

Executive Summary

JACOBS WAS COMMISSIONED BY TRANSPORT SCOTLAND TO UNDERTAKE A STAGE 1 EVALUATION OF THE REOPENING OF EAST LINTON RAILWAY STATION, WHICH OPENED IN DECEMBER 2023.

In line with Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance, this evaluation provides an early assessment of the scheme's performance, focusing on progress towards achieving its Transport Planning Objectives (TPOs).

The evaluation draws on a comprehensive evidence base, including resident, business and visitor surveys, rail usage and accessibility data, and counterfactual analysis, whereby a town with similar characteristics to East Linton, but without a new railway station, was selected to assess the true impact of the scheme by comparing wider market conditions.

East Linton Railway Station was delivered to address historic gaps in rail provision in eastern East Lothian, reconnecting the settlement to the East Coast Main Line and providing direct links to Edinburgh, Dunbar, Berwick-upon-Tweed and Newcastle. The scheme aims to improve access to employment, education and services, while encouraging a shift towards more sustainable travel.

The scheme objectives were as follows. These are the two objectives pertinent to East Linton Railway Station and the impact within East Lothian:

TPO 1: Improve access to reliable and consistent public transport services to Edinburgh from the East Linton area to support sustainable economic growth.

TPO 2: Increase the sustainable mode share for residents and businesses from East Lothian to Edinburgh and other key destinations.



Headline Statistics

RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

TRAVEL CHOICES

77% of residents report using the station (36% regularly, 41% occasionally).



40% of residents report travelling more since the station opened.

Edinburgh

Rail is the primary mode for trips to Edinburgh (53%) and Newcastle, while car dominates local journeys.



East Linton

32% of commuters travel by rail, with car remaining dominant overall at 54%.

Newcastle

IMPACTS OF EAST LINTON STATION



89% of respondents believe the station has had a positive impact on the local area.



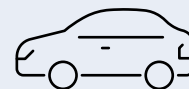
79% report that the station provides new journey opportunities.

MODE OF ACCESS TO RAIL

81% of East Linton Rail Users across the survey area walk/wheel to access the station.



16% travel by car.



This reflects the compact nature of East Linton and the proximity of the station to residential areas.

SATISFACTION

High satisfaction with station infrastructure:



94%
say the station is
easy to access.



96%
feel safe during the
day; 85% at night.



93%
satisfied with overall
station facilities.

Lower satisfaction with service provision:



56%
dissatisfied with
service frequency.

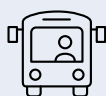


55%
dissatisfied with
first/last train times.

Reasons for Non-Use:



53%
cite car convenience
as a key reason for
non use.



50%
cite free bus travel
(NEC).



34%
cite cost of rail travel.

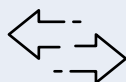


23%
cite infrequent services,
alongside timetable limitations.

VISITOR SURVEY



81%
of visitors to the area
are more likely to visit
due to rail access, with
65% increasing visit
frequency.



70%
report increased rail use
to visit the area, and 77%
report replacing car
journeys with rail.



Visitors to the area are
predominantly
undertaking day trips
and short-stay visits,
supporting the local
visitor economy.

Business Survey:



59%
of businesses view
rail connectivity as
a competitive
advantage.



However, **0%** of
employees currently
commute by rail, with
car (63%) and walking
(30%) dominant.

*Limited evidence of direct
economic or operational
change, with most impacts
perceived rather than
realised at this stage.*

SECONDARY DATA

RAIL PATRONAGE AND PUNCTUALITY



Observed demand below forecast of
130,000-141,143
entries and exits per year.

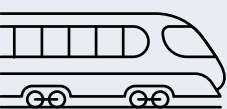


Punctuality has been broadly high and improving over time.



78% of demand is for Edinburgh, confirming its dominance as a destination.

JOURNEY TIMES



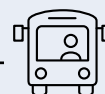
Rail approx

20-25 mins

Edinburgh

Significantly faster than bus

>1hr



ACCESSIBILITY

c.1,050



households now within walking distance of the station. Previously no houses were within walking distance to a station.



households within **30 minutes** by public transport, an increase of over 300 households.

c.924

Edinburgh

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS



Economic indicators (e.g. GVA growth) have improved, but trends are broadly consistent with comparator areas.



No clear causal attribution to the station at this stage.

DEMAND AND VALUE FOR MONEY



Demand below forecast levels.



Capital costs higher than estimated in the Final Business Case (£16.7m vs £15.0m).



Value for money is assessed as low at this stage, driven by lower demand and cost increases.

The Stage 1 Evaluation finds that the reopening of East Linton Railway Station has delivered clear and significant accessibility benefits, particularly through fast and reliable connections to Edinburgh and the wider rail network. The station is well embedded locally, with high levels of awareness, usage, and satisfaction.

There is strong evidence of mode shift to rail for longer-distance journeys, particularly to Edinburgh, alongside increased travel activity and clear abstraction from nearby stations such as Drem and Dunbar. However, these benefits have not yet translated into wide-scale behavioural or economic change. Car use remains dominant for local journeys, rail demand is below forecast, and business impacts remain limited. Rail use is often infrequent and leisure-oriented, rather than forming part of daily travel patterns. The evaluation identifies key constraints including:

- Limited service frequency and timetable gaps
- High perceived cost of rail travel
- Weak integration with other transport modes

Overall, East Linton Railway Station can be characterised as a scheme that has successfully improved accessibility and established a strong foundation for change, but has not yet fully realised its potential. Realisation of long-term benefits, including sustainable mode shift and economic growth, will depend on:

- Enhanced service provision and timetable improvements
- Better integration with local transport networks
- Continued growth in demand over time