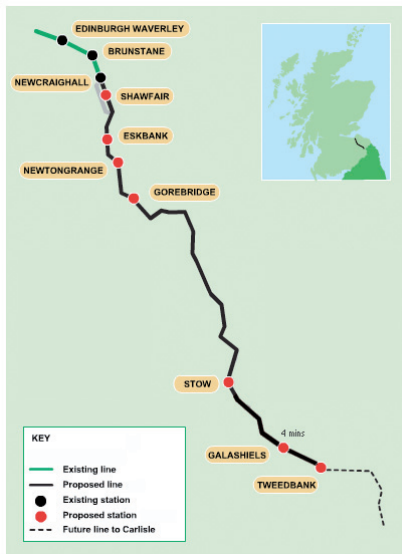


ONTRACK

Waverley Line – a new era Ground investigations start

Pre construction work to prepare the Waverley railway line in advance of building is now underway. Following the partial clearance of vegetation to enable access for detailed site investigations, there will be increased activity along the route of the line in the next few weeks.



Ground investigation works and topographical surveys are now underway along the 35 mile stretch of the rail route. This will take a few months to complete and will provide our engineers with information and data vital to providing a comprehensive and phased design and construction plan.

In tandem with this activity, the Waverley Railway Partnership project team has been busy implementing a detailed tendering process for a number of contracts, including land bank adviser, environmental and design consultants.

David Parker, Leader of Scottish Borders Council commented: "Last year was an historic year for the project, a landmark year, when we secured a positive outcome at committee stage, parliamentary backing for the line and also achieved Royal Assent.

"We are now preparing to embark on detailed design activity as we continue with the tendering process, land assembly and early site investigation works."

Since the line secured Royal Assent in July 2006, more than £32m of funding has been released from the Scottish Executive. This funding is being used to purchase the land required to build the line, implement preliminary investigation works, and appoint consultants to undertake the design and prepare contract documents for the preliminary building and engineering works and other essential project initiatives.

As announced by the Transport Minister in June, a full review of the Waverley Railway Project is currently underway, in preparation for Transport Scotland taking over the role of authorised undertaker of the project later this year. The Waverley Railway Partnership is working with Transport Scotland during the review period. It is expected that this process will be completed in the autumn, when a report will be issued to Ministers.

This report will identify a projected cost of the project and expected delivery date.

Soil Mechanics appointed to rail link

The Waverley Railway Partnership has appointed Soil Mechanics to undertake the ground investigation contract on the Waverley Railway Project. The work will take around 18 weeks to complete.

Soil Mechanics, a company within Environmental Services Group Limited (ESGL), was the first UK company to trade in the specialist field of what is now called geotechnics.

The company provides comprehensive ground investigation services for land, near shore, marine and other over water projects from 13 regional offices. It has one of the UK's largest teams of qualified engineers and field crews, backed by an extensive fleet of drilling and exploration equipment.

The company has six quality assured testing laboratories.

Soil Mechanics project leader, Keith Salt, comments: "To meet the wide variety of drilling and testing techniques, logistical challenges, land access organisation and logging requirements needed, we put together a large, multi-skilled project team with experience to cater for the many different ground types and environments that will be encountered along the 35 mile stretch of track."



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Special Feature

Since receiving Royal Assent, the Waverley team has received hundreds of e-mail and phone enquiries about the latest developments relating to the building of the railway. Here we answer some of those most frequently asked questions.

Why would the train be preferred to the bus?

Generally the train will offer quicker journeys than the equivalent bus services and will also offer direct links to areas that do not currently have a direct bus link.

Reducing reliance on the car will help to reduce congestion and accidents on the A7 and A68.

An estimated comparison of a one way bus/train journey from Tweedbank to Edinburgh is given below

Tweedbank to Edinburgh	Bus	Train
Total journey time (min)	91	60
Distance (straight line km)	47.5	47.5
Frequency of service (min)	60	30

(Bus journey based on First Edinburgh service from Galashiels to Edinburgh.)

Will the trains connect with bus services?

The train stations are all being designed to allow integration and easy transfer to the existing bus services. It is a requirement of Scottish Executive funding that we achieve this. Bus operators and local authorities are committed to providing and facilitating an integrated service and it is probable that bus services will act where possible as 'feeder' services to the railway.

If single track is built, can it be upgraded to twin track in the future?

Yes. Originally when the business case for the route was prepared it was on the basis of a twin track railway being built. It was decided for reasons of cost that the rail route would function as effectively using single track incorporating three 'dynamic loops' or passing places. These will be located at Shawfair, Gorebridge and Stow.

Will the trains accommodate wheelchairs, cycles etc?

They will be designed, as will the stations and access facilities, to meet current Disability Discrimination Act access standards as required for any new rail infrastructure. The carrying of cycles will depend on the type of train ultimately used on the line. Secure cycle parking will be provided at every new station and disabled parking spaces will be provided at all station car parks.

Who will pay the cost of building the railway?

The Scottish Executive (Transport Scotland) is the primary funder of the project. It is committed to funding £115m at 2002 prices (index linked), and the remainder will come from local contributions in the form of planning gain and other sources. There will not be a council tax levy.

