



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01115

Name of petitioner

Caroline Moore on behalf of Campaign to Open Blackford Railway Station Again

Petition title

National and Regional Transport Strategies

Petition summary

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to calling for the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to ensure that national and regional transport strategies consider and focus on public transport solutions such as the reopening of Blackford railway station which is identified as a priority action in the latest Tayside and Central Regional Transport Strategy, and in doing so, recognises and supports the positive environmental, economic and social impacts of such local solutions.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

The campaign to reopen Blackford railway station has been ongoing since 2001 when it successfully campaigned to prevent the opening of a general freight depot. It was proposed at the time that a passenger station with dedicated freight access for Highland Spring would be more beneficial to the village and surrounding area. Campaign Members have been involved as key consultees in the development of the draft regional transport strategy. The proposal was also debated at the Scottish Parliament on 28 March 2007 with great support. Campaign members have also lobbied and approached a number of key organisations and individuals to get their support in promoting this campaign with the key decision makers.

Elected representative support: Gordon Banks MP, John Purvis MEP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Elizabeth Smith MSP, Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Perth & Kinross Council, Stirling Council, Anne McGuire MP, Richard Simpson MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Ted Brocklebank.

Petition background information

Key advantages of the proposal:

1. ENVIRONMENT

- A re-opened station, by reducing road transport, will enhance the environment, address traffic growth issues and reduce pollution not only locally but also in a much wider area.
- With Climate Change high on both the national and local agenda this initiative will encourage the use of public transport along the A9 corridor and gives commuters and

tourists a real alternative to the car and will be of significant environmental benefit to the region as a whole.

- Support for this proposal will demonstrate commitment to the climate change declaration

2. SAFETY

- The station site is well lit, within village boundaries, highly visible and overlooked by a signal box which is manned 24 hours per day.

- Currently the only station between Dunblane and Perth is Gleneagles which can only be reached by rail or by car access from the A9 with all the associated dangers of that road.

- Any reduction in traffic off the public roads has safety advantages

3. ECONOMY

- Tourism, local businesses and new developments will benefit. As proposed in the government's "Community Rail Development Strategy" opportunities for new business will be created including mini-franchises on the station site.

- The area round Blackford is designated to be the location of the largest tourist related development in Scotland with a potential for an investment of £400 million

- Economic benefits through making Perth and Stirling tourist and retail attractions more accessible to a wider population base with no further impact on traffic congestion.

4. ACCESSIBILITY

- Rail-owned car-park space already exists on both sides of the rails at Blackford. This would help solve the parking problems at existing stations e.g. Dunblane. The local bus service owner is interested in providing an integrated bus/train service for the Strathearn/Strathallan communities. This service is not currently available.

- Unlike the local Gleneagles Station the level crossing gives access to both North and Southbound platforms. Capability Scotland and the Centre for Accessible Environments agree that this is "best practice" access for the disabled as well as for any wheeled vehicle (bicycle, push-chair, luggage trolley etc).

- There is an alternative B road access to the station which is within walking distance of the proposed multi million Pound resort development GWest site.

- Current evidence suggests that a significant number of commuters from the Perth and the surrounding area travel to Dunblane by car to pick up the train to Edinburgh or Glasgow. This is a perverse situation which results in a significant number of car journeys along an already congested road which are wholly unnecessary. The opening of a station at Blackford coupled with the lobbying of the rail company to adjust their pricing policy would greatly reduce the negative environmental impacts of these unnecessary journeys and also alleviate the impact on the residents of Dunblane where we are aware that parking spills over from the rail station parking facilities causing further congestion and inconvenience

- Currently the population for the Community Council areas covering the villages and towns most likely to access Blackford Station (i.e. the Blackford, Strathallan, Strathearn, and Auchterarder area) is approximately just over 9100. The house building presently underway and that planned for the near future will take this figure to approximately 10360 – a re-opened station at Blackford with a fully integrated bus service would be of immense benefit.

- The Perthshire area offers excellent leisure opportunities such as cycling, walking etc. A station at Blackford would mean that walkers and cyclists can access the area direct without the requirement of a car. Therefore support for this proposal would also demonstrate the Scottish Government's commitment to promoting healthy living.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/PE01115>

Related information for petition

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

NO

How many signatures have you collected so far?

739

Closing date for collecting signatures online

N/A

Comments to stimulate online discussion