

WINCHBURGH RAILWAY STATION- ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT



Winchburgh Railway Station- Economic Impact Assessment

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Winchburgh Development Ltd (WDL) have for over a decade been investing in the social and economic development of the Winchburgh area as part of their development plans for the area. Winchburgh has grown with new residential units and new amenities and infrastructure, including major education facilities, but rail transport projects require long term regional planning and funding strategies to be developed with consistency across other key Planning & Infrastructure Strategies.

The South East Scotland Strategic development Plan of June 2013 identified the delivery of a rail station at Winchburgh as part of the wider key strategic transport infrastructure required to deliver the Plan strategy. It did not, however, require that this was delivered solely by the developers involved in the expansion of Winchburgh.

This is carried through into National Planning Framework 4 of February 2023. This notes the strategic expansion of Winchburgh, as part of a suite of sites within the Lothian and Fife area, delivering 45,000 homes and associated economic and employment benefits. The need for proposals to be supported by low carbon transport solutions, in line with the Infrastructure Investment Plan and National Transport Strategy investment hierarchies and infrastructure first approach, will be critical to their success.

In the Winchburgh Planning Permission in Principle issued in April 2012 a planning condition was included which prevented the delivery of Winchburgh Railway Station without a Business Case firstly being approved by the Planning Authority and Transport Scotland. The reason and background to the condition was that in 2012 the Edinburgh- Glasgow Improvement Programme (EGIP) was still at planning and pre-delivery stage and did not include for new railway stations on the improved E/G route. EGIP has now been substantially completed (with the exception of the Dalmeny/Almond Chord) without regional transport planning progressing towards delivery of Winchburgh Railway Station. The opening of a station would make a major contribution to the provision of sustainable transport in Winchburgh but also the wider area. Trips on congested roads to central Edinburgh would be replaced with train journeys taking less than 15 minutes.

Our initial work on the station has shown that it has a wider catchment population of the around 26,822 people, which is approximately twice the walk up catchment once Winchburgh is completed of 13,210. The benefits of a station would however be spread beyond Winchburgh itself. The station would be located at the last viable point for intercepting traffic on the M9 before it reaches the congested M8/M90 and the local roads into Edinburgh. This means the station would have a role as a Park & Ride site, with an immediate catchment area to the north and west of Winchburgh covering Bo’Ness and parts of Grangemouth. This would be a much more attractive option than Polmont and Linlithgow both of which have small car parks which are challenging to expand, and thus help to increase rail mode share into Edinburgh. It is estimated that a station at Winchburgh could cause a 15% mode shift away from car for flows towards the whole of the Edinburgh City Council area.

The station would support direct benefits to passengers of **£2.4m** per annum and generate approximately **£3.5m** of decongestion benefits each year.

The development of a new station, whilst justified in the long term, has a large up-front cost, which is likely to be unaffordable for a single funding body, either public or private sector. With a wider role to play in the transport network of West Lothian, Winchburgh station would be quite unlike the

infrastructure delivered to date in the area which has a much more local focus. The development of the station therefore needs to follow a partnership approach between public and private sectors, reflecting the stations wider role.

This suggests that the development of the station should be funded through partnership between the public and private sector to ensure timely delivery and that benefits to wider society are realised.

2. INTRODUCTION

Plans to expand the village of Winchburgh to the west of Edinburgh have been developed over a twenty year period, with construction beginning in earnest over the last ten years. Whilst there have already been in excess of 900 residential occupations this has been accompanied by significant investment in infrastructure, facilities and publicly accessible greenspace. New primary and secondary school have been completed, a new district park and most recently a junction onto the nearby M9 Motorway. All of these facilities have been delivered in advance of much of the committed development on the site, ensuring that Winchburgh evolves as a viable, attractive and sustainable community. On completion of the current consented masterplan, it is currently estimated Winchburgh will have 4,324 residential units and a population of 13,210.

