 07.48 southbound and 19.33 and 20.24 northbound.

LNER proposed to remove two services per day to and from Glasgow Central and Stirling from its December 2024 Timetable. As a result, some existing services will start and terminate at different stations.

These LNER services are now being used by very few customers north / west of Edinburgh, particularly the early morning Stirling service and Glasgow Central service where there are already rail links provided by other train operators. The proposed changes will enable LNER to deliver a more efficient and reliable timetable of services for our customers now and into the future.

LNER would still call at Stirling as part of its daily service to and from Inverness. The decision to remove some direct services reflects the changes in travel patterns in recent years with more customers choosing to travel for leisure than business.

### **Glasgow (and Motherwell)**

LNER proposed to amend the Glasgow Central and Motherwell to London King's Cross direct train service. This means LNER would no longer call at Glasgow Central at 06.48 southbound and 21.26 northbound, LNER would also not call at Motherwell at 07.04 southbound and 21.03 northbound.

The LNER service to Glasgow Central is a legacy of the East Coast Main Line electrification in the 1990s, when it was faster to travel from London to Glasgow via the East Coast. Since 2007, it has been faster to get from London to Motherwell and Glasgow Central via faster, more frequent and higher capacity trains running between Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh Waverley. There are also direct Glasgow<->London services operating on the West Coast Main Line.

Departing from Glasgow before 07.00 in the morning southbound, and not arriving back in Glasgow until after 21.00, these trains are not particularly well utilised, particularly northbound.

In 2011, LNER retained just one return train a day to Glasgow Central while the remaining seven paths in each direction were transferred to CrossCountry.<sup>3</sup> It has always been faster to use Glasgow Queen Street and connect using ScotRail to East Coast Main Line services at Edinburgh Waverley, and since the electrification of the Edinburgh Waverley to Glasgow Queen Street.

The services would still operate south of Edinburgh and alternative connections are available to provide cross-border journey opportunities at more popular times using Glasgow Queen Street and Edinburgh Waverley as an interchange.

### **Stirling (and Falkirk Grahamston)**

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<sup>3</sup> CrossCountry have not yet reintroduced these paths post the COVID-19 pandemic, but may be planning to.

LNER proposed to remove the Stirling to Edinburgh portion of the 05.34 Stirling to King's Cross service and the Edinburgh to Stirling portion of the 15.00 London King's Cross to Stirling service.

This change would also see the removal of the LNER 05.47 southbound departure from Falkirk Grahamston and the LNER 19.58 northbound arrival. However, both Stirling and Falkirk Grahamston would continue to be served by LNER's daily Inverness service, which calls at Stirling at 10.34 southbound and 17.19 northbound, and at Falkirk Grahamston at 10.48 southbound and 17.03 northbound.

The LNER early morning/evening services from/to Stirling were added in 2015 under Virgin Trains East Coast. Departing from Stirling before 06.00 in the morning southbound, and not arriving back in Stirling until after 20.00, these trains have not been well utilised, particularly southbound. The trains would still operate south of Edinburgh and alternative connections are available to provide cross-border journey opportunities at more popular times. The daily return Highland Chieftain service between Inverness and London will still call at Stirling and Falkirk Grahamston.

### **Communications approach**

LNER used multiple communications channels to raise awareness of its proposals to remove Glasgow/Stirling services from its December 2024 timetable.

LNER wrote to stakeholders, including MSPs, MPs, Transport Scotland, relevant local authorities, and accessibility groups.

LNER issued a media release on 22 January 2024 to local and trade media, generating coverage in a number of media publications.<sup>4</sup>

During the consultation period LNER issued station posters at Glasgow, Motherwell, Stirling and Falkirk Grahamston. Posters included information with respect to the proposals, as well as instructions on how to reply to the consultation.

LNER produced and hosted a consultation document on its website that provided information on the proposals to remove the Glasgow and Stirling extensions, reasons as to why and how to reply to the consultation. Easy Read, large print, audio versions of the document were made available on its website. It was made clear that other accessible versions of the consultation materials would be provided on request.

