



**20 REASONS TO KEEP THE BORDERS RAILWAY
ON TRACK in 2011**

20 REASONS WHY THERE MUST BE NO MORE DELAYS, ATTEMPTS TO SHORTEN OR CANCEL THE BORDERS RAILWAY FROM EDINBURGH TO TWEEDBANK

...And why critics are wrong!

Apart from a few right-wing ideologues, roads lobbyists and people who want the Borders preserved in aspic for their country retirement, we would have heard little opposition, economic questioning or gloomy local doubts about the Government's commitment if this line was already being built. These have been happening due to delays since the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Act of 2006. The line is currently due to be fully operational by 2014. Here are 20 reasons why it's very important to keep this rail restoration firmly on track despite the economic climate and demands for public spending cutbacks - and for ALL political parties at Holyrood to continue their clear commitment when they passed the Act.

1 Righting a wrong:

This partial reopening of the Waverley Route is not about nostalgia or sentiment. It partly corrects a major injustice done to the Midlothian & Borders communities four decades ago. The Waverley Route was not a branch line but the main line from Edinburgh to Carlisle: Britain's biggest rail closure of the Beeching era. Closure isolated this area, and has severely affected its economy ever since, leaving it struggling with poor road services.

2 Ending transport discrimination:

Midlothian & Borders remain the largest populated mainland Scottish area with no access to rail services. Their populations contribute to, yet don't benefit from major public funds supporting our rail network. By the last census, a quarter of Border's households have no access to a car: in Hawick 38% don't own a car, in Galashiels 32%. There are 59 stations in Highland Council's area, none in Midlothian & Borders. They don't ask for special treatment - just a fair deal.

3 Cruel and cynical betrayal of communities' commitment:

No-one campaigned harder for 40 years for the return of rail services than the people of central Borders and their representatives, whose long determination and petitioning of the Scottish Parliament was the main impetus to MSPs passing the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Act 2006 with a single dissenter. It would thus seriously and cruelly betray these communities to promise and begin restoration,

then to backtrack in any way or continue to delay. Cynical too, if this resulted from any lack of political “clout” of people in this area.

4 No double standards on criteria or costings:

Contrast other Scottish rail lines and transport schemes reopened after little public campaigning or political questioning of their value, in areas with good public transport. E.G. Bathgate-Airdrie, the third direct Edinburgh-Glasgow link, cost £312m at 2006 prices. It has just reopened, 3 years after Parliamentary approval under the previous coalition. Progress with the Borders Railway does appear extremely slow but CBR does welcome the ongoing works such as bridge protection work, demolition work to unsafe bridges and Planning Applications for associated works.

The Borders Railway is estimated at £295 million for 35 miles. Even should costs rise due to the repeated delays, compare funding for other projects. The short Glasgow airport rail link was quoted at £395m, few of whose users would be from ordinary local communities. Scottish Governments have committed up to £500m to the Edinburgh Trams Project, which even before the string of delays and serious problems was originally to cost approx £375m for only 11 miles. Now it is thought the price tag may be anything between £540 m to £650 m. The M74 link, opening this June, is only five miles long, yet cost Government and local councils about £445 million, with another £200 million spent on buying the necessary land.

These points are NOT about arguing one line against another, one scheme against another. These schemes may all be valuable. It is about arguing against double standards: any suggestions that criteria and costs are justified for some of Scotland’s electorate and tourists, but not for others.

5 Most stations will be in built-up Midlothian:

Opponents talk as if the Borders Railway will pass through some wilderness area, yet a majority of stations will be in built-up Midlothian. Its economy is inextricably linked to the wider Edinburgh economy. Nor in any case is central Borders some sparse wasteland: the line will serve a significant number of people in the Borders, Midlothian and Edinburgh and attract people from a much larger area.

