

Text of Email to East Coast – 18 Dec 2013

As you know, SENRUG would like to see more East Coast services call at Morpeth. We have discussed this informally a number of times with yourself and Karen Boswell, pointing out the existing services are well used and appear commercially viable. But whilst the current provision improved significantly following the May 2011 timetable change, it is still the case the services we do have are mainly peak hour trains, on which the cheaper advanced purchase tickets are not available. We believe the leisure and tourist market to and from Morpeth is still under-exploited, and would particularly like to see an after morning peak departure from London call at Morpeth around lunchtime, and an after morning peak southbound departure from Morpeth, arriving in London around lunchtime.

I would also draw your attention to the potential for strong business and leisure flows between Morpeth and Edinburgh and Morpeth and York. There is a tendency to only think in terms of the Morpeth to London market. Yet, additional calls at Morpeth provide a useful way of increasing passenger numbers on the less busy section of a train's journey.

There is also a particular anomaly on Sundays that we would like to see addressed. East Coast currently provides 4 services northbound but only 2 southbound Sunday services at Morpeth. Because Morpeth does not enjoy any local train services on Sunday, the first opportunity to travel south is not until the rather late time of 11.18 CrossCountry service. Yet an East Coast train passes through Morpeth without stopping an hour earlier, only to then wait for 6 minutes on the platform at Newcastle. Morpeth passengers have no ability to connect with that service or arrive in London before 14.50 on a Sunday!

Below are a list of the East Coast trains we have identified that we believe would significantly enhance the inter-city offering at Morpeth. Our eventual aspiration is for this busy market and county town to enjoy an inter-city service in each direction every 2 hours, provided between both inter-city operators. We have also made representations to CrossCountry in the hope they will plug some of the other long gaps we experience throughout the day.

Could I please request you ask your timetabling and commercial teams to look at the below proposals and advise us if further improvements in the timetable will be possible. Just for the avoidance of doubt, the services requested below are *in addition to* the existing services which are well used, not to replace them.

Northbound: Monday to Saturday

09:30 from London KX to call at Morpeth at approx **13.00**

Northbound: Sundays

09:30 from London KX to call at Morpeth at approx **13.00**

Southbound: Mondays – Fridays

08:30 from Edinburgh to call at Morpeth at approx **09:45**; arrives London 12:51
(12:52 on Sats)

Southbound: Sundays

09:00 from Edinburgh to call at Morpeth at approx **10:15**; arrives London 13:42
Note: This would be the first train south of the day from Morpeth. This train currently waits at Newcastle for 6 minutes

and

17:30 from Edinburgh to call at Morpeth at approx **18:45**; arrives London 22:00

I look forward to hearing from you once you've had a chance to discuss with your operational and commercial colleagues

End