

Borders Railway Blueprint: Programme Update – July 2015

(From Leadership Group Report, 7 July 2015, updated for SBC Executive Committee 18 August 2015)

Purpose

To provide an update on the work on the Borders Railway Blueprint in the period since 29 May 2015, updating on project progress under each key theme.

Great Places for Working & Investing – Progress

- Central Borders Business Park – Phase 1 & 2

Phase 1 of the development, led by Scottish Enterprise (SE), received outline business case approval on 13 May. SBC has now confirmed to SE the expected extent of the road adoption on the station access route, and has established that a small strip of land in Network Rail ownership will be required in order to construct the new access to the Phase 1 site. The Council has also confirmed it does not intend to reserve any of the land in its ownership for possible future station car park provision, recognising the significant provision already in place at Tweedbank Station, and that there are alternative solutions for additional car parking if that should become necessary in future. Further work is now underway by SE and SBC on:

- Impact of route safeguarding south of Tweedbank station on the Phase 1 development site.
- Discussion with land/property owners in Phase 2, with initial focus on Aggmore Holdings.
- Initial design/visuals for the 'Eildon Mill' site, to ensure a complement to the GTS building in future.

Project approval for the Phase 1 investment in new business space is expected in September 2015.

- Borders Railway Inward Investment Prospectus

Web designers are due to complete the Inward Investment Prospectus website together with an interactive map of over 100 development sites by the end of July 2015. This is funded by Scottish Borders, Midlothian and Edinburgh City Councils. The web designers plan to share a test version of the website with the project team by 10 July. A 'soft launch' of the Prospectus, which will include a short video being developed by the web designers and the production of a desktop published brochure, is anticipated to take place in August, with a follow up launch event in Edinburgh in September 2015.

- Borders Railway Inward Investment Response

Following initial discussions with Edinburgh City Council's Invest Edinburgh team on the resources needed to proactively promote investment in the Railway corridor, meetings have been held with Midlothian and Scottish Borders Councils to agree the creation of a seconded senior post to jointly deliver inward investment activity and create a single point of contact for managing enquiries. Scottish Development International (SDI) input, facilitated by SE, has been provided to sense check the content of the Prospectus and the overall approach. It is expected that an application for Scottish Government Blueprint funds to deliver this activity will be submitted for approval in August 2015.

- Borders Railway Investment Fund

Assets have been being transferred from regional loan funds to the new 'Scottish Local Authorities Business Loan Fund' which will deliver a planned £1million finance mechanism for business investment in the Railway corridor. An application is in process to lever in additional ERDF investment to the national fund, and an application for Scottish Government Blueprint funds will be submitted by September 2015. The new fund will be available from 1st October 2015, and interim options for business loans are now available.

Great Places for Living & Learning – Progress- **Housing Land/ Development**

Following a Scottish Government facilitated a meeting of senior planners in Scottish Borders and Midlothian Councils to discuss the strategic role of the railway in creating a new ‘development corridor’ for Scotland, Local Authorities have completed some detailed work on the development status of housing sites along the corridor. An article on the Borders Railway and the housing/ planning/ place agenda appeared in Scottish Planner in July 2015. This is a priority area to be addressed after the opening of the Railway.

- **Integrated Transport at Station Hubs**

As a conclusion to dialogue between Scottish Borders Council and First Group Borders, the bus company has developed a number of services changes from September 7th which should assist bus/rail integration at Galashiels and Tweedbank.

A second meeting was held in June 2015 with transport contacts in ScotRail, Scottish Borders, Midlothian and Edinburgh City Councils to discuss integration of bus and rail scheduling, the physical connections from stations, and the planned provision for taxis, car hire, and bike hire facilities. Key gaps and opportunities are being progressed and a report outlining plans for rail/ bus service improvements to be in place by September 2015 in Scottish Borders was approved by Scottish Borders Council on 25th June 2015. This includes an expected financial contribution from Scottish Government Blueprint funds which will be submitted for approval in August 2015.

- **Develop walk/ cycle paths into wider network**

Projects are progressing led by Scottish Borders and Midlothian Councils to deliver ‘active travel projects’ and touch screen information points at key stations, funded by the Scottish Government/ Transport Scotland Smarter Choices grants.

