

Plans to create new railway station in West Lothian given boost

The creation of a new railway station to serve an isolated West Lothian community has been boosted thanks to a new deal over a local bridge.

West Lothian Council has confirmed it will enter an agreement with Network Rail and Winchburgh Developments for the creation of a new railway line overbridge in the village.

The tripartite agreement is the first between the main players and lays the groundwork for co-operation on future transport development including a new railway station.

The bridge forms part of the new core road network through rapidly developing community crossing the railway line close to the original station site.

The new bridge is part of the main route to access new schools, community and retail facilities.

The new core road design required a new bridge over the existing Edinburgh to Glasgow railway line to provide a through route for Winchburgh, access to the M9 motorway and other areas of the new development. The new structure crosses the live electrified railway line underneath.

The bridge has been paid for by the Winchburgh developers but will be officially adopted and maintained by the council as

the roads authority. Network Rail is the national company which maintains the rail network infrastructure.

The council has to enter into a Network Rail Asset Protection Agreement to carry out any future maintenance or alterations to the structure. This is normal practice, and subject to negotiation as to terms between the council and the firm.

In the event that Network Rail require to carry out any major work to move or relocate any part of the bridge, it would do so at their own cost.

The council may seek to improve the bridge but only with Network Rail's consent and subject to the council bearing the cost.

The tripartite agreement covers technical and legal aspects around the bridge but broadly the importance of the agreement lies in the cooperation between the interested parties in developing infrastructure as Winchburgh grows.

The council has already brokered negotiation on proposals to open a station in Winchburgh holding meetings with WDL and Transport Scotland, the national transport agency.

Funding for a new station would have to come through Scottish Government channels and would be expected to cost around £20m. WDL has already set aside land for the development of park and ride facilities and has long pushed for work to start on a new station arguing that it would take thousands of car journeys off the roads around Edinburgh.

Leader of West Lothian Council, Lawrence Fitzpatrick said: "Winchburgh is a core development area in West Lothian and the transformation in the village is incredible. This road is an important part of the new infrastructure and this is an important step forward."

John Hamilton, CEO of Winchburgh Developments Ltd, said: "We

are delighted that we are now in a position to proceed with formalising all necessary arrangements for the opening of the railway bridge and the new core road from the Town Centre to Beatlie Road and the M9. We are working closely with West Lothian Council and Network Rail to confirm an official opening date and will share this as soon as possible.”

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter