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20<sup>th</sup> October 2008

Dear Sir,

### **East Midlands Trains Timetable**

It is of the opinion of Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport that East Midlands Trains (EMT) is failing to meet its contractual obligations with its new timetable from 14<sup>th</sup> December 2008.

The issues relate to SLC2 Route I Nottingham - Skegness and then Netherfield, Radcliffe, Aslockton and Bottesford stations.

#### **Para 5.2 (b)**

EMT is failing 'to meet the needs of commuting, school and leisure journeys to Nottingham'. Using the SLC2 definition of peak time being 16:00 to 18:59, the timetable sees a 50% cut in p.m. commuter services to Radcliffe.

This fails to meet the needs of commuters, who as defined by SLC2, need trains spread between 16:00 and 18:59. The 16:45/17:34/17:50/18:45 should call local stations to serve commuting needs.

SLC2 offers no guidance on late trains. The EMT timetable has the last stopping train of the day towards Nottingham approximately **two hours earlier** than the current service. This conflicts with leisure days out and longer distance travel opportunities via Grantham. The 21:47 from Grantham needs to call at local stations.

However, we recognise extra stops will conflict with the specification of five trains and Para 5.2 (b) is defining the impossible – EMT *cannot* meet the needs of commuting, school and leisure journeys within five trains. DfT needs to explain the logic behind this nonsensical specification.

### **Para 5.4 (b)**

By specifying nine trains, Bottesford receives a reasonable service, but SLC2 then states a cut off time of 17:30. This is completely illogical and Better Transport wonders if this is a typographical error. DfT needs to explain why this time is defined. The result is as defined at Para 5.2 (b) and EMT ceases stopping vital commuter trains at Bottesford. As stated in that paragraph, the full spread of commuter trains between 16:00 and 18:59 from Nottingham must call at Bottesford.

### **Actions**

The above covers a small number of issues with the new timetable, but to solve the main hardship problems the following must happen:

- 1) 17:50 Nottingham – Grantham to call all stations (except Elton & Orston).
- 2) 18:45 Nottingham – Grantham to call all stations (except Elton & Orston).
- 3) 21:47 Grantham – Nottingham to call all stations (except Elton & Orston).

Considering this for next May is *not* acceptable and EMT must be instructed to implement the above from the December 2008 timetable.

### **Responsibilities**

To close a station requires due process, yet to render a station useless by axing its key trains is happening in secrecy with zero process. The fact that serious hardship<sup>1</sup> is being caused is completely ignored. Bear in mind that the basic timetable structure has been in place for many decades and commuters have taken lifestyle decisions on that certainty. To then axe key commuter services without consulting with those commuters is astounding.

This can only be a serious failure of Government. Better Transport is seeking expert advice on the responsibilities of DfT to understand the legality of this failure.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1.

## **Climate Change**

The DfT is failing totally in Government commitments to tackle Climate Change.

A few facts on the Nottingham – Grantham rail route:

- 1) Nottingham is one of the major cities of Europe with a population approaching 300,000.
- 2) The rail corridor parallels the A52 trunk road which has congestion problems and has been the focus of a Multi Modal Study.
- 3) Few corridors have such great potential for modal shift.
- 4) In coming years the East Midlands Region is expected to have the highest growth in population of any English region.

Yet Government (via DfT) has orchestrated the dismantling of the commuter rail service that serves this corridor, leaving those commuters with no alternative but to drive.

## **More Background**

[http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/nottinghamshire\\_local\\_group](http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/nottinghamshire_local_group) has more background to the Better Transport campaign against these service cuts.

Yours sincerely,

David Thornhill  
Chair – Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport

## APPENDIX 1

Here are a few extracts from e-mails received by Better Transport highlighting the hardship the new timetable will cause.

- *However, I am desperate for this service to be saved as I have recently switched over from driving and sold my car (at a huge loss) as I saw trains as the way forward - I will be down by several thousand pounds if I have to buy another car. Catching the later train is not an option as I have two young daughters (3 year old and 1 year old) who I hardly see during the week as it is. I work on NG2 Business Park in Nottingham from 9-5:30 so getting to the station by 5:33 is not going to be possible.*
- *I commute to work by train daily from Bottesford to Nottingham, returning on the 17.50 or 1850 (to become 1845) train. Under the revised timetable, neither of these trains will stop at Bottesford, which will leave me with little option but to use my car to drive into the city centre every working day - something I am very keen to avoid and something which is actively being discouraged by the city council and other local and national bodies.*
- *As I travel Monday to Saturday from Bottesford to Nottingham for work purposes I am disgusted that the present timetable which has services leaving Nottingham at 16.50, 17.50, 18.50 and 20.50 is being changed to 16.45, 17.34 and then nothing until 20.51, hence a gap of over 3 hours! Having travelled to Nottingham for the last 15 years and seen both bus services that ran direct to the city being removed I find it preposterous that the last remaining mode of public transport is being reduced in this way. How does this encourage local villagers to choose not to drive into a city and hence reduce carbon emissions to help the planet?*
- *I am a 22 year old living in Bottesford and I have a job in Nottingham and I rely on the train service heavily .....*
  1. *I do not have a car and do not plan to own one. In a time where we are all encouraged to use public transport to stay 'green' I believe that cutting train services is contradictory and damaging to a policy that is so widely supported.*
  2. *There is no bus service. The bus service was stopped at Bottesford several years ago. There is now only a bus service between Nottingham and Bingham, and Bottesford and Grantham. The train is the only public transport I have.*
  3. *If there is no train I cannot stay behind after work, which I sometimes are asked to do to complete tasks. This reflects badly as I will be branded 'inflexible', which never looks good to an employer.*
- *I work in Derby and my reason for moving to Radcliffe was the convenient train service which meant that I could leave my car at home. At present I get the train from Radcliffe at 06:37am and return on the 17:50pm train from Nottingham. Under the proposals that I have seen there will be a train at 17:34pm from Nottingham (which I will miss as my train from Derby doesn't get in until 17:35pm), the next train is proposed to be at 20:45pm. I will therefore either have to wait at Nottingham station for three hours or ask my wife to come in to Nottingham in the car to pick me up. I did used to think that it was Government Policy to get us off the road and on to public transport, but I believe this to be a fallacy. This action will increase my journeys by car into Nottingham by 5 car journeys (there and back) per week.*