



**Release Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> May 2017

## **Settle-Carlisle Groups Welcome Scottish Rail Study**

The two major groups which champion the development of the world-famous Settle-Carlisle railway line have both strongly welcomed Transport Scotland's announcement that a 7-month study is to examine transport provision in the South of Scotland. The move is a step towards the full restoration of the 98 miles 'Borders Railway' between Edinburgh and Carlisle, the first 35 miles of which, as far as Tweedbank, re-opened in 2015 and has been a huge success story, carrying over 20,000 passengers a week.

Announcing the study in April, Scotland's Transport Minister Humza Yousaf said: "We want to build on the existing Borders Railway by considering whether it should be extended to Carlisle. The study will also look at how we improve access from the Scottish Borders to key markets in to Edinburgh, Carlisle and Newcastle."

While the full re-opening is still at least a decade away, realising this ambition would not only offer the potential to provide an alternative rail route between two of the UK's key business and financial centres - Leeds and Edinburgh - via the Settle-Carlisle line, but would also provide car-free access to market towns along the S-C from Southern Scotland, and to the Borders country from West and North Yorkshire, with significant implications for tourism and the rural economies.

Putting this into historical context, Mark Rand, Joint Vice Chairman of the 3500-member Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line said: "*People often ask why did the Victorians build a railway line from tiny Settle to the border city of Carlisle. It was part of a much greater whole - the Midland Railway's main route from London St Pancras to Scotland via Leeds and Carlisle, from where what is today called the Borders Railway continued to Edinburgh. What opportunities the full Edinburgh-Carlisle re-opening would enable! The Friends of the Settle-Carlisle Line welcomes this study with open arms.*"

Further, the full re-opening would give a railway offering world-class scenery for much of the 211 miles from Leeds to Edinburgh, attracting huge numbers of international tourists, as happens in countries such as Norway and Switzerland, an industry so vital to the UK economy.

Steve Broadbent, director of the Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company, said: "*A through Leeds-Carlisle-Edinburgh train service would be a 'must-do experience' for tourists, 200 miles of breath-taking British scenery. This key market for rail travel needs to be properly reflected in Borders Railway re-opening evaluations. The Scottish and Westminster governments must work closely together to maximise the potential of a fully re-opened Anglo-Scottish route.*"

**ENDS**

## **Editor's Notes:**

The Borders Railway was historically known as the Waverley route because of its connection with Scottish author Sir Walter Scott.

Transport Scotland is the Scottish equivalent of the UK government's Department for Transport.

For the last few miles as it approaches Carlisle, the Borders route crosses into England, becoming the responsibility of the Department for Transport.

The Settle-Carlisle railway forms part of the national rail network line from Leeds to Carlisle, over which scheduled passenger, freight and charter trains operate, carrying 750,000 passengers annually.

Any future Leeds-Carlisle-Edinburgh railway service could further exploit a historic market by starting from places such as Sheffield or Nottingham.

The Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the railway line and invests in projects which benefit the local economy.

More information about the Settle-Carlisle Railway can be found here: [www.settle-carlisle.co.uk](http://www.settle-carlisle.co.uk)

## **For Further Information Contact:**

Steve Broadbent, Director, Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company

Email: [stevebroadbent@virginmedia.com](mailto:stevebroadbent@virginmedia.com)

Mobile: 07855 547441