

On Track

Edition 2, February 2005



Welcome to the second edition of On Track, the Newsletter designed to keep you up to date with the latest developments relating to the Waverley Railway Project.

The response to our first edition of the newsletter issued in January was overwhelming. Calls and e-mails have been flooding in to offer support for the project, to request further copies of the newsletter and to ask further questions about the proposal.

In this edition, as well as providing an update on the project, we will begin to answer some of your questions. While this newsletter summarises some of the research carried out into the project, those of you looking for more details will find extensive background information on the Scottish Parliament website:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/waverlyRB/index.htm> and on the Project Website.

January was an important month for the project, with around 100 supporters attending a rally in Galashiels, organised by Campaign For Borders Rail, to show their support for the line. February and March will be even more important, with the preliminary stage committee presiding over the Bill. You can find out more details on page 2.

If you would like more copies of this newsletter or would like to voice your support for the Waverley Railway Project, please visit www.waverleyrailwayproject.co.uk or phone 0131 623 2008.

Rail Supporters 'Rally' Round on Campaign March



Despite a typically wet and windy January day, a recent rally held to support the re-opening of the Waverley line was well attended by supporters.

The day began with a walk along the route of the old line between Tweedbank and Galashiels, 36 years to the day since it was closed.

The walk culminated in a rally held at Market Square, during which speeches were made by Anne Borthwick, Chair of the organisers Campaign for Borders Rail, local list SNP MSP Christine Grahame, Tweeddale, Etterick and Lauderdale MSP, Jeremy Purvis and Conservative List MSP, David Mundell. Councillors from the Scottish Borders and Midlothian also attended.

The speakers focussed on the benefits that a rail line would bring to Midlothian and the Borders and called for the Scottish Executive to deliver funding for the rail link.

Photo: William Brodie

This Month...

- Parliamentary Committee
- Safety benefits
- Addressing the alternatives: new roads

Parliamentary Committee

This month, the Scottish Parliamentary Committee takes oral evidence for the first time. The committee will consider the merits and details of some of the objections to the project during this the Preliminary Stage.

The Waverley Railway (Scotland) Bill was introduced into the Parliament on 11 September 2003 by the Waverley Railway Partnership.

The principal reason for the Bill is to authorise the works necessary for the construction of a railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank.

The Bill is currently in the Preliminary Stage, where the Committee must report to the Parliament on whether the Bill should proceed as a Private Bill, and also give consideration to all objections to the Bill.

The following MSPs will sit on this committee:



*Tricia Marwick
(Convener)*



Ted Brocklebank



*Christine May
(Deputy Convener)*



Gordon Jackson



Margaret Smith

The committee meetings are open to the public and will take place on the following dates:

Meeting 1: **28th February**, 11am Langlee, Community Centre, Galashiels

Meeting 2: **7th March**, 10.30am Scottish Mining Museum, Newtongrange

Meeting 3: **14th March**, 11am Langlee, Community Centre, Galashiels

Meeting 4: **21st March**, 10.30am Scottish Mining Museum, Newtongrange

Objectors

As with any major transport development, there are individuals, groups and businesses which will be adversely affected by the building of a railway. The Waverley Railway Project is the largest rail project in the UK since the Channel Tunnel Rail Link to London and unfortunately, as a result, there will be some buildings and properties which will be subject to compulsory purchase.

Some other people potentially affected by the line have, understandably, lodged official objections to the line. These objections will be heard by the parliamentary committee and a decision will be made on whether they have a case or not. There are two types of objection:

- Objections in principle are objections to the rail line as a whole.
- Objections in detail are objections to particular sections and effects of the proposed line. These will be heard at Stage 2

There are 131 objections to the bill:

- 123 of those are objections in details, 2 are objections in principal and 6 are objections in both detail and principle.

The Scottish Parliament committee will consider all objections individually. **To date, the Scottish Parliament has rejected all of the objections in principle.**



The Alternatives: Road

Opponents to the Waverley Railway Project often suggest that upgrading the A7 to dual carriageway status would be a suitable alternative. This option has been considered, however, it is not believed to be a viable option when regeneration, environmental and congestion factors are taken into account. While Midlothian and the Borders may benefit from a dual carriageway, it cannot come at the expense of losing a rail line. A summary of the assessment is outlined below.

