

On Track

Edition 3, March 2005



Welcome to the latest edition of On Track, the newsletter that aims to keep you updated with developments relating to the Waverley Railway Project.

It has been an intense few weeks with the main news being the Transport Minister Nicol Stephen's announcement that the Executive will provide £115 million (at 2002 prices) of funding to build the new rail line between Newcraighall in Midlothian and Tweedbank in the Scottish Borders.

The news was greeted enthusiastically by all the organisations and individuals that have campaigned for many years to re-establish a rail link that will bring hundreds of jobs to Midlothian and the Borders while also offering a link to the country's leading economy.

Much work has still to be done to ensure a safe passage for the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill. Assuming a satisfactory conclusion to the Preliminary Stage, the matter must still complete the Consideration Stage by the Bill Committee and thereafter be voted on in the Scottish Parliament.

The news does however demonstrate the most significant leap forward for the project in recent times and the backing of the Scottish Executive has been warmly welcomed. The announcement of funding for the Project should also allow discussions to progress with people whose

property or land may be directly affected by the proposals.

As always we would welcome your views on the latest developments either through the Waverley Railway Project hotline on 0131-623 2008 or visiting the project website at www.waverleyrailwayproject.co.uk.

Funding Announcement Boosts Rail Prospects



Nicol Stephen, the Transport Minister (above) confirmed the Scottish Executive's support for the new Waverley railway line when he announced it to the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill Committee on 14 March in Langlee Community Centre, Galashiels. Mr Stephen said:

This Month...

- Funding Pledge Confirmed
- An "Exceptional Day"
- "Travel to Work" figures

"This morning I am here to confirm the Scottish Executive's support for the Borders Railway. For the first time I can make clear that this support includes agreement in principle to provide the funding set out in the Funding Statement for the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill.

To date the Executive has allocated over £2m to the development of the scheme and is delivering on its commitment to the rail link.

Most significantly the Partnership Agreement restated the Executive's commitment to constructing the Borders Rail Line and we allocated resources in the most recent Spending Review to ensure that there is sufficient funding for all our major transport infrastructure projects to be delivered.

All the major transport infrastructure projects in our Partnership Agreement - including the two Edinburgh Tram lines currently before Parliament - the rail links to Edinburgh and Glasgow Airports and the Airdrie - Bathgate line, which will all be before the Parliament soon, and all of these projects will be delivered within our overall transport investment plan. So too will the Borders Railway.

In the business case now before the committee, the Borders Railway demonstrates a positive net present value. Re-opening the rail line will provide greater opportunities for people in the Borders and Midlothian, helping to stimulate a sustainable economy in the Borders, attract investment and crucially to encourage more young people to remain. At the same time it will increase access to the buoyant Edinburgh labour market. This is good for communities served by the railway as opportunities increase; it is good not only for business in the Borders

and Midlothian but also for those businesses in Edinburgh who need better transport links to expand their labour pool; and it is good for Scotland as a whole as growing our economy is our top priority.

Faster journey times, greater accessibility for passengers with a disability, improved opportunities for education, employment and leisure, reduced emissions from road traffic, safer travel - these are the tangible transport and economic benefits that the railway will bring.

I know that Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Enterprise Borders, and Scottish Borders Tourist Board along with their Midlothian counterparts and the private sector have all been working hard to create new jobs.

This railway is a real sign that times are changing, that the Borders and Midlothian will play their full part in the strong, confident Scotland, that our transport investment will help build.

This project is about connecting the Borders and connecting Midlothian, not only to Edinburgh and the rest of Scotland but through the Edinburgh airport rail link onwards to global markets.

These are the compelling reasons that underpin the Executive's support in principle for the scheme before you. Like all major infrastructure projects, I should make it clear that our support comes with conditions that must be satisfied before funding can be released for construction to begin:

- ***First and foremost, funding is conditional on approval of the Bill by this Committee and by the Scottish Parliament;***



- *Secondly, the assumptions underlying the business case must hold - including the achievement of patronage levels, containment of costs, active management of risks and housing growth projections which are achievable and based on identified market demand*
- *Third, a clear and comprehensive risk management strategy must be developed and delivered - the Waverley Railway Partnership has undertaken work on risk management but this must be taken further and translated into a specific action plan before construction can begin*
- *Fourth, the railway must be integrated with local bus services to ensure that the railway has the widest possible impact in the Borders and Midlothian*

The decision to release funding will also, of course, be informed by the thinking of this committee.