6 Other re-openings much more popular than expected:

Critics have claimed that passenger estimates and the business case are too optimistic. But experience of other re-openings in the UK and Irish Republic

suggests the opposite - that the predicted 1.47 million journeys a year on the Borders Railway is likely to be exceeded. The new Limerick-Galway service had more than 30,000 journeys in its first month despite a business case anticipating £2.4 million p.a. losses. 18 months after the Welsh Assembly government reopened the Ebbw Valley line (closed 1962) it had carried a million passengers, originally estimated at 400,000. Stirling-Alloa (reopened 2008) has about 400,000 passengers p.a. using it, compared with a forecast before rebuilding of 155,000. On Edinburgh-Bathgate (reopened 1986) trains now carry four times as many users as originally projected. Passenger figures for reopened Laurencekirk station are almost double those predicted, and at the small, reopened Beaully station they are running at four times the original estimate. This suggests passenger projections for the Borders Railway may be significantly underestimated - *not* overestimated.

7 Alleviating poverty and isolation:

All political parties have agreed Midlothian & Borders contain some of Scotland poorest communities, with many pockets of poverty, unemployment and a low wage economy. Midlothian has one of the lowest levels of young people in higher education. Around Newtongrange and Eskbank in Midlothian, the line will provide a step change in public transport accessibility for areas ranked as among the 15% most deprived in Scotland. The Borders Railway will bring real benefits to Midlothian & Borders communities and reduce isolation by attracting businesses, increasing access to jobs, education and opportunities to develop tourism. The contract will also give a much-needed boost to our construction industry.

8 Funding saved wouldn't go into Borders roads (nor cover them):

If funding was cancelled for this railway, it would **not** go instead into any significant improvement of the dire Borders road network, nor into improving its bus services, especially in this time of cutbacks. These are pipe-dreams. Why would a roads programme happen, when it hasn't in 40 years? (And even suppose it did, how many years of disruption would upgrading bring local motorists?) Claims that roads could be substantially improved at a fraction of railway costs are also nonsense. Road building can cost much more for the same distance than rail. As stated the 5-mile M74 link cost Government and local councils £445 million, with another £200 million on buying the necessary land.

9 Funding can't be swapped with GARL:

Nor could Borders Railway funding simply be transferred over to revive the Glasgow Airport Rail Project (GARL), quoted at £395 million. This is because the Borders Railway will be funded in a different way from most other transport schemes like GARL. While capital grants have already delivered advance works and the costs of procurement, building the line itself is not coming out of the Scottish block nor the capital budget. It is being raised through the NPD (non-

profit-distributing) Scottish Futures Trust, a “non profit” version of PFI. Once the contract is signed the penalties are such that there is no saving to cancel, or so small as not to be worth it.

10 Political pettiness would mean betrayal:

Any West of Scotland politicians who see an attempt to cancel or curtail the Borders Railway as some kind of revenge for GARL being cancelled, please stop and think - not just because the funding methods are different. But because it is no fault of Midlothian & Borders people that GARL was cancelled, nor did their MSPs canvass for that, nor did cancellation help their own cause. Labour politicians will recall also that Midlothian is one of their own core supporting areas - and that cancellation of GARL still left £182m upgrades to rail infrastructure at Paisley intact. Conservative group at Holyrood please consider that if any members want to weaken its support for the Borders Railway, this would be a cynical volte face after supporting the campaign, voting for it in Parliament, and being members of the largest party in the administration of Borders Council, where the railway is a key part of the regeneration plan.

11 Why waste money?

£52m of public money has already been spent on the Borders Railway including investigations and surveys, buying the land, preparatory works, environmental works, diversion of public utilities (for instance at Stow) and construction of a new bridge in Galashiels. Surely none of this should go to waste.

12 Council funding is capped:

The Borders Party has tried to argue that council taxpayers in Midlothian and Borders could be landed with huge costs in a funding shortfall. But the £30 million to be paid by Edinburgh, Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils is capped and will be paid not in a lump sum, but over the lifetime of the loan. A large proportion will be paid in yearly instalments *after* the railway is built.

13 Can't turn back under legislation:

After Transport Scotland's procurement process and their drawing up of a three companies invited to tender, any move to halt or defer the railway would need an amendment to the Waverley Railway (Scotland) Act 2006. The utilities work from March 2010 'triggered' the Act, which states that once work has begun the railway must be finished in its entirety from Edinburgh to Tweedbank. This has locked governments into the project, and it would require another Act of Parliament to cancel it.