Delivering a station is very expensive but it is a facility that would bring benefits to an area extending well beyond the Winchburgh development. Being strategically located adjacent to the M9 and as the last feasible point for a station before the M9 joins the M8/M90 the station would serve a large catchment that currently has quite poor access to rail stations. As we demonstrate later in this report this would bring benefits to a number of communities beyond Winchburgh as well as users of the road network.

A new station would bring the centre of Edinburgh to within a 15 minute journey time from Winchburgh, in contrast to a car journey which can be as much as 55 minutes in the peak hour. The nearest existing sustainable way of accessing central Edinburgh is to drive to the Ingliston Park and Ride providing interchange with the tram into central Edinburgh. However, this can have a similar journey time to driving throughout due to the need to interchange.

2.1 Economic Benefits of New Stations

A new station and new services can have an impact on environmental and social issues. The Urban Transport Group¹ in their report on “The Transformational Benefits of Investing in Regional Rail” presented case study evidence showing “stimulating the economy in a sustainable way will help reduce levels of deprivation across the area served as access to opportunities improve”. Individuals levels of health may also improve as a result of mode shift from car to rail which will likely involve greater levels of walking and cycling to access stations. In turn this will also help to improve the quality of the environment, not just locally within the vicinity of the new station, but also through reduced car use will help to improve air quality on key parts of the road network.

In the context of Winchburgh, this suite of benefits would extend to include not just Winchburgh village but also a wider catchment and as such should be seen as an investment in the transport connectivity and economic and social well-being of the West Lothian and Falkirk area as a whole.

New stations, especially in combination with new development, bring a range of benefits to residents business and wider society. New stations have a demonstrable benefit to local economies. The Urban Transport Group presented a range of case studies that showed the benefits new lines and new stations could have on developments. Examples include how in Ashington in the North East of England a new line could connect areas with relatively low levels of employment opportunity and high

¹ <https://www.urbantransportgroup.org/resources/types/report/transformational-benefits-investing-regional-rail>

deprivation levels to areas with regional centres with multiple opportunities. Passenger rail services can help provide better links to employment, education and skills training, as well as making the local area a more attractive place to live and work.

New rail routes deliver direct rail access direct to the centre of the city region. In Winchburgh, the links to Edinburgh are particularly relevant with journey time by rail being much quicker than the existing journey times by car or bus. New stations and services can help enable local economic activity, providing access to employment in neighbouring cities. People who already have jobs would find that the communities the new station and services serve would become more attractive places to live due to the improved connectivity offered and in so doing would bring additional spending to local economies, whilst there would also be an opportunity to broaden the opportunities available to residents in terms of range of jobs and educational opportunities available to them.

The real transformative impacts of a transport scheme come from the ability of transport to support the economy of an area. The Urban Transport Group's case study discusses how, "*the opening of the railway could have the potential to trigger a wave of secondary impacts*". These include improvements in access to employment in other areas. Railway accessibility can facilitate and stimulate development and release employment land, helping to strengthen the economy within the communities served, and release land for housing.

The Urban Transport Group's case study shows that "to deliver high impacts in terms of Gross Value Added and additional jobs requires initiatives going beyond the railway itself, but the railway can act as a catalyst for change".

3. THE CATCHMENT OF THE STATION

A station at Winchburgh, as well as serving the existing and planned Winchburgh development would also serve a wider catchment area, covering the areas to the north and west of the station. The station would help improve access to central Edinburgh with a journey time of only around 15 minutes versus peak journey times of 55 minutes and off peak journey times of 35 minutes. This assumes that only Dunblane – Edinburgh trains would call at the station, the role of the station would be further enhanced if Edinburgh – Glasgow trains called at the station.

