



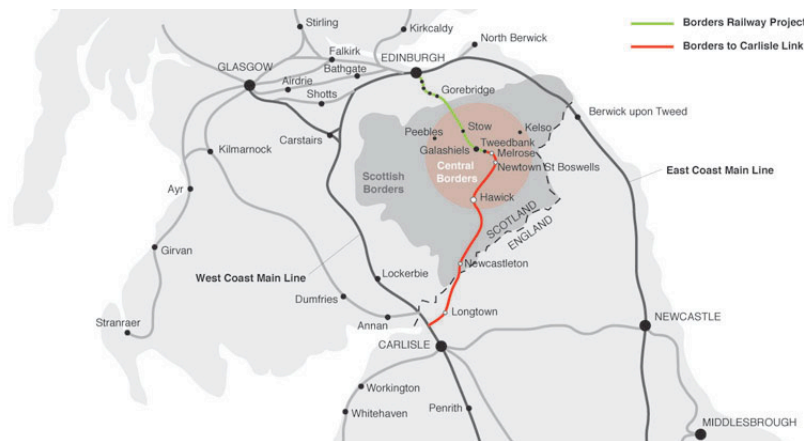
NPF3, Question 15: Where are the priorities for targeted improvements to our transport networks?

Are there other nationally significant priorities for investment in transport within and between cities?

As well as prioritising links within and between cities, what national priorities should NPF3 identify to improve physical and digital connections for rural areas?

One of the draft NPF’s stated aims is to reduce inequalities between regions, but there is no mention of specific new proposals for the Borders or acknowledgement that better transport links to the south would unlock the region’s potential.

The Campaign for Borders Railⁱ is calling for NPF3 to build on the current Borders Railway project by including the reopening of the Borders to Carlisle section of the line as one of its ‘National Developments’. It is already an objective of the *South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan*.



Map showing proposed line in relation to other routes.

This aim is shared by the Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce, which has urged the Scottish Government to fund the extension of the Borders Railway through to Hawick and on to Carlisle. They say:

“A new cross border link is hugely important and the campaign to get that starts right now. We in the Borders not only want to see improved transport links with our neighbours in Scotland but with the North of England.”ⁱⁱ

The principal benefits will be to:

1. Further boost the Borders economy, helping it to maximise its potential.
2. Provide through rail services to the central Borders, population approx. 75,000.
3. Create much-needed additional capacity on the West Coast Main Line by re-routing some passenger and freight services to run through the Borders.ⁱⁱⁱ
4. Provide greater resilience to the West Coast Main Line by providing a diversionary route to Edinburgh^{iv}.

5. Deliver benefits on a 10-year timescale rather than the 25-30 years envisaged for building the proposed high-speed line to England^v.
6. Make use of the substantial legacy of existing disused infrastructure to provide value for money^{vi}, maximise sustainability and minimise impact on the landscape.
7. Form basis of enhanced cross-border network of inter-regional trains linking the cities of Central Scotland and Northern England, and serving the towns and communities in between (see diagram below).
8. Connect Hawick (population 15,000) to the rail network^{vii}.
9. Give Borders towns a fast, high quality, direct link to the South, connecting with inter-city services to London at Carlisle^{viii}.
10. Create opportunities for modal shift of freight from road to rail by giving access to forestry plantations, shifting heavy timber traffic off unsuitable roads.^{ix}
11. Provide rail access to other sources of freight traffic, for example, to serve the coal mining projects proposed in the Canonbie and Longtown areas.^x
12. Capture a significant proportion of Carlisle-bound commuter traffic along the A7 corridor through the southern Borders and North Cumbria. Places such as Canonbie, Longtown, Langholm, Newcastleton and even Hawick already form part of Carlisle's commuter catchment and would be well served by a reopened railway.
13. Complement proposed high-speed line to England, depending on route option selected.^{xi}

Previous feasibility studies have taken a rather narrow focus when trying to assess the demand for extending the Borders railway to Hawick and Carlisle^{xii}. A new study is urgently needed that takes a wider view, not only assessing the potential for local demand within the region, but also the demand for inter-regional travel (e.g. Edinburgh to Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool) which is currently being constrained by lack of capacity on existing routes.



