

# Borderlands Partnership publishes their prospectus for the Borders Railway extension

October 12, 2021



The Borderlands Partnership has published a Borders Railway Prospectus which will inform ongoing discussions with the UK and Scottish governments for the extension of the Borders Railway to Carlisle.

Work to assess the benefits and challenges of options to extend the Edinburgh – Tweedbank Borders Railway to Carlisle is part of the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, which was signed on 18 March by both UK and Scottish Governments, and the five Borderlands partners – Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council. £10million is allocated to support this work, with the evidence base progressed initially through Transport Scotland’s on-going second Strategic Transport Projects Review in Scotland while the UK Government Department for Transport progress complementary work with a wider UK perspective

In developing the Prospectus, the Partnership has assessed what is needed to tackle the transport connectivity issues in this heart of the Borderlands region and has identified the development of the Tweedbank to Carlisle railway as the best solution. The Prospectus will be discussed at the planned meeting between Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy, Kate Forbes, and the Borderlands Partnership later this month.

Cllr Elaine Murray, Leader of Dumfries and Galloway Council and Borderlands Partnership co-chair said: “The Borders Railway offers the opportunity to build on the success of the initial phase, which re-established a rail line between Edinburgh and Tweedbank. The usage of the initial phase of the Borders Railway line extension has exceeded the forecast of the business case by up to a factor of ten. In practice, the benefits have been much higher, and particularly at the local level where evidence points towards substantial impacts on the delivery of economic and social benefits.

“The Borderlands Partnership was successful in making a strong case work to consider the extension of the Borders Railway across the border to Carlisle in the Deal. The Prospectus provides information that builds a strong foundation for taking forward the study and shows its importance for the overall Deal.”

Cllr Stewart Young, Leader of Cumbria County Council and Borderlands Partnership co-chair added: “The extension of the Borders Railway offers the opportunity to build on the success of the re-establishment of a rail line between Edinburgh and Tweedbank, as well as capitalise on the nationally significant infrastructure investment from HS2 and the proposed modification of rail infrastructure at Carlisle to allow high speed trains to call at the station.”

The Prospectus outlines the Borderlands Partnership’s views on where and how the railway extension would result in positive transformational change in the Borderlands region and help to address a regional connectivity need, whilst also having the potential to provide solutions at a UK level for enhancing cross border capacity, resilience and connectivity.

The Prospectus provides more context as to why an extension to this route could be transformational to the Borderlands region. However, the document itself does not provide a view on where stations should be located on the route or comment on the viability of potential freight traffic opportunities. These will be matters for the feasibility study.

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal includes the commitment to progressing work (including feasibility) to assess the benefits and challenges of extending the Borders Railway and lay the foundations for new and improved infrastructure to connect rural communities. The Scottish Government will progress the evidence base for this through the Strategic Transport Projects Review process underway through Transport Scotland. The UK Government Department for Transport will progress complementary work on these options with a wider UK perspective. The Borderlands Partnership is looking forward to working with both Transport Scotland and the Department for Transport on the development of the work.

The Prospectus is available on the Borderlands website at Borders Railway Prospectus along with a shorter summary document. The £452 million Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal is a regional investment programme jointly supported by the UK and Scottish governments and local partners. Full details of the Deal are on [www.borderlandsgrowth.com](http://www.borderlandsgrowth.com)

*Photo credit: Shutterstock*