Work on key structures reaches critical stage

A year on since the start of construction, work on the project has continued to intensify, with work on structures particularly noticeable. With the countdown now on until track-laying begins, the team has been working tirelessly to get the route ready.

In the north, a section of the A6106 between Millerhill and the Sherifhall roundabout closed on 3 March so it could be realigned to run parallel to the new railway. To help relieve traffic pressure, the project team has provided an alternative route via Shawfair. The realigned A6106 will open again in the autumn.

There have been two successful weekends of work on the new rail bridge which crosses Hardengreen roundabout. The first weekend saw the team lift the concrete bridge beams into place and the second weekend saw them complete the installation of the bridge deck.

From April, the team will transfer the A720 city bypass from its temporary alignment back to the original alignment over the newly constructed railway bridge.

In the central section, the construction of the new road bridge crossing the railway at the village of Heriot, joining the B709 to the A7, continues. The connection of the new road to the A7 will require the A7 to be widened and realigned. Traffic management and phased changes will take place until late May.

With the revised plans for Falahill now approved, the construction schedule is now being developed. To deliver the new bridge at this location, a temporary road to the east of the current A7 alignment is required.

Meanwhile, the south section has been focusing on the Galashiels and Tweedbank areas. On 17 February the Redbridge Viaduct was temporarily closed for eight weeks to allow the team to re-surface and waterproof the bridge deck as well as carrying out utility works and masonry repairs. Railway bridges over Wheatlands Road, Gala Water and Currie Road are underway. The team is also now in a position to begin to rebuild the Winston Road bridge as well as demolishing the existing bridge at Plumtreehall Brae and installing a new footbridge.
Local community projects to share third railway grant

In 2013, the Borders Railway project established the Borders Railway Community Safety Fund, in partnership with the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN), to create connections with communities and engage with them on issues such as site safety, road safety, theft, vandalism and rail safety.

So far, 34 projects have benefitted from grants totalling £5,500. The third round of funding, which invites community organisations and charities to apply for a share of the fund totalling £2,500, closed on 14 March.

The successful projects have worked alongside the SCSN to deliver their goals and many of the groups have received railway safety talks from the British Transport Police as part of the scheme.

A fourth round of funding will open later in the year. Projects can apply for up to £250 and can find out more by emailing info@scsn.org.uk

Borders Railway receives recognition for sustainability performance

The Borders Railway project team is celebrating after receiving an ‘excellent’ CEEQUAL award rating in recognition of its outstanding environmental design credentials. The prestigious award recognises outstanding performance for sustainable civil engineering and infrastructure projects across the UK. It takes into consideration elements such as how a project helps conserve natural habitats, how it will sustainably serve passengers as well as its green credentials once completed.

The Borders Railway project has also been awarded an ‘excellent’ rating from the Considerate Construction Scheme, a national initiative set up to recognise achievement in construction.

HUGH WARK, project director, Network Rail, said:

“We are really pleased to achieve these two accolades. They recognise the hard work that goes into the project behind the scenes in dealing with environmental, community and safety issues but also underline the quality of work that our contractors are putting into building the railway every day.”

Ballast and sleepers begin to arrive

Deliveries of key materials for the next stage of the Borders Railway have begun. Preparations for track-laying get underway in earnest later in the year. Ahead of this, key components such as ballast to form the bed for the track and railway sleepers are being delivered and stockpiled ready to be laid.

Over 93,000 railway sleepers will arrive throughout March and into April.

From June onwards the ballast will be laid to provide a foundation and drainage layer for the track. The sleepers will then be laid on the ballast, followed by the track itself which is then joined together.

Making preparations for track laying will be a significant shift in the day-to-day operations for the Borders project team. Once the track laying is underway fundamental work will begin on the railway’s stations while work continues on key structures along the line.
Hardengreen bridge slots into place

The team successfully installed its longest bridge to be built from scratch over two weekends, bringing the new 30-mile railway one step closer to completion and creating a new landmark for Midlothian. Minister for Transport and Veterans, Keith Brown, joined project directors from Network Rail and BAM on 15 February to watch the bridge’s installation over Hardengreen roundabout between Eskbank and Newtongrange.

