Consultation Document – Consultation by Transport Scotland on the proposal by
Network Rail to close Breich Station

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text may be freely downloaded and translated by individuals or organisations for conversion
into other accessible formats. If you have other needs in this regard please contact Network
Rail.

breichstation@networkrail.co.uk.

Or Breich Station Closure consultation, Community Relations Team, Network Rail, 151, St
Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5NW
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Foreword

The purpose of this document is to consult the public on Network Rail’s proposal to withdraw passenger services from Breich Station and to carry out the necessary works to close the station. Network Rail has prepared this document to assist Transport Scotland, as the relevant national authority, to consult on the closure of Breich Station. The following stakeholders are invited to respond to this consultation.

Local Residents
Passengers
Community Stakeholders
Local Authority
Statutory Bodies
Elected representatives

This document sets out the reasons why closure of the station is being proposed, and invites any interested parties to make representations that they feel are relevant to the decision on whether the station should close. This consultation document has been prepared in accordance with the Railways Act 2005.

Network Rail is proposing closure of Breich station due to the low number of passengers using the station, the costs of operating the station and the availability of suitable public transport alternatives. An average of 2.6 passengers per week uses the station, and on the basis of current and expected traffic this is equivalent to £95 per passenger journey. Considerable investment would be required to bring the station up to modern standards. It is considered that such investment could be better used to provide a wider benefit on the rail network in Scotland.

Network Rail is currently in the process of modernising the Edinburgh – Glasgow via Shotts Route on which Breich station is located by electrifying the line. This upgrade will deliver many benefits to both the people using the train service and local residents. It will enable more reliable and more comfortable journeys for passengers on new electric trains, which are quieter than current diesel services.

1 Please see Railway Closures Guidance for further detail
As part of the modernisation of the route, many stations along it, Breich included, require significant enabling works to be carried out to ensure compliance with current safety standards. These require public areas to be a safe distance from overhead electric wires. At Breich, the station would require a substantial rebuild.

Network Rail’s analysis suggests that the combination of low levels of patronage at Breich station and the relatively high cost of operating the station provide a case for closure. Given the imminent requirement to rebuild the station for the electrification project, there is a strong case for closing the station at this time. As a government body, Network Rail has a duty to ensure that public money is managed responsibly\(^2\). It is Network Rail’s view that a failure to close the station in advance of electrification works would be a poor use of public funds.

This consultation has been prepared in accordance with The Railway Closures Guidance\(^3\) to assist Transport Scotland, as the relevant national authority, to consult on the closure of Breich Station. As a consultation, it is intended to invite views and information that will be relevant to the closure decision. A detailed report on the outcome of the consultation will be provided to Scottish Ministers to allow them to form an opinion on whether the closure should be progressed. The report will include a complete list of the parties consulted and all individual responses from statutory consultees and others that have been consulted, in accordance with the Railways Closures Guidance. If, after reviewing the consultation responses, Scottish Ministers\(^4\) form an opinion that the station should be closed then Scottish Ministers will refer the proposal to the Office of Rail and Road.

The Office of Rail and Road’s decision of whether or not to ratify the closure decision is dependent on whether the process set out in the Railway Closures Guidance has been followed. Breich station will only close if The Office of Rail and Road ratify the closure decision and issue a ratification notice.


\(^3\) Published by The Department for Transport, Transport Scotland and The National Assembly for Wales on the 18\(^{th}\) October, 2006  [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/railway-closures-guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/railway-closures-guidance)

\(^4\) As the relevant national authority
# How to Respond

The consultation period runs for 12 weeks from 10th July 2017 to – 2359hrs on 2\textsuperscript{nd} October 2017.

The consultation document is available on Network Rail’s website at [www.networkrail.co.uk/breichstation](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/breichstation). Alternatively, copies can be obtained from The Community Relations Team, Network Rail, 151, St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5NW.

Copies will be provided free of charge.