### **Responses**

LNER received 265 replies to its consultation on proposals to remove its Glasgow and Stirling extensions.

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<sup>4</sup> LNER'S media release, *Proposed December 2024 Timetable Changes- Consultation On Glasgow And Stirling Extensions*, found here: [Proposed December 2024 Timetable Changes- Consultation on Glasgow and Stirling extensions \(lner.co.uk\)](https://www.lner.co.uk/consultation-on-glasgow-and-stirling-extensions), last accessed 26 March 2024.

155/265 of responses were generated from two online campaigns, the Scottish Green Party Campaign - *Stop LNER's Scottish Train Cuts* ([link](#)) and the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) campaign - *LNER Scotland Service Cuts Consultation* ([link](#)).

Responses focused on the removal of Glasgow and Stirling extensions; Glasgow only; Stirling only, Motherwell only and Falkirk Grahamston only.

Individual consultation replies were mainly based on personal experience, however there were general themes that came out from the responses.

Responses that focused on the Glasgow Central extension removal highlighted the loss of connectivity to the East Coast Main Line from Glasgow. Responses also highlighted the negative impact the removal would have on commuting between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Responses that focused on the Stirling extension removal highlighted how Stirling to London leisure travel would be made more difficult by the removal of the early morning LNER Stirling service.

### **Scottish Green Party campaign**

The Scottish Green Party launched a campaign to oppose LNER's proposals to remove its Glasgow and Stirling extensions. The Scottish Green Party encouraged the public to take part in the e-lobby by sending a pre-written campaign letter to communicate to LNER reasons for their objection.

89/265 to LNER's consultation came via the Scottish Green e-lobby, all of which objected to LNER's proposals. Reasons for objecting included: a negative customer experience; negative impact to customers who require Passenger Assist; the unreliability of other train operators that customers would have to use if LNER services were removed; and increased journey times. The culmination of which would lead people to switch to cars or planes, and therefore the removals were identified as having a negative environmental impact as well.

### **The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers campaign**

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) encouraged members and the public to respond to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions by submitting a pre-written campaign letter via its e-lobby to record their objection.

66/265 responses to LNER's consultation came via the RMT e-lobby, all of which objected to the proposals. Reasons for objecting included: a negative customer experience; negative impact to the environment; negative impact to customers who require Passenger Assist; the unreliability of other train operators that customers would have to use if LNER services were removed, and loss of direct connectivity between Glasgow/Stirling to the East Coast Main Line.

### **Political representatives and representative body replies**

Political representatives and representative bodies responded to LNER's consultation, objecting to proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions, including Motherwell and Falkirk.

Reasons for objecting included: loss of connectivity to the East Coast; lack of alternative rail alternatives; additional costs to customers; increased journey times; negative impact to the economy; the unreliability of other train operators that customers would have to use if LNER services were removed; negative impact for commuters; added difficulty of travelling by train if having to change from one operator to another; and additional difficulty of doing so for those customers who require Passenger Assist. The culmination of which would lead people to switch to cars or planes, and therefore the removals were identified as having a negative environmental impact as well. Concerns with respect to potential job losses were also raised.

### **Individual replies<sup>5</sup>**

106/265 replies from individuals to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions.

#### **Glasgow and Stirling extensions**

172 responded to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions. The majority of these responses, (155/172) were submitted through the Scottish Green Party and RMT campaigns.

17/172 of the replies that focused on the Glasgow and Stirling extensions were from individuals. Not all replies objected to the proposals, some agreeing that the removal of the Glasgow and Stirling extensions made sense from a business perspective.

The majority of replies were objections. Reasons for objecting included: loss of connectivity to the East Coast; the unreliability of other train operators that customers would have to use if LNER services were removed; negative impact for commuters; negative impact to business travellers; possible journey time increases; added difficulty of travelling by train, if having to change from one operator to another; and additional difficulty of doing so for those customers who require Passenger Assist. The culmination of which would lead to people switch to cars or planes, and therefore the removals were identified as having a negative environmental impact as well.

