

THE CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES OF THE SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND RAIL USER GROUP

Ref	Objective	Reason	Progress
1	Local Services: Morpeth – Cramlington – Manors – Newcastle – MetroCentre		
1.1	Hourly service: <i>The timetable gaps of over an hour (Mon – Fri southbound from Morpeth between 09.32 and 10.50 and between 16.50 and 18.32) should be eliminated.</i>	To give an minimum of an hourly service throughout the day	The draft timetable put forward under Options 1 and 2 of the ABT Phase 1 proposal addressed these gaps (see objective 6.1)
1.2	Evening service. <i>There is currently only one (recently introduced) local train after 18.30 and a regular service throughout the evening up till midnight should be provided.</i>	Allows evening travel to and from Newcastle by train.	Option 2 of the ABT Phase 1 proposal would deliver this (see objective 6.1)
1.3	Sunday service. <i>There is currently no local Sunday service except for December. A regular Sunday service should be provided.</i>	Allows Sunday travel to Newcastle and MetroCentre by train and connection at Newcastle to a wide range of inter-city services.	December service introduced by Northern Rail (for Christmas shoppers) from 2006 onwards
1.4	All trains to stop at Manors. <i>Currently only a few peak hour trains stop here</i>	The demographics of the Manors area have changed. The station now serves a major university campus (Northumbria) and several call centres. Neither students nor call centre workers travel in conventional am and pm peak periods. The station also serves the Artists Quarter, Biscuit Factory, Laing Gallery, Quayside & Millennium Bridge (for access to the Baltic and the Sage) and provides a Metro interchange for the Coast line. NB: Nexus report a 40% increase at Manors Metro station compared to 2.4% passenger growth across the Metro network overall (see Nexus Press Release 6 Jan 09)	Under consideration by Northern Rail.
1.5	Signpost Manors Station Entrance. <i>The entrance is from what appears to be a private company's car park and is not signposted from the street or from the nearby Metro station. The entrance to the Metro station by contrast is highly visible.</i>	Currently, if you don't know where Manors National Rail station is, you won't find it. It is accessed from what appears to be a private company's car park is not advertised or signposted from the main road. Although the National Rail station is only a few yards from the well signposted Metro station entrance, the route between the two entrances is not signposted. The potential for Metro interchange is not exploited. (Metro interchange at Central Station requires a further change at Monument for those travelling on the Coast line)	Raised with Northern Rail who acknowledged the problem and seemed sympathetic.

1.6	Clockface departures. (<i>Trains should depart at the same minutes past the hour throughout the day</i>). Key issues are the northbound 13.03 from Newcastle which should ideally depart at 13.15, and minor variations of up to one minute for Cramlington times on several services)	An easy to understand and remember timetable promotes use of the service	
2	Local Services North of Morpeth (Morpeth – Alnmouth – Chathill – Berwick)		
2.1	Berwick Service throughout the day. <i>The current single am and a single pm local service to Chathill should be extended to Berwick with additional trains throughout the day.</i>	This would open up the north of the county for tourist and leisure travellers (the line hugs the coast and has been voted one of the most scenic in the country), as well as providing access to Newcastle for residents in the north.	
2.2	Belford Station to be re-opened. <i>Currently, the morning and evening Chathill trains actually proceed on to the former Belford Station to turn round, but passengers may not disembark or alight at Belford.</i>	This would allow business commuting from the Belford area. Subsequently, if objective 2.1 is delivered, it would open up the Belford area for tourism and leisure and provide daytime access to Newcastle for Belford area residents.	Being progressed by Northumberland County Council (though the new platform would not serve through trains from Berwick as per objective 2.1)
2.3	Beal station to be re-opened (<i>in conjunction with objective 2.1</i>).	This would open up the Beal area (including Holy Island) for tourism and leisure and provide daytime access to Newcastle for Beal area residents.	
3	Station Facilities at Morpeth		
3.1	Level access to northbound platform. <i>Currently, Morpeth's northbound platform can only be reached by a flight of steps from the subway. However, the platform is only a few yards from and on the same level as Bankside Road, across disused railway sidings.</i>	This would enable access for disabled in wheelchairs, parents with buggies and those with luggage on wheels, and increase rail use.	DfT "Access For All" funding announced 31 st January 2008 (see DfT press release) and implementation now being progressed by Network Rail, though project is still in its early stages.
3.2	Passenger Information System (<i>either remote tannoy announcements, display screens or a Help Point</i>)	Currently no means of obtaining train running information in afternoons, evenings or Sundays (when station is unstaffed). This creates a bad customer experience if there is disruption or late running and loses passengers from rail travel for ever. It is also dangerous as passengers can move to platform edge as a train approaches expecting it to stop, whereas it could be an earlier train that is running late.	David Franks MD of National Express Trains has agreed to take up the issue with Northern Rail who are the Station Facility Operator.
3.3	Ticket Office to be open all day. (<i>The Ticket office currently closes at 12.20 each day</i>).	The Ticket Office also provides a waiting room and access to the toilets, opportunity for ticket sales and fare enquiries, and information in the event of disruption	Trialled by Northern Rail in summer of 2006. Business case now believed to be under consideration.

