Local Rail Review

Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party

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Scottish
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& Unionist

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Foreword

We would review the railway lines closed due to the Beeching cuts in the 1960s, with a view to reopening connections and stations that will support local growth.

The Beeching cuts of the 1960s saw iconic Scottish railways and stations closed, leaving many of our communities without their own train station.

Now fifty years later, the Scottish Conservatives would review whether that decision has done long-term damage to the communities affected and whether the economic case for their closure remains strong.

Good transport links are essential for helping communities thrive and grow, but the SNP have ignored this for the last 13 years as their focus has been another independence referendum. We will focus on rebuilding our communities by restoring Scotland's railways.

Background

- **The 1960s Beeching cuts resulted in the closure of many railways and stations in Scotland.** The first report identified 2,363 stations and five thousand miles of railway line for closure throughout the UK. (British Railways, Beeching Closures, accessed on 17 November 2020, link).

- **The UK Conservative Manifesto called for the restoration of many of the Beeching lines in England.** 'Connectivity is not just about the UK's great cities. To help communities across the country, we will restore many of the Beeching lines, reconnecting smaller towns such as Fleetwood and Willenhall that have suffered permanent disadvantage since they were removed from the rail network in the 1960s'. (Conservatives, The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019, link).

Key Points

- **The cuts left many of our communities without their own train station.** Aberdeenshire, Moray and Argyll and Bute were just some of the areas which saw station closures. The closure of Fraserburgh Railway Station resulted in the area being 40 miles from the nearest train station. (Press & Journal, 6 September 2015, link; The Scotsman, 12 December 2017, link).

- **The Scottish Borders was left without a dedicated railway service for over 40 years until the Borders Railway opened in 2015.** Transport Scotland's business case projected that the number of jobs accessible to residents within 90 minutes increased by up to 138 per cent. (The Scotsman, 16 February 2017, link; The Guardian, 4 September 2014, link; Transport Scotland, Borders Railway Final Business Case, November 2012, link).

- **Alloa was left without a station for 40 years, until it was re-opened in 2008.** The Scottish Enterprise Network (SEN) believed the re-introduction of a passenger service between Alloa and Stirling would assist its efforts to reduce long term unemployment in Clackmannanshire by providing improved access to job opportunities outside the area - particularly in Stirling and Glasgow. (Railnews, 3 June 2008, link; Scottish Parliament, Stirling-Alloa-Kincardine Railway and Linked Improvements Bill – Promotor's memorandum, 21 March 2003, link).

- **We have already put forward plans to massively accelerate Scotland's infrastructure.** Our Power up Scotland plan proposed a joint UK-Scottish infrastructure investment vehicle to allow infrastructure projects of national importance in Scotland to be jointly funded and be jointly overseen. Our plan sets out proposals to bring Aberdeen, Inverness, Edinburgh and Glasgow closer together through better rail links, a three-lane M8 and larger population centres between the four. (Scottish Conservatives, Power Up Scotland, 31 August 2020, p.32, link).