#### **Glasgow only**

28/265 responded to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions focused on Glasgow only.

The 28 responses were objections. Reasons for objecting included: loss of connectivity to the East Coast; the unreliability of other train operators that customers would have to use if LNER services were removed; negative impact for commuters; added difficulty of travelling

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<sup>5</sup> Some themes have not been included at risk of individual identities being revealed as a result. Political representatives and third-party groups have been included in this analysis.

by train if having to change from one operator to another; and additional difficulty of doing so for those customers who require Passenger Assist. The culmination of which would lead people to switch to cars or planes, and therefore the removals were identified as having a negative environmental impact as well.

### **Motherwell**

19/265 responded to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions focused on Motherwell only.

The 19 responses were objections. Reasons for objecting included: loss of connectivity to the East Coast and Edinburgh; the unreliability and lack of alternative train operators that customers would have to use if LNER services were removed; negative impact to customers who used the service for commuting and business travel.

### **Stirling**

26/265 responded to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions focused on Stirling only.

The 26 responses were objections. Reasons for objecting included: loss of connectivity to the East Coast; the unreliability of other train operators that customers would have to use if LNER services were removed; increased journey times; negative impact to customers who used LNER services for commuting and business travel; added difficulty of travelling by train if having to change from one operator to another; and additional difficulty of doing so for those customers who require Passenger Assist; removing the services would mean day-trips to London from Stirling would no longer be possible on LNER services.

### **Falkirk Grahamston**

16/265 responded to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions focused on Falkirk only.

The 16 responses were objections. Reasons for objecting included: the removal of LNER services would have a negative impact to customers who used LNER services for commuting and business travel; make rail travel between Falkirk and London less attractive.

### **Voids**

4/265 responses to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions were void. 2 submissions did not contain feedback on the proposals, and 2 were a duplication.<sup>6</sup>

### **Conclusion**

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<sup>6</sup> Duplication means one person has either submitted the same response twice, or one individual has submitted two separate responses.

The responses to LNER's consultation on proposals to remove Glasgow and Stirling extensions demonstrated the importance that rail has to many.

However, after careful consideration of the consultation responses, LNER has decided that it will proceed with proposals to remove the Glasgow and Stirling extensions from the December 2024 timetable.

LNER services to Glasgow and Stirling extensions are not well utilised, and there remains alternative rail options for those wishing to travel to/from London. The removals are aimed to create a more efficient and reliable railway, and therefore aim to support modal shift towards long distance rail.

The number of journeys between Edinburgh and London will not decrease because of these proposals. Glasgow and Edinburgh will remain well connected by regular ScotRail services providing connections to regular LNER Anglo-Scot East Coast Main Line services. The removal of LNER Glasgow and Stirling services will not have a significant impact to customers who are travelling to the East Coast from Glasgow/Motherwell given the frequency of available connections.

LNER recognise that the removal of the Glasgow and Stirling extensions will impact rail travel for customers who use these services, be it for leisure, business or commuting. The impact will be felt through increased journey times, in some instances, and having to change train at Edinburgh Waverley to connecting services. However, it remains the case that LNER services for these portions of the journey were not well utilised and their removal would support LNER to run more reliable services by being able to use limited resources more efficiently.

Passenger Assist is available at Glasgow Central, Stirling, Motherwell and Falkirk Grahamston and at Edinburgh Waverley, to ensure assistance is available for customers who require it, including for connecting services – available as “turn up and go” and/or to book in advance. There will be no impact to the availability of Passenger Assist.

LNER is responsible for Passenger Assist and ticket retailing at Edinburgh Waverley. LNER colleagues support customers throughout the day, from first to last train.

Stirling will still retain direct connectivity to the East Coast Main Line achieved by both Stirling and Falkirk Grahamston being served by LNER's daily Inverness service, which currently calls at Stirling at 10.34 southbound and 17.19 northbound; and at Falkirk Grahamston at 10.48 southbound and 17.03 northbound.

There will be no job losses as a result of these proposals.