The new structure, which spans 71.5 metres, required a 1,200 tonne crane used to hoist the bridge’s four 107 tonne beams into place.

A 30-strong construction team worked around the clock over the two weekends to carry out the precise process of lifting the bridge beams into place and installing the bridge deck.

KEITH BROWN, Transport Minister, said:

“It is incredibly exciting to see the longest new bridge of the Borders Railway being lifted into place – one of the most significant milestones in this project, which is reinstating the links between the Borders and the Central Belt more than 40 years after they were ripped out by the Beeching cuts.”

Spotlight on Gorebridge

For passengers heading north from the Scottish Borders the former mining village of Gorebridge is the first town in Midlothian they will come to. Those joining the train at Gorebridge will have a short journey of 13 miles to reach Edinburgh.

Situated on the site of the original Waverley Line station, which lies at the heart of Gorebridge, the station will be well-placed for commuters and businesses alike.

For those travelling from further afield or wanting to drop-off and pick up friends and relatives, there will be over 70 free car parking spaces. The one-platform station will also provide sheltered cycle storage facilities and a passenger waiting area with an automated ticket machine.

New road layout near Millerhill

A section of the A6106 between Millerhill and the Sheriffhall roundabout has closed so that it can be realigned to run parallel to the new Borders Railway. The Borders Railway alignment cuts across the current road layout, meaning new roads are required to connect Millerhill to Sheriffhall roundabout.

To help relieve traffic pressure and divert road users, the Borders Railway project has constructed a new road and roundabout which provides an alternative route between Millerhill and the Old Dalkeith Road (A7) via Shawfair. The newly realigned road will be reopened in the autumn.

HUGH WARK, project director, Network Rail said:

“The alignment of the railway north of the city bypass is entirely new, meaning that there are some significant obstacles to overcome, including this stretch of the A6106. This closure will allow us to move the road and make space for the new line.”

Connect with the Borders Railway

Join those already receiving the latest updates on the progress of the railway.

120,000 people have visited bordersrailway.co.uk
1,300 Twitter followers @BordersRailway
3,500 people are signed up to our monthly e-bulletin
Scrum-down for Borders Railway at Melrose 7s

The Borders Railway will be a proud sponsor of this year’s 124th Melrose 7s rugby festival. Following on from the railway’s sponsorship of the tournament in 2013, the festival’s referees will be branded with the Borders Railway logo when they take to the pitch on 12 April.

As the global home of rugby sevens, the Borders Railway is proud to sponsor this historic tournament.

For spectators, visitors and those living in and around the region, the new Borders Railway will improve the transport links to the Scottish Borders, allowing tourists and residents to travel more easily to the area and beyond. The sponsorship gives the project the chance to connect with potential rail users from Edinburgh, Midlothian, the Scottish Borders and beyond.

Providing safe crossing

The Borders Railway line will run in close proximity to towns and villages. This has sometimes meant the closure of footpaths for safety reasons during the construction phase. Whilst working hard to maintain pedestrian access where possible, we are also constructing new routes.

Network Rail has a policy not to introduce new level-crossings to the rail network due to the dangers they can pose. The Borders Railway will therefore not have a single level-crossing. Instead, we are constructing a number of new footbridges and pathways to better connect local communities to each other and the new stations.

In the south section, when the railway is complete, a footpath will run next to the railway on the Redbridge joining Langlee and Tweedbank, a new footbridge will connect Langlee and the Borders College and two footbridges will be constructed close to Low Buckholmside in Galashiels. Further up the line, a new underpass will replace the former level-crossing site at Heriot which will enable the community to cross the railway safely, and at Gorebridge new footbridges will connect new housing developments to the station. New footbridges crossing the line will also be constructed in Newtongrange, Eskbank and Shawfair. For more information go to bordersrailway.co.uk and visit the maps and plans section.

For more information about what’s going on in your area, and more regular updates you can visit our website at www.bordersrailway.co.uk

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