Representations about the proposal should be sent to [breichstation@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:breichstation@networkrail.co.uk).

Or Breich Station Closure Consultation, Community Relations Team, Network Rail, 151, St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5NW

No later than 2\textsuperscript{nd} October, 2017

For General Enquiries contact Network Rail Helpline – Telephone 03457 11 41 41

The following stakeholders have been sent a copy of this consultation document and invited to respond:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Train Operators</th>
<th>Abellio ScotRail</th>
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<td>Alliance Rail</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Arriva Cross Country</td>
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<td>Caledonian Sleeper</td>
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<td>Colas Rail</td>
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<td>GB Railfreight Ltd</td>
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<td>Virgin Trains East Coast</td>
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<td>Virgin Trains West Coast</td>
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<td>Community Councils</td>
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<td>Longridge</td>
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<td>Stoneyburn</td>
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<td>Fauldhouse</td>
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<td>Addiewell and Loganlea</td>
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<td>Local Councillors</td>
<td>Fauldhouse &amp; Breich Valley Ward Councillors</td>
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<td>MSPs</td>
<td>Almond Valley</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Livingston</td>
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<td>Lothian Regional MSPs</td>
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<td>Council</td>
<td>Edinburgh City Council</td>
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<td>West Lothian Council</td>
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<td>North Lanarkshire Council</td>
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<td>Glasgow City Council</td>
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<td>Unions</td>
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<td>Unite</td>
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<td>Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers Union (RMT)</td>
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<td>ASLEF</td>
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<td>Transport Partnerships</td>
<td>South East of Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran)</td>
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<td>Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT)</td>
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<td>Government</td>
<td>Transport Scotland</td>
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<td>Passenger</td>
<td>Transport Focus</td>
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<td>Rail Industry Partners</td>
<td>Police Scotland</td>
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<td>British Transport Police</td>
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When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.
Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on Network Rail.

Network Rail will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.
Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to consult the public on Network Rail’s proposal to withdraw passenger services from Breich Station. Network Rail has prepared this document to assist Transport Scotland, as the relevant national authority, to consult on the closure of Breich Station and invites the public to respond to this consultation.

This document sets out the reasons why closure of the station is being proposed, and invites interested parties to make any representations that they feel are relevant to the decision on whether or not to close the station. It describes the scope of the investment to modernise the Shotts Route, the costs associated specifically with the proposed works at Breich and a summary of a socio-economic appraisal that has been carried out to assess the options for retaining the station at Breich.

Based on this assessment and appraisal Network Rail has concluded that Breich station should be closed for the following reasons:-

- The patronage at the station is expected to remain low
- The ongoing operating costs of the station represent poor value for money to the public
- The closure of the station will have very little impact on rail users
- The option to retain the station has a (negative) Net Present Value\(^5\) of -£1.79 million based on renewal costs avoided alone
- The option to retain the station once the electrification scheme has been completed has a (negative) Net Present Value of -£1.95m. The closure will avoid station rebuild costs of £1.4 million associated with the Shotts Electrification Programme.

In light of this conclusion Network Rail in accordance with the Railways Act 2005 Section 29 (1) (a), is carrying out this consultation to assist Transport Scotland and is seeking views on this closure proposal.

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\(^5\) Railways Closure Guidance suggests the use of benefit cost ratio methodology to assess investment proposals. Net present value is a related method which provides a more helpful metric in cases such as this where there are net disbenefits or net cost savings.
Closure of Breich Station

Purpose of Consultation

The purpose of this document is to set out the reasons why Network Rail is proposing the closure of Breich station in West Lothian.

Network Rail has carried out an assessment in accordance with the Railway Closures Guidance on whether the closure of the station represents good value for money. Network Rail has reviewed the costs and the benefits of retaining the station at Breich and has concluded that this is neither an appropriate or responsible use of public money.

Under Section 29 of the Railways Act 2005, Transport Scotland, as the relevant national authority, is required to carry out a consultation process, if it has formed an opinion that closure should be allowed having received a proposal from Network Rail in accordance with the closures guidance on the reasons for closure of a particular station.

