A NEW RAILWAY FOR MIDLOTHIAN AND THE BORDERS

PROJECT OVERVIEW

With around 1.5 million tonnes of soil to be excavated along the Borders Railway route, it is clear why earthworks have been the main priority for the project during the relatively settled weather in spring and early summer.

The main focus for earthworks at present is in the most northerly section where an entirely new rail alignment is being landscaped. The project team expects to shift approximately 250,000 cubic metres of soil in the Shawfair area alone, with significant earth works also due to take place in Eskbank, Newtownrange, Falahill and Langlee as the project progresses during the course of the year. With so much earth to move, the project team will be utilising the railway land as much as possible to keep heavy vehicles off the road. Some of these trucks, filled with soil, will be using the Lothianbridge Viaduct to transport the earth to other locations along the route.

Work is now evident right along the route, with top soil removed as far south as Heriot, and with bridge works underway in several locations. Site offices have been established and access roads created where necessary to allow plant machinery to access the work site.

Motorists using the Edinburgh city bypass will also now see evidence of the diversionary section of road which will be created while the project builds the railway underneath the busy stretch of road between Sherrifhall and the A1. The temporary diversion will begin operating in September, with traffic moving back to the original alignment in May 2014.

Another significant part of the preparatory works, mining remediation, has already been taking place at Shawfair, Eskbank and Newtownrange. The work involves stabilising the ground where the railway crosses old mine works. Drilling rigs have been brought onto the sites to identify the location of underground voids, while pumping rigs are used to fill any cavities.

With over 140 bridges along the route, early work to structures is also critical. Piling work, which prepares the ground for the weight of major structures, has begun at the Hardengreen roundabout viaduct and for the Gore Glen bridge over the A7. The old deck of the Bowland Railway Bridge has already been demolished, while steel workers will be examining all the old Waverley Line bridges to ensure that they can be reused by a modern railway.

With major civil engineering work still to be carried out, it won’t be until 2014 that track is finally laid on the Borders Railway route. Bowshank Tunnel is likely to see the first new rails in spring of next year, with the rest of the track being laid from late summer of 2014.

Because of the complexity of the project, and the traditional weather experienced in Midlothian and the Scottish Borders, delivery schedules are subject to change, however, we’ll keep you up to date with the last construction timescales during the course of the project.
Come and talk to the project team

Thanks to all those who have attended our community drop-in sessions. Residents in Eskbank, Newtongrange, Danderhall and Gorebridge were able to ask questions of members of the project team about the construction process and view detailed plans in April and May.

A further six events were held in June in Tweedbank, Galashiels, Heriot, Fountainhall and Stow.

The dates, times and venues for all events organised by the Borders Railway project team are published on the Borders Railway website (www.bordersrailway.co.uk).

The project’s first phase of community drop-ins across Midlothian and the Scottish Borders during autumn 2012 were extremely well attended with more than 1,200 local residents taking the time to drop in and find out more about the project.

The team will also be attending gala days and festivals across the region during the summer.

Black Path set to close

On the 15th July the Black Path, between Glenfield Road and Winston Road, will be closed. The project team will then set about excavating a large volume of earth ahead of bridge works to create a road bridge over the railway.

Some essential crossing points will remain along the route but alternative routes will be advertised locally, as well as on the Borders Railway website.

The Borders Railway team will keep residents informed of further developments as construction work progresses in the area.

Website updates

To coincide with the start of the main works, we have updated the project website.

You can now view up to 76 drawings for all 30 miles of new railway track making up the Borders Railway under the ‘maps & plans’ section. An interactive map also allows you to pin-point where station works are taking place, as well as other works, including bridge construction.

There is also a section explaining how a railway is built, and more information about the code of construction and safety aspects of the project.

Further updates will be made throughout the project, with new sections added, as well as regular news stories about the latest construction activity.

Sod cutting ceremony

A ceremony with the Transport Minister, Network Rail and the principal contractor BAM Nuttall, was held on 18 April 2013 to celebrate the beginning of the main construction work on the Borders Railway line.

The Transport Minister, Keith Brown MSP, said:

“Our delivery of the Borders Railway is bringing communities along the route back into the rail network for the first time in over 40 years.

“The start of the construction works is a hugely exciting milestone and will allow those communities to witness the scheme coming to life.

“I very much look forward to seeing the Borders Railway take shape from here with all the social, economic and environmental benefits that will bring for the area.”