A review of alternative access points to the rail network highlights a gap in provision in this part of the West Lothian and Falkirk local authority areas. Whilst the settlements of Polmont and Linlithgow have stations with high quality services, their ability to serve the wider catchment area including settlements such as Bo’ness and Grangemouth is constrained by the size of their car parks. Both have small car parks with little or no room for expansion meaning that even in a post COVID environment with reduced levels of commuting the stations cannot reliably serve a wider catchment area that might want to Park & Ride at these stations. A station at Winchburgh would address this, as well as serving the current and future population of Winchburgh. To demonstrate the issue we have estimated catchment areas using GIS software for stations across West Lothian. The figures below demonstrate the following:

- Current catchments without Winchburgh station
- Catchment area with Winchburgh and assuming Linlithgow and Polmont had adequate parking
- Catchment area with Winchburgh acting as a P&R for the wider Linlithgow and Polmont catchments

Figure 2. Current Catchments

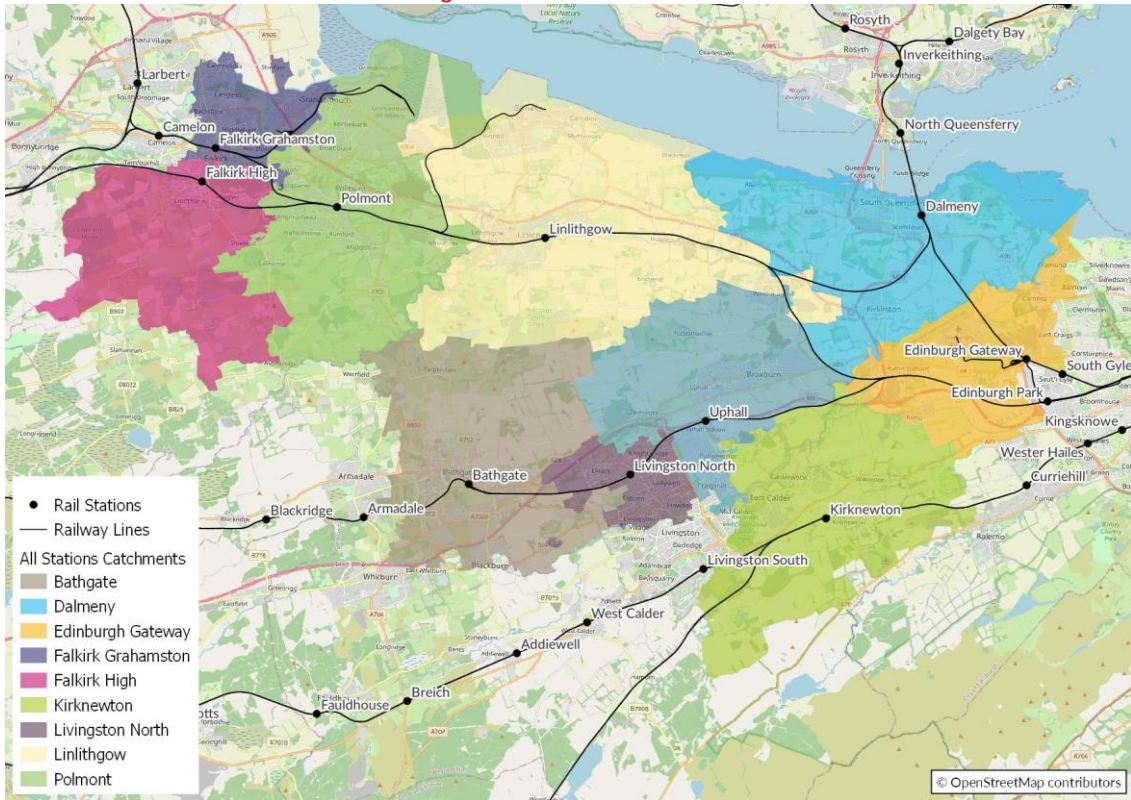


Figure 3. Catchment with Winchburgh

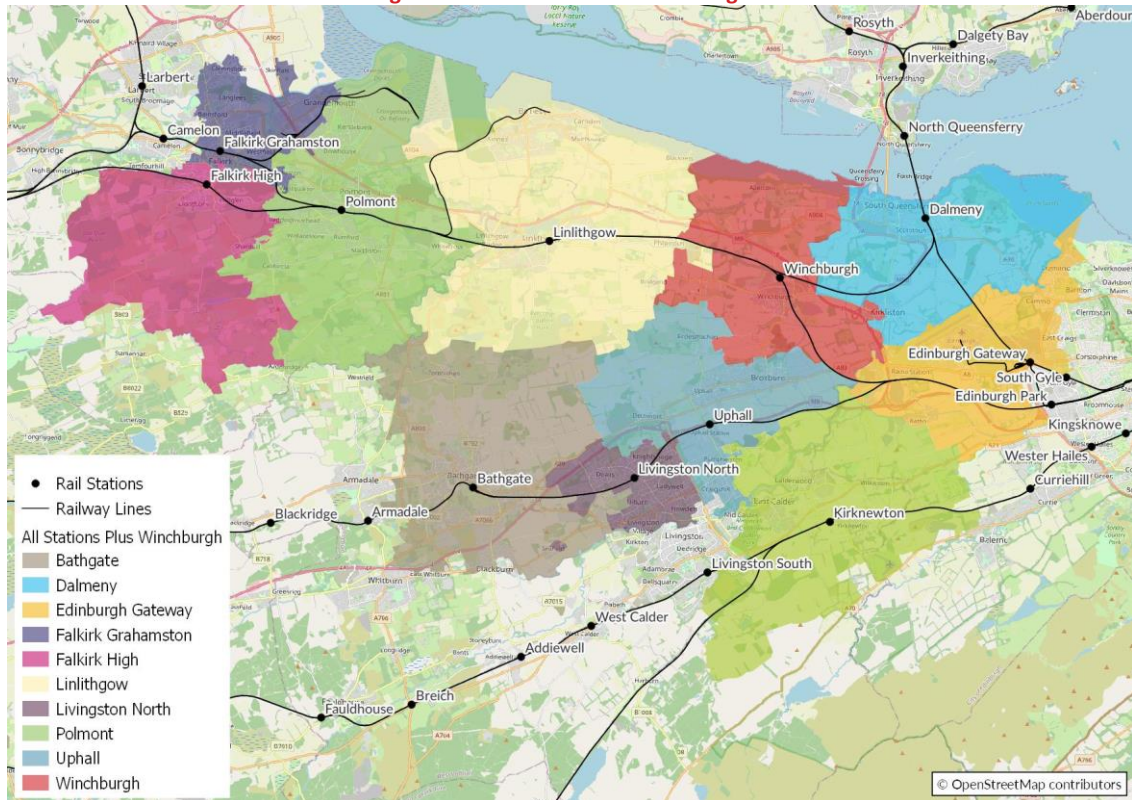
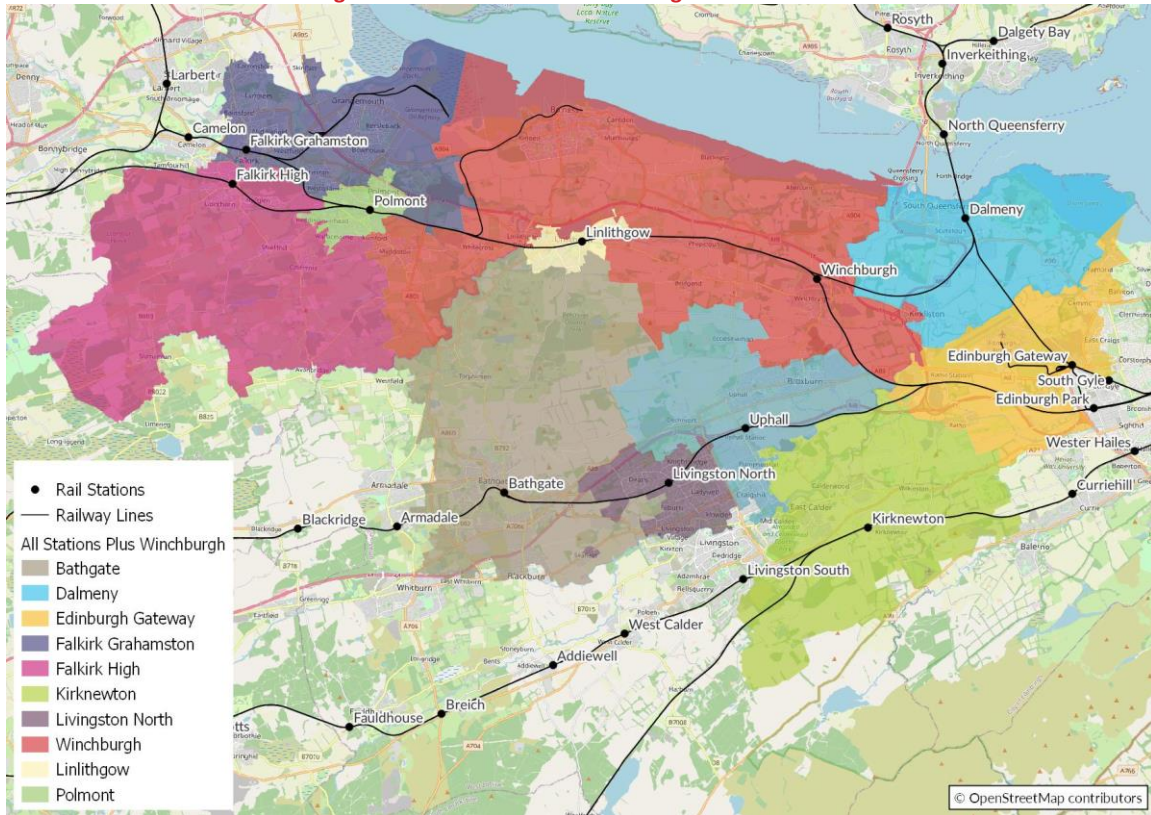