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Background

Breich station is located on the Edinburgh to Glasgow via Shotts Route in West Lothian. It is currently served by one train per day in either direction, six days a week. Services are provided as part of the ScotRail franchise, which is funded by Transport Scotland.

Figure 1: Location of Breich relative to Fauldhouse, Addiewell and neighbouring settlement © Ordnance Survey 2015

Figure 2: Location of Breich Station
Pedestrian access to the station is by means of a footpath off the main A71 600m to the west of Breich village. The road access to the station is located at the junction of the A706 and the A71.

The station has basic facilities including a waiting shelter and a footbridge. It is unstaffed.

The service provision at Breich reflects the patronage at the station, which has historically been low. The level of patronage at Breich is in contrast to other stations on the route where demand is higher and which has increased steadily in recent years. Table 1 below compares the number of passengers using Breich station to the numbers using the neighbouring stations of Fauldhouse and Addiewell, together with the busier West Lothian stations on the route. The numbers are based on ticket sales to and from each station.

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addiewell</td>
<td>10,157</td>
<td>10,460</td>
<td>13,459</td>
<td>15,0102</td>
<td>25,738</td>
<td>22,868</td>
<td>24,200</td>
<td>23,268</td>
<td>21,070</td>
<td>22,214</td>
<td>23,346</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breich</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fauldhouse</td>
<td>38,760</td>
<td>41,850</td>
<td>45,766</td>
<td>49,184</td>
<td>45,598</td>
<td>44,504</td>
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<td>42,350</td>
<td>43,098</td>
<td>45,500</td>
<td>45,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Calder</td>
<td>99,213</td>
<td>96,541</td>
<td>94,404</td>
<td>100,938</td>
<td>97,396</td>
<td>109,252</td>
<td>113,484</td>
<td>118,164</td>
<td>122,448</td>
<td>131,620</td>
<td>136,052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Station usage statistics: The number of entries and exits at selected stations on the Shotts Route (source: Office of Rail and Road, 2015)

All station usage numbers are estimates, but the ORR numbers illustrate the fact that passenger demand at Breich is low when compared to demand at neighbouring stations.

The above table reflects the service level at stations along the route. Stations adjacent to Breich have an hourly service provision whereas Breich gets one train service a day in each direction to reflect the historical and anticipated low usage of the station. A Glasgow to Edinburgh train currently departs Glasgow Central at 0713hrs and calls at the station at 0804hrs arriving in Edinburgh Station at 0849hrs, whilst an Edinburgh to Glasgow service departs Edinburgh at 1756hrs arriving at Breich at 1837hrs and at Glasgow Central at 1926hrs. Despite these relatively commuter-friendly service times patronage at the station has remained low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Towards Glasgow</th>
<th>Towards Edinburgh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addiewell</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breich</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fauldhouse</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livingston South</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Calder</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Number of passenger services per weekday (source: December 2016 timetable8)

The population of Breich is approximately 300 people. The majority of planned development is occurring in communities surrounding Breich which are nearer to Fauldhouse Station (2.9 miles to the west of Breich by road) and Addiewell Stations (2.3 miles to the east)9. Breich has relatively good transport connections to the train service provided at Addiewell and Fauldhouse and is served by two buses per hour to Fauldhouse and Livingston, both of which connect with train services on the Shotts Route.

8 https://www.scotrail.co.uk/sites/default/files/assets/download_ct/sr1703_glasgow-edinburgh_via_shotts_0.pdf
9 West Lothian Local Development Plan https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/WLLP
Network Rail’s obligations to plan the rail network efficiently

The rail industry is funded by a combination of public funding and revenue from passengers and freight customers. Network Rail is obliged as part of its Operating Licence to consider the long term efficiency of rail investments and demonstrate value for money for the public.