The development of walking and cycle path connections in Scottish Borders is progressing well, with links between Clovenfords, Melrose, Abbotsford House and the Borders General Hospital all included in ongoing works. Signage and information is available at Stow, Galashiels and Tweedbank stations to inform visitors of the various short and long distance routes available for walking and cycling.

- **Scope out Potential Feasibility Work for Extending the Line**

Further discussions have been held with Transport Scotland regarding the scope of the project. Contact with other key partners in Dumfries and Galloway and Cumbria have been made via the ‘Borderlands’ project. Once agreement on the scope has been achieved, it is hope that initial feasibility work will start later in 2015.

Great Destinations to Visit - Progress- **Great Tapestry of Scotland – Pre-opening**

Plans are being progressed with the GTS team to showcase the Tapestry in temporary exhibitions at five locations along the Railway corridor in time for the opening celebrations in September 2015. Venues being explored are: Waverley Station in Edinburgh, the National Mining Museum in Newtongrange, Stow Primary School, Galashiels Transport Interchange and Abbotsford House.

Discussions are underway to also display some of the GT panels at the Milan Expo Pavilion during ‘Great Scotland’ week in September (11-14th). VisitScotland (VS) is working on creating a ‘Win a Trip to the Borders’. The Minister attending the Expo will be Mr Lochhead MSP. He will be briefed to cover the

Borders Railway in his presentations/meetings, plus any chance to serve local produce from the Borders/Midlothian (to tie in with Year of Food & Drink) will be maximised.

- **Great Tapestry of Scotland – Permanent Home**

Following the Feasibility Stage Proposals, completed in December 2014, Scottish Borders Council have commenced with the next stage of the design process, and the Planning Application was submitted in July 2015. The Project Governance structure has been established covering the general principles of how Scottish Borders Council will manage the design, cost control and reporting procedures throughout the design and construction phases.

SBC are in the process of finalising the appointments of the various consultants required to inform the overall design. The design consultants engaged to date are:

- Project Manager - Turner & Townsend
- Architect (Lead Consultant) – Page & Park
- Civil & Structural Engineer – Goodson Associates
- Cost Management – Faithful & Gould
- Landscape Architect – Harrisonstevens
- Mechanical & Electrical – Atelier Ten
- Fire Engineer – Atelier Ten

The team have now completed RIBA Stage 2. This includes Preparing Developed Designs, coordinated and updated proposals for structural design, building services systems, outline specifications, Cost Information and Project Strategies in accordance with Design Programme. All associated site surveys including, Topographical, Ecology, Geo Physical, Site Investigation & Ground Investigation are now complete.

- **Steam Train Experience**

ScotRail have now appointed DB Schenker to run both the steam train for the opening celebrations and also the Steam Train Experience (STE) (18+1). The target for commencement of ticket sales for the STE is end July 2015 however ScotRail will try to better this. The STE evaluation exercise has been discussed between Transport Scotland (TS) and ScotRail and they have suggested that they may be in a position to carry out the evaluation. TS will seek advice/input from VS and SE on this. The draft BR Timetable has been published with slots included for running the STE. This aims to minimise the disruption to services.

- **Tourism Train Market Assessment**

A Tourism Train Market Assessment is underway, commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, working with Transport Scotland and VisitScotland. This research aims to review opportunities for the Borders route and how economic impact can be maximised. The work is being carried out by BTS, who have completed consultations with Abellio/ScotRail, tour operators, private sector and key stakeholders. An interim report was produced in July 2015, and final report is expected in August 2015.

- **Tourism Destination Audit**

The Tourism Destination Audit for Scottish Borders and Midlothian is now complete, and was launched at a joint tourism event held in Midlothian on 28th May. A joint news release was issued in June 2015 highlighting the audit findings, reporting almost 30 themed tourism business development gaps and opportunities linked to the Borders Railway. The audit findings form the basis for Tourism Business Development Programme.

- **Borders Railway Tourism Development Programme**

Using the findings of the Destination Audit, Business Gateway in Scottish Borders and Midlothian with support from Scottish Enterprise, have worked up a plan to support the tourism sector to respond to new economic opportunities linked to the Railway. The approach includes the development of a

'Business Opportunities Guide' linked to business briefings, innovation workshops, 1:1 and cluster business support. An application for Blueprint funding has been submitted for the July meeting of the Leaders Group.

