

ScotRail promises quicker journeys from December

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Journey times on the main Edinburgh to Glasgow shuttle train service will be cut to 47 minutes by the end of the year, ScotRail has announced.

The reduction of four minutes is one of a number of improvements announced by Scotland's national rail operator. Other changes, which will come into operation in December, include reducing journey times between Glasgow and Stirling by up to five minutes and introducing new services between Inverness and Elgin.

The rail operator has also promised faster journey times, more services and more seats as a result of new high-speed and electric trains and further electrification of the lines.

Alex Hynes, managing director of the ScotRail Alliance, told BBC Scot-

land: "As we've seen on the Edinburgh-Glasgow electrification, once we introduce our brand new Hitachi trains customers absolutely love them."

The Hitachi class 385 trains were meant to come into service in March but were eventually introduced in July.

Tom Rye, a transport expert at Edinburgh Napier University, questioned whether the cost of the general rail improvements would prove to be worth it. He said: "Scotland's railway is essentially a public railway — it's the largest single contract that is let by the Scottish government. It's about £700 million a year and the number of people it actually carries in comparison to the whole transport system is really rather small. These increases in capacity comes at huge cost and we have to ask ourselves — are we getting value for money?"