Diagram showing possible Cross-Border inter-regional network of through services, with a central hub at Carlisle.

Endnotes:

ⁱ The Campaign for Borders Rail (CBR) is a community grass-roots organisation with a wide membership base throughout the Borders and beyond. It was established in 1999 to lobby for the reconnection of the Borders to the rail network. Our overall objective is the full reinstatement of the entire 98-mile Waverley Route between Edinburgh and Carlisle, via Hawick. CBR has played a crucial role in bringing about the Borders Railway project, which is reinstating the 35-mile section from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, near Galashiels. Our current activities are focussed around two main priorities:

(1) Supporting the Borders Railway project to ensure that the new Tweedbank line is a success from the outset. CBR is bidding to establish a ‘Community Rail Partnership’ⁱ, which will promote the interests of the line and its users, and work to maximise its social, economic and environmental benefits.

(2) Lobbying for the extension of the railway to Hawick and Carlisle, for which we believe a strong economic and business case can be made.

ⁱⁱ Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce press release 5th November 2012.

ⁱⁱⁱ Network Rail’s current Route Utilisation Strategy reports that the West Coast Main Line, which is already very busy, will be nearly full by 2024.

^{iv} Edinburgh to Carlisle via Hawick would be approximately 98 miles, as compared to 102 miles via Carstairs.

^v Based on the Airdrie to Bathgate scheme, which took 7 years from inception to delivery, a timescale of 10 years would seem reasonable, meaning trains running between Edinburgh and Carlisle by 2024. HS2 Phase 1 (London to Birmingham) is due to be opened in 2026 and the onward lines to Leeds and Manchester in 2033. The current discussions about the onward link to Scotland do not envisage it opening before 2040.

^{vi} We are suggesting that the line should be constructed largely as double-track throughout (including doubling most of the 20 miles of single-track on the Edinburgh – Tweedbank section) and be electrified. Our view, based on the costs of recent schemes such as the Borders Railway project and Airdrie to Bathgate, suggests that the overall cost would be in the region of £1-1.5bn. By contrast, the Scottish portion of the high speed network, which will be similar in scale and scope to the London – Birmingham high speed line (i.e. 2 terminal stations and approx. 140 miles of high speed line through difficult terrain) could cost around £15bn. Nor does this include the English portion of the line needed to connect from the border to either the Leeds or Manchester branches of the English high-speed network. This will require another 100 or so miles of high-speed line – cost perhaps £5-6bn.

^{vii} 2001 Census 14,801. Hawick will still be over 15 miles from a railway station even after the Borders Railway opens in 2015. Other smaller places such as Melrose, St Boswells, Newcastleton and Longtown (Cumbria) would also benefit, as would their currently remote rural hinterlands.

^{viii} Current journey time by bus from Edinburgh to Carlisle is 213 minutes; Galashiels to Carlisle is 123 minutes; Hawick to Carlisle is 82 minutes. Equivalent journey times by rail in 1968, the last year of operation on the Edinburgh – Hawick – Carlisle ‘Waverley Route’, were 138 minutes, 91 minutes and 62 minutes, respectively. Today higher line speeds and fewer intermediate calling points would allow for further improvement on these times. Buses do not convey bicycles, have limited capacity for luggage and prams etc and, despite being billed as a ‘rail link service’, do not terminate at the Carlisle Railway station, but rather inconveniently several minutes’ walk away.

^{ix} A timber terminal near Riccarton Junction or Kielder, for timber and military traffic, would remove substantial numbers of lorries from public roads serving the Kielder, Wauchope, Newcastleton and Kershope forests.

^x The Lochinvar coal field: The mine’s promoter, New Age Exploration, was granted an underground licence by the UK Coal Authority in June 2012 to carry out explorations for a major coking coal project. The Lochinvar Project has a conceptual target of between 330 and 410 Mt of potential high volatile coking and PCI coal. There is also an alternative proposal by Keir Mining for an open cast mine in the Canonbie area.

^{xi} Generally speaking, a high speed line taking a route east of the Pennines would result in a more balanced rail network than one taking a west of the Pennines route. The latter would result in 3 or 4 alternative routes down the West Coast and just 1 down the East Coast. This is illustrated in more detail in our response to Question 16.

^{xii} e.g. Scott Wilson report, 2000.