Figure 4. Catchment with Winchburgh as Park & Ride



The catchment maps demonstrate that Winchburgh is well placed to serve wider a catchment area. Our modelling suggests that Winchburgh would serve a population of 13,210 after the consented developments in Winchburgh are built out within its walk up catchment, once development at Winchburgh is complete whilst the wider catchment contains a population of 26,822. Thus the wider catchment area has a population that is more than twice the size of the expanded Winchburgh development.

In the following sections we consider the type and scale of benefits that might be delivered to this population by the station.

4. BENEFITS TO PASSENGERS

Within this section we explore the scale of benefits that might accrue to passengers from the opening of a new station. This examines both the financial cost but also the benefits associated with time savings. These two factors are combined into a metric known as Generalised Cost which combines financial costs and monetises time based impacts.

Benefits to passengers of rail commuting into Edinburgh, relative to a car journey could be around £2.4M annually. This is across six commuter flows into Edinburgh from journey origins with the station catchment.

In Transport Economics generalised cost is the sum of financial and non-financial costs of a journey. Financial costs covers fares, car park charges and car running costs, whilst non-financial costs, but which can be monetised, typically covers the value of time that passengers hold. The combination of the two helps to explain the choices that individuals make about which mode to use for a journey under different circumstances.

UK Department for Transport TAG (Unit M2.1) (which also applies in Scotland) highlights that the cost function developed for the choice of a trip by rail will be influenced by variables relating to rail (e.g. travel time, fare) and by variables relating to the individual (income, gender, journey purpose). In principle the generalised cost structure permits a considerable level of variation in behaviour to be examined and allowed for in the forecasting process. Generalised cost normally includes elements relating to the following, for private car:

- Operating cost
- In-vehicle time.
- Parking costs
- Access time to and from car.
- Tolls or user charges

For public transport modes generalised cost will include:

- Fares
- In-vehicle time.
- Walking to and from the service.
- Waiting times.
- Interchange penalty.
- Non-walked access (e.g. park and ride).