- **Hop on/ Hop off Bus Services**

Plans are in progress to deliver a hop on/ hop off bus pilot in Scottish Borders in time for the opening weekend, to coincide with the six week Steam Train Experience pilot. Linked to bus/ rail service enhancements approved by Council in June 2015, an application for Blueprint funding will be submitted in August 2015.

- **Marketing Programme**

Following commitment of Blueprint Funding by Scottish Government and Local Authorities, a news release announcing the VisitScotland led Marketing Programme was issued in May 2015. Landing Pages on visitscotland.com/bordersrailway went live from the July 2015. Other recent progress:

- A blog page at visitscotland.com/bordersrailway is now live, directing visitors to the destination web pages and to buy tickets.
- The 'Borders Railway Industry Toolkit' on visitscotland.org has been further expanded to offer additional information about opportunities to get involved with ScotRail marketing and consumer ticket promotions, in addition to existing marketing information and other business support links.
- Following the successful 28 May industry event at Newbattle Abbey College which encouraged businesses to get involved in this marketing campaign, industry have also been engaged at:
 - 3 June 2015: Tourism Destination Audit presentation to Scottish Borders Tourism Partnership.
 - 17 June 2015: Borders Railway Tourism event at Carfraemill with ScotRail, hosted by Scottish Borders and Midlothian Councils. Both ScotRail and VisitScotland presented details of the marketing plans around Borders Railway and highlighted opportunities for businesses to get involved. This was promoted via the local Area Tourism Partnerships and had 90 places available for businesses.
- The Scotlanders blogger group press trip took place 11-14 June across Midlothian and the Scottish Borders. Extensive itineraries for six bloggers incorporated a wide range of attractions and activities, including Borders Book Festival, and generated engaging content across blogs and social media. The Scotlanders combined social media following is over 40,000 people in over one hundred countries.
- Creative brief for launch activity has been issued to media agency using iconic images for Midlothian, Scottish Borders and Edinburgh as backdrop to Brilliant Moments messaging. This activity will be multi-channel proposal initially using outdoor, digital and radio advertising mid-August – end September. As well as raising awareness of Borders Railway and inspiring visitors to the regions by train, the campaign will have a strong call to action with primary focus on data capture and generating business referrals.
- Cross-referencing media schedule with ScotRail marketing plans to ensure no cross-over of promotional activity occurs. This also offers opportunities to work in partnership on some activities, such as outdoor advertising.
- New photography is being captured by our in-house media team to refresh the imagery available for the regions. This is still being supplemented and will be built on by an external photographer commissioned to capture photographs of major events in the regions.
- Accommodation Partners and Food & Drink partners have been sourced for the media press trip in and around the opening weekend.
- Our consumer PR team is working with Saks 5th Avenue to create Scottish content for a new customer 'magalog' (high-end magazine meets catalogue). In addition to Scottish fashion shoots,

this will include a page of editorial on Scotland, and Borders Railway will feature as the top story. The magalog will go to 500k of Saks top customers (customers who have spent \$1m in the last year) – profiling suggests 80% of whom love to travel internationally. A launch event will be held in September in the Saks flagship NYC store.

- **Train Wrap**

Following the launch of the Train Wrap to ‘communicate to rail travellers the key leisure and tourism assets of each of the three Council areas and the increased connectivity and accessibility of the new Borders Railway line’, the wrapped train continues to generate significant interest on social media as it travels between the seven Scottish cities. Marketing Edinburgh on behalf of the three Local Authorities has developed a PR plan to build media activity and interest in the lead up to the opening celebrations, and funding a funding partnership is being discussed with ScotRail and the VisitScotland Growth Fund.

- **Borders Railway Expo**

Plans continue to take shape for Borders Railway ‘Expo’ activities to increase the impact of the two day opening celebrations. This has moved away from a single ‘showcase’ event towards a programme of activity in different locations at different times, including:

- VisitScotland led FAM visits and press trips leading up to the opening celebrations.
- A Local Authority led ‘showcase’ of local food & drink and products at Waverley Station – timed for the opening celebrations and to continue for 3 weeks post opening.
- Attendance at VisitScotland Expo in Edinburgh in 2016.
- A launch event for the Borders Railway Inward Investment Prospectus in September 2015.
- SCDI event.

10 August 2015 (updated)