

New report sets out the benefits of a rail connection for Winchburgh and West Lothian.

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A new campaign has been launched to bring a new railway station to Winchburgh in West Lothian, with the publication of a report setting out the benefits of a rail connection.

The report – *A vision for a new rail connection for Winchburgh* – sets out the findings of an expert assessment of the benefits that a new rail connection would deliver for Winchburgh and the wider Lothian region.

The report, commissioned by **Winchburgh Developments Ltd**, demonstrates community support for a new rail connection, with local businesses and community figures lending their support to the vision. The report, based on an assessment commissioned by Winchburgh Developments Ltd and conducted by specialists Systra, outlines significant benefits for the economy, environment and local people:

- Trips on congested roads to central Edinburgh would be replaced with train journeys taking less than 15 minutes.

- An estimated 1,658 car journeys could be taken off the road per day with a station at Winchburgh, which would amount to around 419,490 car journeys annually.
- Remaining road users would benefit from reduced congestion and society would benefit from reduced levels of greenhouse gases and improved air quality.
- The station would support direct benefits to passengers of £2.4m a year and generate at least £3.5m of decongestion benefits a year.
- The station would serve a wider regional catchment of around 27,000 people. This is more than double the projected population of Winchburgh.

A new railway station has been a key feature of the Winchburgh masterplan since planning permission in principle was awarded in 2012. Discussions on a new station have been ongoing between developers, Network Rail, Scotrail, Transport Scotland and other key stakeholders. It is hoped that the new campaign will galvanise community support and lead to progress.

Winchburgh Developments Ltd have called on the Scottish Government to establish a working group and set a date for the opening of a new station.

John Hamilton, Chief Executive, Winchburgh Developments, said: "A new railway station requires multiple partners to come together to make it work and ultimately it can only proceed with a decision by Transport Scotland, Network Rail and other public sector agencies.

"This report demonstrates that a new rail connection for Winchburgh would bring significant economic and environmental benefits to the local community and the wider Lothian region. In recent years, we have seen many communities across Scotland benefit from new rail connections – now, it's Winchburgh's turn."

"Winchburgh Developments Ltd have already invested more than £50m in transport upgrades, with no public sector contribution to those costs. We have always been ready to invest private sector funds in a station if a way forward can be agreed with the public sector."

"We have an opportunity to make real progress, and we are asking the Scottish Government to convene a Working Group of the public and private sector stakeholders who can deliver a new station for Winchburgh. To set a date for opening of a new station at Winchburgh would focus minds on realising the significant economic and environmental benefits that a rail connection will deliver."

As part of the campaign, the local community are being asked to show their support for a new train station in a letter writing campaign to local MSPs.

The campaign has received cross-party support from local councillors, and from the wider community.

Councillor Diane Calder, SNP, quoted in the report, said: "With the Scottish Government's ambitions to create and encourage the use of sustainable public transport and reduce car use and the increasing population in Winchburgh, in my view it is imperative that we deliver a train station here in Winchburgh and I fully support ongoing work to and considerations of all parties to pull everyone together to build the collective momentum to deliver a Winchburgh railway station".

Councillor Tony Boyle, Scottish Labour, quoted in the report, said: “The delivery of the long-promised Winchburgh station, for which I started campaigning in 2012, would ease the journey times of many who commute daily east to Edinburgh and west to Glasgow.”

Councillor Angela Doran-Timson, Scottish Conservative, quoted in the report, said: “We all want to see fewer vehicles on the road, and a Winchburgh railway station would achieve this.”

Graham Campbell, Chair of the local Community Council, quoted in the report, said: “The Community Council would be delighted to see a new railway station built in Winchburgh. Opening Winchburgh up to the rail network would provide easier access for the community to visit Glasgow or Stirling, and allow people from further away to experience all that Winchburgh has to offer.”

Sheetal Shah, of Tiptoes Nursery in Winchburgh, quoted in the report, said: “A train station at Winchburgh would be a much-needed boost for community. Given the expansion of the village, with new residential properties and families at our nursery, better transport links are vital.”

Photo credit: Winchburgh Developments