Values of walk and wait times and interchange penalties are usually related to the value of in-vehicle time by applying weights. In this analysis waiting time is valued as double the in-vehicle time.

It is not proportionate at this stage to create a rail demand model for all of the future journeys from Winchburgh station relative to a baseline. However it has been possible to estimate the annual change in Generalised Cost relative to the baseline for six commuter flows into Edinburgh Waverley. This represents the net benefit to consumers to change their mode of travel from car to rail.

The table below presents areas that would feed into the Winchburgh station catchment.

Table 1. Populations and flow numbers. (Source 2011 census Intermediate Zones)

ORIGIN	POPULATION	DAILY CARS TO EDINBURGH
Winchburgh	13,210 (with consented masterplan development)	3,739 (after consented current masterplan development is completed)
Bo'ness	10,730	2994
Grangemouth	6,727 (part)	741
Kingscavil- (representing the catchment east and north of Linlithgow)	2,998	1611
Abercorn- (representing the catchment around Bridgend and Philipstoun)	2,239	1098
Polmont	4,128	871

Kingscavil was chosen as an origin for smaller areas outside of Linlithgow and Abercorn represented areas to the north and west of Winchburgh. For simplicity, abstraction of demand for rail patronage from Linlithgow and Polmont station was considered out of the scope of this analysis.

The number of users in the relevant commuter flow is estimated from a combination of travel to work data, derived from the Scottish Census 2011 for key areas within the catchment of Winchburgh station. For areas outside of Winchburgh itself, the benefits of reduced generalised costs compared to a car journey are compared with a scenario in which commuters travel to Winchburgh by car and then take a train on to Edinburgh. It is estimated that a station at Winchburgh could cause a 15% mode shift away from car for flows towards the whole of the Edinburgh City Council area, which is a figure based on the proportionate mode share for commuters travelling to Edinburgh destinations from Linlithgow and Polmont. Passengers are assumed to be commuters during the morning peak and leisure users outside of that peak. It is assumed that there are no parking charges for rail station if its use as a railhead is being encouraged.

Using the figure of 15% mode shift we have estimated the number of trips that might be routed via a station at Winchburgh (Tables 2 and 3). Although these are highly indicative figures based on very high level assumptions it suggests demand of around 419,490. This estimate is conservative estimate as it discounts weekend days.

Table 2. Estimated Daily and Annual Trips to Edinburgh from Winchburgh from the wider catchment.

	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF DAILY TRIPS TO EDINBURGH	ESTIMATED ANNUAL NUMBER OF TRIPS TO EDINBURGH
Bo'ness	449	113,639
Grangemouth	111	28,113
Kingscavil	242	61,134
Abercorn	165	41,674
Polmont	131	33,045

Table 3. Estimated Daily and Annual Trips to Edinburgh from Winchburgh, current consented development.

	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF DAILY TRIPS TO EDINBURGH	ESTIMATED ANNUAL NUMBER OF TRIPS TO EDINBURGH
Winchburgh (Current consented development)	561	141,884

Rail journeys from Winchburgh to Edinburgh have lower generalised costs relative to car at all times of the day. However, the benefits are particularly high if passengers commute during the morning peak when the roads into Edinburgh are particularly congested and high city centre parking charges apply.

It can be seen that for trips to the city centre there are financial savings to passengers in both peak and off peak periods.