A key part of Network Rail’s infrastructure planning process, is to consider which services the rail network can and should deliver in the future. This may include the provision of additional or improved services, greater connectivity to other modes or even additional lines where these generate benefits for communities. However on occasion this may result in a reduction to some services to ensure that a wider overall benefit can be delivered.
Overall context of Shotts Electrification Programme

In an environment where demand for rail services has grown consistently in recent years, this continues to mean planning for growth at a national level. The Scottish Government’s commitment to supporting this growth has been demonstrated by the significant recent investment. In West Lothian this has included the Airdrie to Bathgate line and the Edinburgh Glasgow Improvement Project.

As part of Network Rail’s current regulatory settlement, it is committed to the electrification of the railway between Glasgow Central and Edinburgh Waverley via Shotts, known as the Shotts Route. Network Rail is currently investing £160m to upgrade the infrastructure and install overhead electric wires. In tandem, Transport Scotland is funding the introduction of brand new electric rolling stock for passenger services through the ScotRail franchise, which will increase the number of seats available on more comfortable and environmentally friendly trains. By end of March, 2019 the investment will have delivered:

- Electrification of 74km of single track railway
- Extended platforms at three stations – Carfin, Shotts and West Calder
- New station footbridge at Addiewell
- The reconstruction of the footpath for the westbound platform at Addiewell to comply with the Accessible Train Station Design for Disabled People: A Code of Practice.
- A new station footbridge with lifts at West Calder
- Redeveloped Livingston South station.

To date the project has delivered

- Upgrades to bridges across North Lanarkshire and West Lothian on the route to be electrified enabling consequential improvements to road network
- Strengthening and widening Benhar Road in Shotts to enable the removal of traffic lights for the first time in a generation

In addition to this investment, the upgraded rail route will encourage modal shift from road to rail and will help to reduce congestion on the A71, M74 and M8 as well as helping to reduce transport-related carbon emissions.

Overall, the investment in the Shotts Electrification Programme will deliver a step change in the quality of rail transport within West Lothian, and will support the long term potential for economic growth within West Lothian and across the wider Central Belt.
Breich investment costs

The Shotts Electrification Programme is currently at an advanced stage of development and it has become increasingly apparent that continuing to provide services at Breich will entail significant investment. The need to upgrade the station to modern standards, combined with a requirement to comply with safety standards, means that the station would require rebuilding prior to electrification in order to remain open.

The current estimated cost for rebuilding Breich to comply with modern standards is £1.4m. In addition to this initial investment, ongoing costs of maintaining a rebuilt station could be substantial relative to the footfall at the station.

The cost of maintaining an operational station at Breich is comprised of:

a) The cost of renewing the infrastructure of the station and
b) The costs of operating and maintaining the station.

ScotRail is responsible for operating and maintaining the station and some of the staff time would be saved and it would be reallocated to other stations along the route. This is a relatively cautious assumption.

The costs of renewing the assets at the station would be saved. Currently Abellio ScotRail pays Network Rail £27,000 per annum towards the renewal of the assets at the station. This is called the Stations Long Term Charge and it is calculated using an economic model agreed by The Office of Rail and Road.

Such costs are equivalent to £95 per passenger journey, given the current estimate of passenger usage of the station. It is these operating costs, combined with low patronage, which have informed the proposal to close the station. The timing of the proposed closure is intended to enable the Shotts Electrification Programme to be delivered in the most efficient way.

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10 The current estimate being of 69 journeys from and 69 exits at Breich Station
Summary of Appraisal Results

The Railways Closures Guidance requires Network Rail to carry out an appraisal (which can be found here)\(^1\). The appraisal considers five key criteria which are addressed in the appraisal document. The appraisal that has been undertaken is in accordance with the standard transport appraisal guidance used by the Scottish Government\(^2\).

The conclusions of the appraisal are summarised below:

**Environmental**

As the existing patronage at the station is so low, the environmental impact of transferring traffic onto the road network is likely to be minimal.

