Airdrie-Bathgate Railway and Linked Improvements Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 64
Introduced on: 30 May 2006
Introduced by: Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
Passed: 28 March 2007
Royal Assent: 8 May 2007

2007 asp 19

Passage of the Bill

The Airdrie-Bathgate Railway and Linked Improvements Bill [SP Bill 64] is a Private Bill, and, as such, is subject to different Parliamentary rules procedures. The Bill was introduced in the Parliament on 30 May 2006. The Airdrie-Bathgate Railway and Linked Improvements Bill Committee was established by Parliament on 15 June 2006 and met for the first time on 28 June 2006. The 60 day period for objections concluded on 31 July 2006. There were 79 admissible objections lodged to the Bill.

The Committee published its Preliminary Stage Report on 14 November 2006 with the Preliminary Stage debate held in the Parliament on 23 November 2006. The Parliament also passed the Financial Resolution on the Bill. The Committee commenced phase one of Consideration Stage on 23 November 2006 which culminated in the publication of the Committee’s Consideration Stage Report on 5 March 2007 together with the Committee’s Report on the Airdrie-Bathgate and Linked Improvements Bill and European Protected Species. Phase two of Consideration Stage was completed by the Committee on 14 March 2007 when the Committee considered and agreed 54 amendments to the Bill.

The Final Stage of the Bill was held on 28 March 2007 when the Parliament agreed two amendments to the Bill and the Bill was passed.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The proposals in the Bill would allow Network Rail to construct an electrified double track railway between Airdrie and Bathgate, following the route of a previous railway line. Network Rail would also double track and, where necessary electrify, the existing Airdrie-Drumgelloch and Edinburgh-Bathgate railway lines using their existing statutory powers. The Bill grants Network Rail other powers required to build the railway, e.g. powers to build new roads or stop up existing roads. The end result would be a continuous electrified
double track railway between Glasgow and Edinburgh via Airdrie and Bathgate.

The Bill allows for the construction of new stations in the villages Caldercruix and Armadale. The existing stations at Drumgelloch and Bathgate would be relocated and a new light maintenance depot built on the site of a rail served car storage yard in Bathgate, which will itself be relocated to Boghall, to the east of Bathgate. The existing Airdrie-Bathgate cycle path, which forms part of the National Cycle Network Route 75, would be relocated.

The specific objectives behind construction of the railway are to:

- improve direct access to labour markets in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and West Lothian for people living in the Airdrie to Uphall corridor.
- stimulate economic growth of the Airdrie to Uphall corridor by improving the connectivity of the area.
- assist in the delivery of social inclusion to communities in the Airdrie to Uphall corridor by providing enhanced public transport opportunities to those without access to private cars.
- contribute towards increasing the number of people using public transport in Central Scotland and provide these communities with improved access into the national rail network.
- offer a public transport alternative to the M8 thus helping to reduce the rise in road congestion and subsequent environmental impacts.
- construct a rail link that will allow for existing services on the Glasgow North electrics to operate as through services to Edinburgh providing an alternative to the Edinburgh-Glasgow main line service, thus assisting in reducing congestion at peak times.

**Provisions of the Bill**

Part 1 of the Bill gives powers relating to the works required. There are two types of works, those that are specifically described in the Bill, and those carried out under more general powers. Part 2 of the Bill gives compulsory purchase powers. Part 3 covers a number of miscellaneous subjects, whilst Part 4 gives some definitions and sets out the powers of Scottish Ministers.

**Parliamentary consideration**

In its Preliminary Stage Report, the Committee expressed concerns regarding the consultation undertaken by the promoter, funding contributions to the Bill and the level of house building forecast in relation to the patronage attributed the rail link. The Committee also commented on the high level of support for the provision of additional stations along the route, most notably at Plains and at Blackridge. The Scottish Executive also indicated its support for additional stations at Blackridge and Plains and committed to take this matter forward in the next session.

At Consideration Stage, the Committee did not uphold any of the outstanding objections however considerably strengthened the level of mitigation provided
by the promoter to address any adverse impacts of the railway. The Committee also reiterated the need for more meaningful dialogue by the promoter with those adversely affected by the railway.

At Final Stage on 28 March 2007, the Parliament agreed two minor amendments to the Bill and the Bill was passed following its Final Stage debate.