

Reopening of Portobello station

(notes from Lawrence Marshall)

The junction where the line to Newcraighall leaves the east coast main line is known as Portobello junction and is currently, due to its layout, restricted to 15 mph.

Because of this, trains are faced by a red signal on the approach to this when heading from Waverley - with the signal not clearing to a proceed aspect until the train has come to a virtual standstill.

The junction is also single track. That's why it takes 6 minutes to get to Musselburgh (it can actually be done in less than 5) but 8 minutes to get the shorter distance to Brunstane.

With the extension of the Newcraighall service to the Borders and the probable opening of an electric depot at Millerhill to service the new trains on the Edinburgh-Glasgow line, there is a need to upgrade this junction. Although no monies have yet been allocated to this, it is likely to happen in the next few years.

We therefore have to make sure that the re-modelling of this junction allows for a station to be re-opened at Portobello (around 5 minutes by rail from Waverley) which can be served both by local east coast main line trains (N.Berwick and Dunbar services) and those to the Borders. We should not accept a track layout which would preclude this.

Can I suggest that the community council formally writes to Kenny MacAskill to request a meeting regarding the re-opening of Portobello station? Only by engaging with the relevant authorities can we hope to get our station back (as others in East Lothian have recently shown re. East Linton and Reston stations which are now "priced options" required to be submitted by those bidding for the new ScotRail franchise).

This meeting will hopefully help kickstart this long process. We don't need to talk about the junction, etc. in the letter to Kenny - it just needs to say that we'd like to meet to discuss the station re-opening.

It may be that we would also need to consider a sub-committee of interested members of the community council to take this forward in the coming months and years.