Closure of the station will enable rail industry resources to be focussed on encouraging modal shift at other locations away from road and onto rail, with consequential environmental benefits.

**Safety**

Due to the low patronage at the station, the number of journeys transferred onto other, less safe modes of transport (for instance, the private car) is likely to be low. Closure of the station will enable resources to be focussed on encouraging modal shift at other locations away from road and onto rail, with attendant safety benefits.

In addition, closing the station will remove a public point of access to the railway and reduce the risk of incursion onto the railway at Breich. Therefore, overall, the closure of Breich Station is likely to be beneficial from a safety perspective.

**Economy**

Given the estimated costs of operating the station, and given the low patronage of the station, maintaining the station at Breich would represent poor value for money irrespective of any upgrade required as a result of the Shotts Electrification Programme. Closing the station on the basis of the implied renewal costs will mean that public resources associated with operating the station could be retained or redirected towards expenditure or investments which are likely to generate a higher social and economic return. Closing the station at this point in time will enable the rebuilding costs associated with the electrification project to be largely avoided.

Equally, closure of the station will have no impact on other rail users in terms of changes in journey time or quality and will have minimal impact on the rail operator’s revenues.

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\(^1\) Public Consultation web page - https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/scotland/breich-station/

According to the 2011 Census, approximately 300 people reside within the immediate catchment of Breich Station\(^\text{13}\). According to the most recent West Lothian Local Plan\(^\text{14}\), land zoned for 145 houses at Breich. One site for 30 houses has been granted planning permission and 27 houses have already been built. On this basis there is unlikely to be a population increase within the catchment area in the near future sufficient to support a station.

**Accessibility**

Closing the station will marginally reduce accessibility to the rail network, although the level of accessibility currently provided by the station is already extremely low. Maintaining accessibility to the rail network at Breich to the small number of current and anticipated future users would divert public resources from schemes with higher accessibility benefits.

The existing half-hourly bus services serving Breich provide a relatively high level of public transport provision for the size of settlement, and removing the single daily train service (6 days a week) will not represent a significant reduction in accessibility to key destinations.

An assessment proportional to the potential impacts of closing the station on users will be undertaken on consideration of responses to this consultation.

**Integration**

The low existing service levels at the station, and the station’s remote location away from the main road through the village of Breich means that the station provides relatively poor integration with other modes. Closure of the station will therefore have very little impact on how rail integrates with other transport modes.

\(^{13}\) Defined as being within a 1km radius of the station.

Conclusion

The conclusions of Network Rail’s assessment suggest that Breich station should be closed for the following reasons:

- The patronage at the station is expected to remain low
- The ongoing operating costs of the station represent poor value for money to the public
- The closure of the station will have very little impact on rail users
- The option to retain the station has a (negative) Net Present Value\textsuperscript{15} of -£1.79 million based on renewal costs avoided alone
- The option to retain the station once the electrification scheme has been completed has a (negative) Net Present Value of -£1.95m. The closure will avoid station rebuild costs of £1.4 million associated with the Shotts Electrification Programme.
- The closure will avoid station rebuild costs of £1.4 million associated with the Shotts Electrification Programme.

The upgrade of the Shotts Route will require significant public funding. The closure of Breich station at this point in time represents an opportunity to deliver the Shotts Electrification Programme in a way that makes the best use of public funds.

\textsuperscript{15} Railways Closure Guidance suggests the use of benefit cost ratio methodology to assess investment proposals. Net present value is a related method which provides a more helpful metric in cases such as this where there are net disbenefits or net cost savings.
What will happen next?

Following the consultation period, Network Rail will produce a report of the consultation responses received for Transport Scotland, which will be published.

This will include a complete list of the parties consulted and all individual responses from statutory consultees and others that have been consulted. This will be submitted to Transport Scotland for Scottish Ministers to make a decision on whether the station should close. If you have any questions about this consultation, please contact:

breichstation@networkrail.co.uk