Table 4. Generalised Cost Components – Peak (£)

	MONETARY COSTS- CAR	NON MONETARY COSTS- CAR	MONETARY COSTS- RAIL	NON-MONETARY COSTS- RAIL
Winchburgh	£15.91	£16.79	£4.90	£9.00
Bo'ness	£17.22	£15.49	£6.87	£4.73
Grangemouth	£18.93	£18.16	£8.03	£4.73
Kingscavil	£16.87	£15.49	£5.86	£4.73
Abercorn	£16.07	£14.96	£5.94	£4.73
Polmont	£18.42	£17.09	£7.59	£4.73

Table 5. Generalised Cost Components- Off Peak (£)

	MONETARY COSTS- CAR	NON MONETARY COSTS- CAR	MONETARY COSTS- RAIL	NON-MONETARY COSTS- RAIL
Winchburgh	£11.49	£5.36	£3.60	£4.11
Bo'ness	£13.14	£5.85	£5.57	£2.16
Grangemouth	£11.83	£9.61	£6.73	£2.16
Kingscavil	£17.28	£0.91	£4.64	£2.07
Abercorn	£11.72	£5.26	£4.56	£2.24
Polmont	£14.38	£6.24	£6.29	£2.16

Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the breakdown of the generalised costs of travelling into Edinburgh by monetised and non-monetised factors. Monetised factors include the tangible costs of fuel, rail tickets and parking. Non-monetised factors include the value of time to commuters and leisure users and the perceived cost to the passenger of waiting at a station.

The table below presents estimated generalised costs savings over a 12 month period, firstly to the passengers travelling to Edinburgh via Winchburgh from the wider station catchment. Secondly, table 7 shows the generalised cost savings in Winchburgh itself.

Table 6. Generalised Cost Savings in the Wider Catchment

	PEAK TIME £M	OFF PEAK TIME £M	TOTAL £M
Bo'ness	£0.50	£0.67	£1.16
Grangemouth	£0.14	£0.54	£0.68
Kingscavil	£0.28	£0.37	£0.64
Abercorn	£0.18	£0.21	£0.38
Polmont	£0.16	£0.22	£0.38
Total	£1.25	£2.00	£3.25

The results show that the station could generate a very substantial annual generalised cost saving of up to £3.25m per annum from the wider catchment, based on our initial assumptions described above.

Table 7. Generalised Cost Savings for Winchburgh commuters (with current consented masterplan).

	PEAK TIME £M	OFF PEAK £M	TOTAL £M
Winchburgh (Population 13,210)	£0.53	£0.33	£0.86

4.1 Impact of Edinburgh Tram

Edinburgh Tram opened in 2014 and travel to work data is primarily based on the 2011 census. We have no indication of the number of people who might commute by car to a railhead such as Ingliston Park and Ride, to use the tram. However, as a sensitivity it is possible to estimate the generalised cost of this option. This alternative would take an estimated 44 to 47 minutes from Winchburgh to central Edinburgh, allowing for interchange time. There is a smaller saving in generalised cost for this option because it compares favourably with the cost of commuting to Edinburgh by car and then incurring parking charges. It shows if all the rail users switched from car, rather than the use of the tram for part of their commute the benefits would be around 20% of a scenario where all switched from car. This gives some indication of a lower bound sensitivity to the scale of the benefits.

Table 8. Sensitivity Test for Rail from Winchburgh, relative to the option of using an Edinburgh Tram to Park and Ride.
 Annual savings in Generalised Cost £m

	PEAK TIME GENERALISED COST SAVINGS £M	OFF-PEAK TIME GENERALISED COST SAVINGS £M	TOTAL £M
Winchburgh to Edinburgh- car to rail (Consented masterplan)	£0.53	£0.33	£0.86
Winchburgh to Edinburgh- car and tram railheading to rail. (Consented masterplan)	£0.03	£0.10	£0.13
Difference in Generalised Cost (Consented masterplan)	£0.50	£0.23	£0.73

It is likely that usage of Winchburgh station would be a mixture of trips abstracted from tram and from car and therefore at this stage it is sensible to assume the scheme would generate generalised cost savings equal to the average of the two scenarios we have presented giving a total of **£2.4m** per annum, where Winchburgh's population reflects the level of development in the current consented masterplan.

