

ONTRACK

Just the Ticket for New Homes

All eyes are on the Borders and Midlothian as the Waverley Railway line will pave the way for crucial new homes in the Scottish Borders and Midlothian.



With population in the Scottish Borders and Midlothian expected to grow substantially, a mix of affordable, accessible and social housing is vital to meet the needs of the area.

The potential to grow the local economy will be enhanced by the ability to offer a full range of housing. Improved accessibility between Edinburgh, Midlothian and the Borders will therefore help improve the success of the region's inward investment effort.

There is little doubt that an upturn in investment interest from developers is linked to the reintroduction of the railway.

Keeping track of the market are:

David Workman, Land Director at Persimmon Homes East Scotland, who predicts the Waverley Line will attract buyers to the company's Easter Langlee development at Galashiels. He says: "The proposed return of the Waverley Line was a big attraction to Persimmon in acquiring the site. It will attract buyers who can benefit from a rural lifestyle while being within an easy commute of Edinburgh."

John Brown, Director of DTZ's residential division; currently marketing a development site for 57 potential

homes at Gorebridge which is expected to go for over £4 million. "The whole area is a hot spot as it sits on the new Waverley line and is an overspill for Edinburgh commuters."

Jim Ross, Managing Director of CALA Finance: "We want to meet more of the demand for family homes that is caused by so many of the properties in Edinburgh being flats. The housebuilding industry is very interested in Midlothian. It is already accessible for families looking to commute to Edinburgh, and the railway will help make it become more accessible."



John Brown, DTZ

All Aboard!

Living in Midlothian and Borders: Vital Statistics
10,000 new homes promised as part of the Borders and Midlothian structure plans
2,500 additional new homes already in the pipeline
Key projects in the pipeline:
500 houses proposed by Persimmon Homes at Easter Langlee, Galashiels
4,800 homes at Shawfair
1,000 units delivered by a mix of developers at Hopefield
825 affordable housing units at Wester Cowden and Thornybank being delivered by a number of developers
1,000 council homes in Midlothian, with work started in Bonnyrigg, Newtongrange and Mayfield

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Full-Steam Ahead for Waverley Railway

The Scottish Government has given the go ahead to the Waverley Railway following a due diligence exercise carried out by Transport Scotland.

The announcement by Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson has set the way forward for the reinstatement of the passenger service from Edinburgh through Midlothian to Tweedbank in the Scottish Borders.

The project will be completed at a cost of £235-£295 million, with the railway being delivered by a "non-profit distributing" vehicle.

A spokesman for Transport Scotland said: "Ministers are committed to progressing work on the Borders Railway as quickly as possible and have said that work will begin in the life of this Parliament. That means starting in early 2011 at the very latest."

Before work can begin, an extensive procurement project will be undertaken, identifying companies to deliver the detailed design of the railway, and the construction.



Land Acquisition for Waverley Rail Project Underway

The land acquisition process required for the construction and operation of the Waverley Railway Project is now well underway.

Scottish Borders Council contacted land and property owners last year in order to begin formally the transfer of land ownership along the route.

Although Transport Scotland is to take over the role of authorised undertaker of the project, it is Scottish Borders

Council that will remain responsible for delivering the land required for the railway.

Around 70 percent of the 1400 tranches of land and property needed for the railway has either been acquired or is in the process of being acquired. The

remaining 30 percent comprises land mainly owned by Midlothian and Scottish Borders councils, but will be brought under Council ownership over the remainder of 2008.

Business as Usual for Badgers

A badger survey along the entire route earmarked for the reinstatement of the Waverley Railway Line has recently been completed. The survey assessed badger activity in the area and confirmed badger sett locations as part of the Reference Design stage of the project.



The badger surveys are a vital step forward in the project to link the Borders and Midlothian to the national rail network. The information will be used to design suitable measures to ensure the welfare of the badgers.

A number of setts within the route area have already been identified and

data used to inform the ongoing topographical and ground investigation surveys.

In the event that badgers have to be relocated prior to the construction of the railway, experts will create artificial setts under license from Scottish Natural Heritage, which will be monitored for up to five years.

Phillipa Sharp, Principal Consultant at ERM, the Waverley Railway Project's environmental consultants, said: "The protection of badgers and their habitat is an important part of our role on this project and we are working closely with Scottish Natural Heritage to ensure that suitable measures are in place to minimise the risk to badgers, along with other protected species that occur on the route, like otters and bats, during the construction and operation of the railway."

Another environmental preparation is a survey to pinpoint the presence of invasive species such as Japanese knotweed along the Waverley route, which is due to be launched in the coming months.

The investigation into the extent of the weed and other species such as Giant Hogweeds and Himalayan Balsam is necessary in order to comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Japanese knotweed was introduced from Japan in 1825 as an ornamental plant. The plant grows to 2.1m in one season and spreads relentlessly, overwhelming other garden plants. Where established as a wayside weed, native plants are also aggressively over-run and a survey will allow these types of plants to be carefully controlled and managed.

Stop Press!

Future Waverley Railway passengers who like an extra five minutes in bed will be pleased to hear that engineers working on the reference design stage of the railway project have managed to reduce the journey time between Tweedbank and Edinburgh from 60 to 55 minutes. The reference stage of the design will be complete in late 2008, with the final detailed design taking place afterwards.



Tracking Time



Times have moved on since this postcard of Galashiels (left) was sent in circa 1915. But the Borders and Midlothian are no strangers to change, as seen in the other image (right). The station shown, just off Station Road at Fountainhall, was opened on 4 August 1848, and was part of the gradual or staged building of the Waverley route from 1848 onwards. Known as 'Fountainhall Junction', it was the former exchange for the Lauder Light Railway.

Rooted in the history of the area, the new Waverley Railway passes through many historic locations on its route from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, and an important part of its development will be in taking care of historic monuments and buildings situated alongside the route. Work is underway, in partnership with specialist agencies, to identify buildings and monuments of note, and a visit is expected soon from the Royal Commission of Ancient Historical Monuments of Scotland to document structures of interest.

Do you have any old images of the railway before it closed? If so, we would love to hear from you on **0800 652 3406**, info@waverleyrailproject.co.uk or in writing to:

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The Team

The Waverley Railway Partnership comprises:

- Scottish Borders Council
- Midlothian Council
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Supported by Scottish Enterprise Borders
- Primary Funder Transport Scotland

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: 0800 652 3406**
- **email: info@waverleyrailwayproject.co.uk**