



## Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** [PE1578](#)

**Main Petitioner:** Martin Keatings

**Subject:** Forth Circle Rail Link

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to release funding for and establish passenger rail platforms at: Crossford; Cairneyhill; Torryburn; Valleyfield; Culross and Kincardine; thereby linking Stirling to the Fife Circle.

### Background

The railway line between Alloa and Dunfermline, running along the north shore of the Firth of Forth, was developed in a number of stages.

- **1850-1853:** The Stirling-Dunfermline Railway was progressively opened. This provided a direct link between the two towns, running through Alloa, Clackmannan, Eastgrange and Oakley.
- **1893:** A branch line from the Stirling-Dunfermline Railway to Kincardine with opened
- **1906:** The line from Kincardine was extended to Dunfermline Lower station (now Dunfermline Town), joining the existing Dunfermline and Queensferry Railway at Charlestown Junction, on the southern outskirts of Dunfermline.

The stations on the Kincardine line were Clackmannan, Kilbagie, Kincardine, Culross, Torryburn and Cairneyhill. Appendix 1 includes an extract from a 1927 Ordnance Survey map, which shows these railway lines and stations.

Passenger services on the Kincardine line were relatively short lived, being withdrawn during 1930. However, the section of line between Dunfermline and Kincardine has remained in constant use for freight, primarily coal for Longannet and Kincardine power stations. The section of line between Stirling, Alloa and Kincardine fell into disuse during the 1970's and 80's.

The railway between Stirling, Alloa and Kincardine was rebuilt and reopened to passenger services between Stirling and Alloa on 15 May 2008. The only station on the reopened line is at Alloa, which is the current eastern terminus for passenger services on the line.

The line beyond Alloa to Longannet was also reopened, although for freight rather than passenger services. This provides a direct rail freight route from Hunterston coal terminal to Longannet power station, removing slow moving coal trains from the busy western approaches to Edinburgh and over the Forth Bridge. Scottish Power has announced that Longannet power station will close on 31 March 2016, removing the great majority of rail traffic from the Alloa-Dunfermline section of the line.

It is worth noting that the layout of the Charlestown Junction means that rail services travelling from Edinburgh currently need to run to sidings at Halbeath, on the north-eastern outskirts of Dunfermline, and then change direction to run along the Kincardine line. A similar reversing manoeuvre is required for trains running from the Kincardine line to Edinburgh.

### **Scottish Government Action**

The Scottish Government is responsible for the letting and management of the ScotRail franchise and setting Network Rail's high level Scottish outputs through a High Level Output Specification (HLOS). The current ScotRail franchise contract and Scottish HLOS do not contain any mention of reopening the Kincardine line to passenger services.

### **Scottish Parliament Action**

The Scottish Parliament has not considered the reopening of the Kincardine line to passenger services.

**Alan Rehfish**  
**Senior Research Specialist**  
11 November 2015

SPICe research specialists are not able to discuss the content of petition briefings with petitioners or other members of the public. However if you have any comments on any petition briefing you can email us at [spice@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:spice@scottish.parliament.uk)

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in petition briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

Published by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe), The Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh, EH99 1SP [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

Appendix 1: Extract from a 1927 Ordnance Survey map showing the Stirling and Dunfermline Railway and the Kincardine Line