When will construction start on the railway?

This will depend on the procurement route chosen. If it is a design and build contract then the main design and construction is anticipated to start around winter 2008/2009.

How much are the fares?

Matters such as fares will be fixed by the eventual operator of the service and will be subject to regulation by the Rail Regulator.

Will the line ever be extended to Hawick and Carlisle?

It has always been an aspiration of the Waverley Railway Partnership to extend the railway to Carlisle. This remains an objective for the future.

Will there be a service on Sundays?

It is expected that some services will operate on Sundays.

Will the line be electrified?

No. This option would be too expensive to construct and operate and would not offer value for money at the present time.

Fast Facts

The Waverley Railway Line, running from Edinburgh through Midlothian and the Borders, will enable the area to maximise its economic and social development opportunities. The project is viewed as one of the most important sustainable public transport proposals presented to the Scottish Parliament.

Here are some Fast Facts relating to the project:

- On 14th June 2006, The Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament by 114 votes to one with one abstention.
- The new line will serve a population base of close to 200,000 people in Midlothian and the Borders who currently have no direct access to a railway line.
- 550 sustainable full time jobs within five years of completion of the line are anticipated.
- There will be 10 stations on the Waverley route – three existing and seven new. It is hoped that services to and from the Borders will be provided by extending existing services (eg Dunblane or Fife) to become through routes via Edinburgh to Tweedbank, significantly improving national and international connectivity.
- The journey time from Waverley to Tweedbank is anticipated to be around 60 minutes.
- The new line will be a catalyst for encouraging further economic development, increased business development and housing opportunities, inward investment and public sector relocation.
- At present more than 21,000 people commute to Edinburgh from Midlothian and the Scottish Borders. Over 15,000 commute by car.
- Promotion of the scheme is currently by the Waverley Rail Partnership (WRP), consisting of Scottish Borders Council, Midlothian and City of Edinburgh Councils and supported by Scottish Enterprise Borders. Transport Scotland will take over the role of authorised undertaker of the scheme later this year but the WRP is expected to retain responsibility for certain aspects of the project delivery including land purchase.
- A full review of the project is currently underway. A report is expected to be presented to Ministers in the autumn outlining the cost of the rail project and an expected delivery date.



On the green side

The Borders has long been renowned for its beautiful green landscapes, rich wildlife and magnificent scenery – and preserving it is one of the key objectives of the project team during the construction process.

The project's environmental consultants, ERM, are working closely with Scottish Natural Heritage and the engineers to ensure that wildlife is protected during the initial ground investigation surveys.

ERM's ecology team has undertaken surveys to identify the areas where protected species are present. Where animals such as bats, otter and badgers are found, these areas are being avoided as far as possible, or licences obtained to allow work to continue in ways that do not put these species at risk.

ERM produced the Environmental Statement (ES) for the project, which was considered alongside the Waverley Railway Parliamentary Bill. This describes all the expected environmental impacts of the scheme and outlines the measures that will be taken to reduce these impacts as far as is practical.

An assessment of impacts on the Gala Water was an essential part of the process as the river is part of the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation - a European protected site. Works undertaken within the river must be designed so as not to harm valued environmental interests, including otter, salmon, river lamprey and rare water crowfoot beds along the river.



Gala pupils 'Making Tracks'

A team of youngsters from Glendinning Primary School in Galashiels has won the top award in a 'Making Tracks' competition, sponsored by Aitken and Turnbull Architects.



Headteacher, Irene Hogg and Councillor John Mitchell with the pupils of the winning team at Glendinning Primary School.



The winning poster



The runner-up poster

The project, based around the creation of the new Waverley Railway Line, was put together by the Borders Construction Industry Forum (BCIF) and involved teams of children completing a series of tasks over a two-day period. The tasks included designing a unique layout for the new Tweedbank Station, writing a newspaper article about the new railway, designing a marketing poster and completing a health and safety quiz.

The 'Railway Returns' team from P7 at Glendinning Primary School received a cheque for £100 from the project to go towards the school fund.

Irene Hogg, headteacher at Glendinning Primary School and teacher of the

winning team, explained how she thought the project was a success. "It was certainly a very stimulating project in which the children were given the opportunity to work independently and as a team and incorporate many skills from the curriculum including art, design and mathematics."

Bruce Rutherford, Waverley Railway Project Director said: "One of the main objectives of the new Waverley Line is to help encourage the young people of the Borders to remain living in the area as they grow older and seek out increased opportunities. For that reason it is great to see how the children of Galashiels have embraced the challenge and produced some fantastic results."

Charlotte Waugh from the BCIF added: "The project was a great success with an extremely high standard of entries received. Over 130 youngsters took part and the feedback proved very positive. We now hope to further develop the project and hopefully next year give all Borders schools the opportunity to become involved."

The judging panel included Andrew Lester, Senior Partner of Aitken & Turnbull Architects; Phil Orr, Scottish Borders Council's Enterprise Development Officer; Tracey Graham, Scottish Borders Council's Education & Lifelong Learning Communications Assistant; and Bruce Rutherford, Director of Waverley Railway Project.

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