14 Borders Party laughably contradictory:

The small but vocal Borders Party are laughably contradictory with much of the propaganda they send out to politicians and newspapers. So would any politicians or newspapers be if they repeated that party's arguments in print.

On the one hand, the Borders Party say there won't be enough houses built now, nor enough business going to Midlothian & Borders to make the railway a success: disparaging all the development estimates that have been made.

On the other hand, they also raise fears of people pouring in to disrupt their peaceful Borders idyll: of house prices being driven up by interest in the railway, of three times as many extra houses being built, and the Tweed Valley threatened with major development. You can't argue both positions at the same time! Besides, the Borders structure plan is actually quite conservative. It's about a balanced economy, not concreting over the Eildons.

More bizarrely, they argue that few of these hordes attracted to the Borders by the railway will use the train. That men will clog roads with their cars – so will their wives driving for their weekly supermarket shop on Edinburgh's periphery. These will burn lots of fuel, undermining any saving on global warming. So, they say the railway will provide the rich and privileged with highly subsidised transport to Edinburgh ...yet they also say these people are unlikely to use it!

15 Single track "facts" wrong:

The Borders Railway has been painted by some critics as an unreliable single-track line. Leaving aside that Scotland's other single track lines are not unreliable, this is inaccurate. The original Waverley Railway scheme envisaged only 9.5 miles of double-track. But Transport Scotland has improved the infrastructure specification, so that over half of the new-build (15.5 miles) will be double-track. This will minimise disruptions from late-running trains.

16 It *can* get to Carlisle:

Some critics claim they'd support the railway if only it went all the way to Carlisle, and that the truncated line won't serve most Borders communities. (Though if the proposed Tweedbank line was longer, would the same critics shout even louder that it would be uneconomic!)

- a) If it doesn't get to Tweedbank first, it certainly won't ever get to Hawick or Carlisle...

- b) Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson said in March 2010 it was a "perfectly reasonable ambition" for the line to be extended to Carlisle. Transport Scotland's Pre-qualification Document now requires infrastructure designed to facilitate and allow future extension of the railway. Interchange would then be possible at Carlisle with any future high-speed rail link.
 - c) Campaign for Borders Rail is strongly committed to line extension – not least because Hawick suffered most from loss of the old Waverley Route in 1969.
 - d) It's a condition of building the railway that it must be integrated with local bus services to ensure widest possible impact in Borders and Midlothian. Travellers from Hawick, Selkirk and other Borders towns not directly served will have a bus-rail interchange at Galashiels station. Imaginative bus/minibus links by community rail partnerships across the UK, if copied, could easily link with other towns, such as Lauder from Stow.
- e) As for saying the line won't help those communities without a station beside the main East Coast line: it's the oddest logic for any politician to suggest one campaign is somehow at odds with another. On the contrary people and organisations interested in rail transport support - and would campaign for - the Borders Railway AND reopening of stations at places like Reston. Borders Council supports both projects.

17 Claims that it can't take freight are wrong:

It is claimed the line won't be able to take freight trains. In fact Transport Scotland's Pre-qualification Document stipulates all new structures must be capable of handling the heaviest freight trains that can run on the British network, and that infrastructure design should facilitate additional loops for freight traffic. Freight and passenger charters would need a rounding loop at Tweedbank, but that would be a modest add-on to the currently planned terminus layout.

18 Not "Green" enough?

The Borders' Railway's capacity to provide "Green" solutions has been cast in doubt – and repeated in some newspapers - even though, again, this is the **only** planned reopening which has faced such criticism.

A. Transport Scotland's estimate of considerable reduction in carbon emissions through 60,000 peak trips being taken off Midlothian & Borders roads each year is based not on back-of-envelope calculations. It is based on an established methodology defined by STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) *used on all major transport projects*.