These are significant challenges that must be met. They are fully in line with what we expect of every other major transport scheme. We are making sure that public money is invested wisely and invested in schemes that will make a real difference to Scotland's transport.

We believe the Borders Railway will transform travel opportunities from Midlothian and the Borders; it will make a real contribution to sustainable travel; and it will provide a real boost to the economy of the Borders, of Midlothian and of South East Scotland as a whole. That is why I am pleased to confirm the Executive's commitment in principle to provide £115 million in 2002 prices towards the project."

Partnership Welcomes Exceptional Day



Monday, 14th March, 2005 - a truly historic day for the people of Midlothian and the Borders. That was the view of the Waverley Railway Partnership on hearing Transport

Minister Nicol Stephen's pledge on majority funding the construction of a 35-mile stretch of rail line from Edinburgh through to the central Scottish Borders.

Jim Dunsmuir, chairman of the Waverley Railway Partnership, said: "This is a truly exceptional day for the people of the Scottish Borders, Midlothian and the City of Edinburgh. The positive announcement on funding is the result of intense campaigning, planning and consulting by many people over many years, with the ultimate goal of bringing passenger rail services back to Midlothian and the Scottish Borders.

The benefits of the rail project include an injection of £258 million into the local economy around the line and a sustained increase in the employment base with up to 548 jobs created across the three local authority areas.

Additionally there will be significant benefits in terms of reducing the current rate of traffic growth into and out of Edinburgh and the related pollution caused by so many cars. There will also be reduced pressure on green belt land around Edinburgh with increased housing opportunities in Midlothian and the Scottish Borders. We also expect that the flow of people from the Capital to Midlothian and Scottish Borders tourist attractions will increase the off-peak travel levels of the train.



Our aim now is to ensure that the Bill secures a safe passage through Parliament with a view to Royal Assent being granted next year and the first trains running from 2008. The announcement also allows us to actively progress negotiations with those residents and landowners who are directly affected by the plans for the new rail line. We would now expect to work with these people to secure some certainty about their future course of action."

Edinburgh's 'Travel To Work' Figures Demonstrate Case for Rail Link

Figures released in a report by City of Edinburgh Council, analysing the 2001 Census travel to work data, show that Midlothian and the Borders account for the greatest number of 'journeys to work' in Edinburgh - more than any other region. The combined figure for the two regions was 21,167 almost 15% more than the next highest figure for West Lothian. The combined total for people travelling to work from the Borders and Midlothian is almost double that of Fife which accounts for 11,333.

A spokesperson for the Waverley Railway Partnership, said: "*All other areas have bus and train access to Edinburgh but only Midlothian and Scottish Borders lack rail access, despite having the highest commuting numbers.*"

"The figures demonstrate the economic and social importance of reinstating passenger rail services through Midlothian to the central Scottish Borders. The trend of increasing numbers travelling to and from Edinburgh to work is increasing annually and it is absolutely imperative that we develop our transport infrastructure adequately. It is only by providing good quality public transport options that we will encourage people to take advantage of the full range of travel options open to them."

The full 'Travel To Work in Edinburgh' figures are:

Midlothian and The Borders	21,167
West Lothian	18,458
East Lothian	16,612
Fife	11,333
Central Scotland	6,675
Glasgow	1,744
Rest of Strathclyde	4,934
Tayside	1,625

The Team

The Waverley Railway Partnership comprises:

- Scottish Borders Council
- Midlothian Council
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Supported by Scottish Enterprise Borders.

If you would like to know more about the Waverley Railway Project or would like to add your support to the project, please visit:

- www.waverleyrailwayproject.co.uk,
- phone: 0131 623 2008,
- email: info@waverleyrailway.co.uk.