5. BENEFITS OF REDUCED CONGESTION.

A new station will cause mode shift from road to rail in the six key commuter flows from the station catchment area into Edinburgh.

The estimated total value of cars taken off the road could be around £3.5m annually. This value captures the value of taking car kilometres off the road in terms of air quality, greenhouse gases, noise, air pollution, infrastructure costs, accidents costs and congestion to other road users.

5.1 Marginal External Costs

UK Department for Transport TAG guidance (Unit A5.4) describes how road decongestion benefits will arise where significant traffic reductions occur in moderate to congested conditions. In uncongested areas the effects of reduced traffic is likely to be minimal. The primary method for estimating decongestion benefits is based on marginal external costs (MECs). The use of road vehicles incurs both private costs borne by the individual traveller (such as fuel costs and personal travel time) and external costs borne by others. These external costs include congestion, local & global air pollution, noise, infrastructure and accident costs. The MEC method is based on the change in these external costs arising from an additional (or removed) vehicle (or vehicle km) on the network.

These values were estimated as an average across the day, with the route into Edinburgh being segmented into different congestion bands which gave different congestion values, from which a weighted average between Winchburgh and Edinburgh could be estimated. As with the calculation for generalised cost, we have assumed a 15% mode shift from cars to rail in the flows outlined in table 2. This can be applied to the estimated number of commuters from the key locations in the Scottish Census. It can be seen that the station would generate over **£6.9m** of MEC savings. This represents an upper bound assuming that all passengers were abstracted from driving direct to Edinburgh (rather than interchanging with Tram). If it is assumed that half of passengers were abstracted from tram it would be reasonable to assume the figure would reduce to **£3.5m**.

Table 9. Externalities MEC Impact- Wider Catchment

	BO'NESS	GRANGEMOUTH	KINGSCAVIL	ABERCORN	POLMONT	TOTAL
MECC Congestion Value £M	£1.84	£0.45	£0.99	£0.67	£0.53	£4.49
Infrastructure £M	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.01
Accident £M	£0.05	£0.01	£0.03	£0.02	£0.01	£0.11
LAQ £M	£0.01	£0.00	£0.01	£0.01	£0.00	£0.04
Noise £M	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.01
Greenhouse Gases £M	£0.08	£0.02	£0.04	£0.03	£0.02	£0.19
Indirect Tax £M	-£0.11	-£0.03	-£0.06	-£0.04	-£0.03	-£0.26
Total Value of Externality Saved £M	£1.88	£0.46	£1.01	£0.69	£0.55	£4.58

Table 10. Externalities- Winchburgh with current consented development £m

	WINCHBURGH- CURRENT CONSENTED DEVELOPMENT
MECC Congestion Value £M	2.29
Infrastructure £M	0.00
Accident £M	0.06
LAQ £M	0.02
Noise £M	0.00
Greenhouse Gases £M	0.10
Indirect Tax £M	-0.13
Total Value of Externality Saved £M	2.34

6. SUMMARY

A station at Winchburgh will make the current consented development in the area more sustainable by providing zero emissions links by electric train to Edinburgh and other parts of the central belt, whilst also improving connectivity to rail services across a wider area.

Based on the level of current consented development, a station could take 1,658 car journeys to Edinburgh off the road daily, around 419,490 car trips annually. Even if approximately half of these are abstracted from journeys that take place using the Edinburgh Tram as a railhead, the benefits would still be substantial.

A large proportion of the benefits of a station at Winchburgh would accrue not only to Winchburgh itself, but to transport users within the wider station catchment of 26,000 people. Motorists on less congested roads into Edinburgh would also benefit, as would people capturing the societal benefits of reduced accidents, reduced noise, improved local air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Our initial estimates suggest there are around **£2.4m** of direct passenger benefits and more than **£3.5m** decongestion benefits.

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