B This rail project is in line with national regional and local policies seeking to encourage more sustainable integrated forms of transport, reduce impact of traffic on the environment, and encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport. Critics seek a narrow parochial approach for Scotland in comparison not just with our Continental neighbours but with Wales and the Irish Republic. Indeed the Irish Government and Welsh Assembly have been highly committed and proactive in backing a range of rail re-openings and securing funding imaginatively from European, national and sponsorship sources.

C Freight capacity will mean that for containerised freight (such as waste, road salt and timber), a simple container-handling terminal could be created close to the planned Tweedbank car park. Domestic freight opportunities at Tweedbank could include supermarket traffic, waste, timber, road salt, and coal traffic in Midlothian. A chord connecting to the Borders Railway at Sherrifhall would give direct access from the Borders to Millerhill freight yard and the East Coast main line.

D A recovering economy is going to see crude oil prices creeping up again – which could reach \$150 a barrel as early as next year. A £10 a gallon pump price for petrol is not impossible.

E Freight train handling and the possibility of extension open up the longer term possibility of timber by rail from the Kielder, Newcastleton and Kershope forests, and a strategic rail route to Carlisle, capable of carrying modern high-capacity containers and continental wagons.

19 Tourist charters and special trains:

Borders Railway critic John Scott has ridiculed in print the idea that charter trains “like the Orient Express” (?) “doddlng in the Borders to a halt, and then returning” could make a profit. In fact Transport Scotland have made a requirement that companies bidding to design, build, finance and maintain the line must take account of secondary revenue from tourist traffic, and make provision for tourist charter trains. The Campaign for Borders Rail (CBR) has estimated in contrast to the critics that the charter market could bring £500,000 of new spend to the Borders economy every year.(Their detail and costings are described in Press Release posted February 17, 2010 by CBR; see its website below).

Charter trains have proved very successful and lucrative on lines throughout GB. The luxury Royal Scotsman regularly visits Scotland’s Highland lines, and Tweedbank station would be an ideal point to connect vintage coaches to Melrose, the Borders Abbeys and Abbotsford. Walkers and cyclists can link directly into long-distance trails at Tweedbank. Imaginative schemes already operating on lines across the UK (see Community Rail Partnerships website, below) demonstrate numerous opportunities for tourists, walkers, cyclists, sports

enthusiasts, for country house and literary trails and Borders events, which make a nonsense of critics' pessimism.

20 Time to switch scrutiny

Some media have re-examined the case for the railway, yet don't seem to have examined the interests of critics of this railway. Isn't it time to be even-handed? Isn't it curious that this should be the only railway reopening in Scotland in recent years to attract a minority of dissenting voices, especially when the case for it, in the largest populated area of Scotland without access to rail services, is so compelling?

In particular they should scrutinise for any connections with the roads lobby; with alternative proposals for infrastructure and transport, and for the former trackbed; with political promotion of competitive tendering of private firms in roads maintenance and infrastructure in the Borders or manufacture of aspic preservative for retirement idylls

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All political parties at Holyrood, please honour and re-affirm your commitment to building the Borders Railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank and avoid any further delays in its completion. It is for all these reasons the right thing to do. Politicians of all parties feel some pride in having attempted to do that - and to behave ethically to all Scotland's regions and communities - ever since the Scottish Parliament was established.

Text by Sarah Nelson. Campaign for Borders Rail

***SOME WEBSITES:**

The Campaign for Borders Rail is a grassroots campaigning organisation set up in 1999 to secure the return of rail to the Scottish Borders – the only region of Britain without passenger trains. See <http://www.campaignforbordersrail.org>

.Transport Scotland's 23-month procurement process for the design, construction, financing and maintenance of the Edinburgh-Galashiels-Tweedbank line (the 'Borders Railway') began in December 2009, and the line is planned to be operational in 2014. See <http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/projects/borders-railway>.

Association of Community Rail Partnerships : <http://www.acorp.uk.com>.

Front picture. Campaign for Borders Rail supporters outside Langlee Community Centre, Galashiels during the Scottish Parliament's Select Committee Hearings.