Users:

Dual Carriageway: Drivers only

WRP: Everyone (32% of households in Galashiels and 37% in Hawick do not own a car). 90% of people surveyed in Midlothian and the Borders said they would use the railway line.

Personal cost:

Dual Carriageway: Drivers commuting to Edinburgh have to pay for increased petrol, more car maintenance, parking costs and, potentially, road tolls.

WRP: Tickets for the Waverley line will be similar in cost to other rural lines in Scotland. Although prices have not yet been set, tickets will be reasonably priced and are likely to represent significant savings on the full cost of driving.

Congestion:

Dual Carriageway: While a dual carriageway will slightly reduce the driving time between the Borders, Midlothian and the outskirts of Edinburgh, it will still take in the region of 80 to 90 minutes to travel into Edinburgh city centre at rush hour. If traffic continues to increase on the south and east of Edinburgh as predicted, commuting times will increase even further.

WRP: Passengers on the Waverley line will travel directly from Tweedbank in to Edinburgh city centre in 60 minutes, with considerably less stress.

Environmental impact of building:

Dual Carriageway: Dualling the A7 would cause significant harm and disruption to all homes and buildings near to the proposed road.

WRP: The route of the proposed line runs in most part along the trackbed from the previous line closed in 1969. Some homes, however, have been built in the Borders and Midlothian since then, so re-building the Waverley line will mean that, unfortunately, some people will potentially lose their property. (All of these people have been contacted by the Partnership).

Neither option is without environmental impact, however the use of existing track-bed does minimise the environmental impact of the rail line.

Environmental impact, ongoing:

Dual Carriageway: Despite more fuel efficient cars, a dual carriageway would encourage more car use in the region, thereby increasing pollutants and greenhouse gases.

WRP: With approximately 1 million annual passenger journeys predicted in the first year alone, the Waverley line will significantly reduce the number of miles covered daily by cars in the region.

Your questions answered

If I board the train at Tweedbank, will I have to change trains at Newcraighall in order to get to Edinburgh?

No, the train will travel directly to and from Edinburgh Waverley and beyond to Edinburgh Park and Bathgate/Dunblane with no changes. The line will also call at Edinburgh Airport station when it is built.



Safety benefits

- Travelling by train is 15 times safer than going by car and five times safer than going by bus or coach.
- You are far more likely to be involved in an accident whilst walking, cycling or driving than when you are on the train.
- Sixteen times more miles are travelled by car than by train yet there are 100 times more accidents on our roads than on our railways.
- In terms of time spent on the journey, train travel is even safer than air travel.
- Every year 3,500 people are killed on Britain's roads and 300,000 people are injured.

Source: Rail Futures

- 60% of fatal crashes occur on rural roads, mainly A roads.
- Source: Transport 2000*
- Nearly 43,000 people were killed on the EU's roads in 1998. There were an estimated 800 rail deaths in the same year (including road deaths that occurred on railway level crossings).

Supporters

"What a bonus this would be - obviously for business and prosperity of the Borders but also for leisure, shopping and the theatre. It would bring Edinburgh to our doorstep. Obviously, however, we would expect that careful consideration would be given to plans for any new housing close to Melrose and the surrounding district."

Mrs Hunt, Melrose area.

"Looking forward to this facility and I will definitely use it. It is a more civilised way to travel given that the train runs fairly frequently."

Mrs Young, Gorebridge.

"We need a quick rail service to Edinburgh for students and commuters to get to the city and universities. For my niece to get to a train involves a 100 mile round trip!"

David Anderson, Ashkirk Parish.

"We feel that the railway is essential for the continued economic development and vibrancy of the area. Many people are forced to find work outwith the Borders due to lack of local jobs and redundancy etc. It will also help to retain our young people, attract them to stay here."

Robin and Diane Gladstone, Galashiels

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.

Next Issue...

- Parliamentary Committee Update
- Addressing the alternatives: bus service