

Two bikes per train is not enough say Greens



The new operator of Scotrail will only allow two bikes per train on the new Borders Railway when it starts running from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, and it is simply not enough say the Scottish Greens.

The party have criticised the Scottish Government after it confirmed the policy.

In response to concerns raised by local businesses, Alison Johnstone, Scottish Green MSP for Lothian, asked the Scottish Government for an explanation.

Transport Minister Derek Mackay has confirmed the two-bike policy, adding that Abellio's strategy in the Netherlands has been to invest in storage at stations and encourage passengers to maintain a second bike at destination stations.

Alison Johnstone MSP, who co-convenes Holyrood's cross-party group on cycling, said:

"Leisure cycling and mountain biking are rapidly growing activities worth tens of millions to the Borders economy, and yet this major public transport project will completely fail to match this with increased capacity. Other countries are way ahead of us with bike carriages carrying dozens of bikes, and even some older Highland trains take at least 6 bikes.

"Hiring a bike at the other end might work for some people, but I know lots of enthusiasts will want to take their own, much-loved bikes with them. I can see families considering a cycling holiday in the Borders giving the area a miss if they're unable to take their own bikes by rail. I urge Abellio

to scale up their ambition before September.”

Pauline Stewart, Scottish Green Party candidate for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk, said:

“Considering that we expect the train line to have a very positive effect on increasing tourism to the region which boasts some of the best downhill and cross country mountain biking courses in Europe the proposed two bike restriction on these trains is incredibly short sighted. The majority of mountain bikers who come to the area to utilise these world class routes or indeed to compete here will be very disappointed to hear that they are expected to hire bikes at their destination.”