

Key advantages of the proposal:

1. ENVIRONMENT

- A re-opened station, by reducing road transport, will enhance the environment, address traffic growth issues and reduce pollution not only locally but also in a much wider area.
- With Climate Change high on both the national and local agenda this initiative will encourage the use of public transport along the A9 corridor and gives commuters and tourists a real alternative to the car and will be of significant environmental benefit to the region as a whole.
- Support for this proposal will demonstrate commitment to the climate change declaration

2. SAFETY

- The station site is well lit, within village boundaries, highly visible and overlooked by a signal box which is manned 24 hours per day.
- Currently the only station between Dunblane and Perth is Gleneagles which can only be reached by rail or by car access from the A9 with all the associated dangers of that road.
- Any reduction in traffic off the public roads has safety advantages

3. ECONOMY

- Tourism, local businesses and new developments will benefit. As proposed in the government's "Community Rail Development Strategy" opportunities for new business will be created including mini-franchises on the station site.
- The area round Blackford is designated to be the location of the largest tourist related development in Scotland with a potential for an investment of £400 million
- Economic benefits through making Perth and Stirling tourist and retail attractions more accessible to a wider population base with no further impact on traffic congestion.

4. ACCESSIBILITY

- Rail-owned car-park space already exists on both sides of the rails at Blackford. This would help solve the parking problems at existing stations e.g. Dunblane. The local bus service owner is interested in providing an integrated bus/train service for the Strathearn/Strathallan communities. This service is not currently available.
- Unlike the local Gleneagles Station the level crossing gives access to both North and Southbound platforms. Capability Scotland and the Centre for Accessible Environments agree that this is "best practice" access for the disabled as well as for any wheeled vehicle (bicycle, push-chair, luggage trolley etc).
- There is an alternative B road access to the station which is within walking distance of the proposed multi million Pound resort development GWest site.
- Current evidence suggests that a significant number of commuters from the Perth and the surrounding area travel to Dunblane by car to pick up the train to Edinburgh or Glasgow. This is a perverse situation which results in a significant number of car journeys along an already congested road which are wholly unnecessary. The opening of a station at Blackford coupled with the lobbying of the rail company to adjust their pricing policy would greatly reduce the negative environmental impacts of these unnecessary journeys and also alleviate the impact on the residents of Dunblane where we are aware that parking spills over from the rail station parking facilities causing further congestion and inconvenience
- Currently the population for the Community Council areas covering the villages and towns most likely to access Blackford Station (i.e. the Blackford, Strathallan, Strathearn, and Auchterarder area) is approximately just over 9100. The house building presently underway and that planned for the near future will take this figure to approximately 10360 – a re-opened station at Blackford with a fully integrated bus service would be of immense benefit.
- The Perthshire area offers excellent leisure opportunities such as cycling, walking etc. A station at Blackford would mean that walkers and cyclists can access the area direct without the requirement of a car. Therefore support for this proposal would also demonstrate the Scottish Government's commitment to promoting healthy living.