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**Spotlight on Eskbank**

Eskbank station is ideally located to access some fantastic local amenities. It sits at a junction of the A7 and the A6094, and will have the largest car park of all the Midlothian stations. It also lies on National Cycle Route NCR1/196, and provides an excellent link to bus services. The new bus stop, only 200m from the station, will be accessed by a new path constructed as part of the railway works. Approximately 20 buses will leave the bus stop every hour at peak times.

Immediately adjacent to the station is Edinburgh College (formerly the Jewel & Esk Valley College). The college is one of the most advanced technology teaching centres in Scotland and forms part of a group of campuses including Milton Road (beside Brunstane Station) and Sighthill (beside Edinburgh Park Station).

The Midlothian Community Hospital is a new development, located around 600m from the station, which provides 88 beds for frail and elderly patients along with a day hospital. The hospital has a direct footpath link to the station which will benefit staff and visitors alike.

The Orchard Café, within the Mayshade Garden Centre situated close by the Community Hospital, was recently voted the best place for lunch and the best place for a coffee at the 2013 Midlothian Food & Drink awards.

Constructing the station will involve extensive civil engineering work, some major earthworks, and a new bridge. The latter will replace an old masonry arch bridge, which had been in-filled following the closure of the original Waverley Route.

The project team are working closely with local people, and organisations such as Sustrans, to ensure that disruption to the existing cycle and footpath path network is minimised.

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**THE RAILWAY IN NUMBERS**

- **1.5M** tonnes of earth to be excavated
- **30,000 M³** of earth moved each week
- **52,000** visits to the Borders Railway website
- **2015** year the Borders Railway will open
- **2,100** people subscribed to the project’s monthly eBulletin
- **APPROXIMATELY 1,100** people to work on project during peak construction

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**Impact on the road network**

Work began in early June building a diversionary route for the Edinburgh city by-pass, to the east of the Sherrifhall roundabout. The diversion will be in place by September in order to allow engineers to create a bridge for the railway to pass underneath the by-pass. This diversion will only be temporary, and the normal road alignment should return in May 2014.

The project will spend a considerable amount of time this year planning the temporary diversion of other roads in the area. We appreciate that it is very important to keep motorists informed about any plans for diversions, and to do so as early as possible. We are working closely with the local authorities and Transport Scotland to ensure that construction timetables are communicated to motorists and disruption is kept to a minimum.
Protecting local wildlife

The project team has been working hard to ensure they are doing all that they can to help protect local wildlife that live along the new line of route.

Barn owls, otters and badgers are just some of the species being protected as part of Network Rail’s commitment towards ensuring that the impact and disturbance to the habitats of these local animals during construction is minimised.

Some of the work carried out by the teams so far includes providing local barn owls with an alternative nest box, protecting badger setts from disturbance during construction, and ensuring that construction does not interfere with otter breeding and resting areas.

Environmental specialists also carried out controlled electro charge in the River Tweed. This stuns lamprey, a type of fish, to make it easier for the team to capture them so they can be released up stream away from the construction works.

Andrew Mitchell, Project Environment Specialist for Network Rail, said:

“Although it is inevitable that a project of this scale will require some de-vegetation and other disturbance to make way for the new line, we are committed to make sure we work around important habitats and protected species or plants sensitively and appropriately.”

The Borders Railway project is also working to ensure any protected plant species are appropriately managed, one of which includes water crowfoot at various locations along the Gala Water.

Fast facts

- When planning our work we are guided by environmental constraints: the impact of our work on nesting birds, other wildlife and the Gala Water. For example, we can only work near the river from May to October.

- The Borders Railway team has divided up the 30 miles of new track into three sections: North, Central and South. This makes what is a very complex project slightly more manageable.

- We can confirm that passengers will be able to travel direct from Tweedbank station to Edinburgh Waverley station without any changes.

- We can assure local residents and commuters that the parking bays provided at the new stations along the Borders Railway will be free.

- Over 4,000 tonnes of grout has been pumped into old mines, and over 300km of drilling has taken place.

- By early June, the project had excavated over 100,000 tonnes of earth from the most northerly part of the route. It is estimated that 1.5million tonnes of spoil will have to be excavated in total.

During the course of construction, Network Rail will provide regular updates about the progress of the project.

For more information about the project and our drop-in events, visit: www.bordersrailway.co.uk

Sign up to our newsletter and keep up to date with all the latest news and progress updates at: www.bordersrailway.co.uk