

Government believes Forth Road Bridge travel plan is working



Road Transport Minister, Derek Mackay, has thanked travellers for their patience during the first week of disruption caused by the closure of the Forth Road Bridge.

The Scottish Government says that early indications show that the comprehensive travel plan, launched last Sunday, is helping to minimise the impact on journey times for people moving between Fife and Edinburgh.

At its peak, the Traffic Scotland website recorded over 3 million hits per day – three times more than normal – from people wishing to receive regular updates on the status of the network and plan their journeys. The plan has undergone several refinements throughout the week.

Over the course of the week journey times on the A907 diversion during peak morning hours fell by over 30 minutes, demonstrating the effectiveness of the ongoing refinements.

In addition, in response to concerns brought forward by local businesses and communities, the restrictions on the dedicated Bus/Goods Vehicle prioritisation corridor on the A985 from Kincardine Roundabout and Cairneyhill Roundabout have been lifted to accommodate all goods vehicles during weekdays, and all vehicles on weekday nights and at weekends.

ScotRail have introduced an extra early morning train on Tuesday to supplement the additional services already running, bringing the number of extra seats on offer across the Forth Rail Bridge up to 10,000 per day. This extra capacity

represents an increase in 64% on usual passenger numbers.

Over the past week [Stagecoach](#) have provided an additional 33 vehicles per day, equating to an extra 11,000 seats, for services between Halbeath, Ferrytoll and Dunfermline to Edinburgh and Livingston, operating up to every 10 minutes at peak times. Journey times are relatively consistent at 1hr 30mins

Transport Minister Derek Mackay said: "I wish to thank the public for their patience and forbearance during this last week. I appreciate that many people have had to make significant changes to their travelling plans and, through their cooperation, we have succeeded in keeping the transport network in Fife operational and getting people to and from where they need to be.

"We have been constantly monitoring the situation and taking on board the advice and concerns of the local communities to ensure that we are doing the very best job that we can. At the centre of this co-ordination has been our comprehensive travel plan, which we have taken steps to refine over the last week

"Although certain services do remain busy, there does remain some capacity on certain routes, especially on the bus network. I encourage people to keep checking the travel plan published on the Traffic Scotland website for the latest advice.

"The team responsible for fixing the bridge are working 24/7 to get it reopened as soon as possible and are making good progress. It is of course vital that until it's repaired we continue to explore what further improvements can be made to the travel plan and take on board feedback."

Phil Verster, Managing Director of the ScotRail Alliance, highlighted that further refinements to the timetable would deliver further improvements from Monday 14th December.

“We’ve listened to customers’ feedback this week and fine-tuned the timetable to add in extra stops at Rosyth and stations south of the Forth on selected services from today. The information is already on our website and in journey planners. We’re doing everything we can to keep people moving. I have to pay tribute to our customers for their understanding, and to our staff for what they have delivered – and continue to deliver – in such challenging timescales.”

Andrew Jarvis, Managing Director, [Stagecoach](#) East Scotland said:

“The implementation of the bus and good vehicle priority measures have meant journey times from Fife to Edinburgh are just 90 minutes and we’ve been able to increase the frequency of services as a result. With more people heading for the buses, traffic on the roads should be that bit quieter and we have a reduced fare of £3 return in place to help ease the cost of the commute. We’re pleased that so many non-bus users have tried the shuttle services and are getting to their destination in a relaxed and timely manner and we’ve had a significant amount of positive feedback from our customers.

“Our staff have been amazing, coping superbly and cheerfully with changes to routes, timetables and shifts with very little notice in order to keep the travelling public moving. We have had drivers from all round Scotland, the north of England and Wales come to help out and I’m very grateful to them and their families for their hard work and adaptability.”