3.4	Fast Ticket machine to be installed at Morpeth (<i>this becomes less of an issue if ticketless travel via mobile phone code, or print-at-home tickets are introduced</i>)	Even when reduced price Advance Purchase tickets are available for sale (as may be the case up to 18.00 the day before travel), those starting their journey at Morpeth can not purchase them if there is insufficient time to post them, due to inability to pick up the tickets on departure at Morpeth	
3.5	Busses to serve the station. <i>Morpeth station is away from the town centre and busses in to town stop some way away from the station and across the main road. The station has a bus turning circle but it is not used.</i>	Greater bus / rail integration is needed to increase the take up of public transport. If you have to drive to the station, many will choose to drive all the way.	Bus companies say they will consider this after road improvements are made to the Coopies Lane / Shields Road Junction. The junction improvements are now being progressed by Northumberland County Council. Meanwhile, SENRUG has suggested the Council uses the fact that the Council subsidises bus route X44 to arrange with the operator for this route to serve the station.
4	Station Facilities at Cramlington		
4.1	Passenger Information System to be provided (either remote tannoy announcements, display screens or a Help Point)	Currently no means of obtaining train running information. Particularly worrying for passengers with a connection to make at Newcastle. Passengers don't know whether to wait a few more minutes in the hope the train arrives, or to get a taxi before it is too late. (Help Point removed by Northern Rail due to repeated vandalism.)	
4.2	Busses to serve station. <i>Cramlington has a turning circle but no busses use it. The busses that serves Nelson Village and could easily be diverted into the turning circle.</i>	Greater bus / rail integration is needed to increase the take up of public transport. If you have to drive to the station, many will choose to drive all the way.	
4.3	Bus stop to serve northbound platform entrance. <i>Busses along A1172 should have a stop adjacent to the level access entrance to the northbound platform.</i>	Greater bus / rail integration is needed to increase the take up of public transport.	
4.4	Promote level access. <i>Although there is level access to both platforms, it is not apparent how to get to the northbound platform (other than</i>	Visitors and newcomers to the area are put off rail travel as it is not clear from the main entrance that there is a level access route to the northbound entrance, or how to find it.	

	<i>via the footbridge) from the main entrance on the Southbound side. The route should be signposted.</i>		
4.5	Promote footpath to Shopping Centre. <i>The existing level access / no road crossing tarmaced footpath from station entrance to Manor Walks Shopping Centre to be lit and signposted.</i>	The potential for rail services to be used for access to this major shopping centre is not exploited.	
5	Inter-City Services at Morpeth		
5.1	2-hourly Inter-City Service: <i>There should be an Inter-City service (either East Coast Main Line route or Cross Country route) stopping at Morpeth every 2 hours throughout the day in each direction</i>	Morpeth is the County Town and has a high population concentration within a 3-mile radius. SENRUG believes there is a suppressed demand for inter-city rail travel from Morpeth due to poor public transport connections to Newcastle. Driving to Newcastle station is not an option as the car park is full by 07.00 am each day and with no scope to expand it.	Arriva CrossCountry reduced Monday to Friday services from 4 to 4 each way per day from December 2008.
5.2	Inter-City services to be evenly spaced: <i>Co-operation between operators so that inter-City services that do call at Morpeth are evenly spaced, rather than two within 30 minutes and then a 6 hour gap</i>	On occasions, National Express East Coast and CrossCountry trains literally follow each other up the line, with neither operator serving stations in Northumberland. On other occasions, both operators' services stop at Morpeth. Better utilisation of existing rail assets is required.	
5.3	Earlier morning London service The current 07.20 service does not arrive in London until 10.40. A pre 10.00 am arrival is required	Required for business users.	National Express are believed to be considering changing the Morpeth stop to the 05.50 train from Edinburgh (Morpeth approx 07.00) that arrives in London at 10.10.
5.4	Evening service to London	Required for those wishing to arrive in London for overnight stay prior to early start next morning.	
5.5	Later return train from London. <i>The current 17.30 from Kings Cross is too early for many business travellers and should be supplemented with a later train. The 19.00 Fridays only service should run Monday – Thursday as well. The existing connection on the 18.20 from London to arrive Morpeth 22.00 will be lost when Arriva CrossCountry withdraw the</i>	Required for business travellers (the times when the business day finished at 17.00 are long gone!)	

	<i>Morpeth stop on their train from December 2008.</i>		
5.6	Better weekend service to / from London	There is a market for leisure travellers (theatre breaks, weddings etc) and business travellers wishing to reach London on Sunday evening prior to Monday morning meetings. As there is no local service from Morpeth on Sundays, inter-connecting at Newcastle is not possible and these journey opportunities are lost to rail.	
5.7	Engineering Works: Use local rail services instead of bus substitution. <i>When there are Sunday engineering works between Alnmouth and Edinburgh, inter-City companies could negotiate with the local train company to provide a Sunday service from Newcastle to Morpeth and Alnmouth instead of using busses. If the local train then additionally served all stations a full local Sunday service is then available as per objective 1.2. Overall journey times would still be quicker than by bus.</i>	Passengers dislike bus substitution and whole journey opportunities and future passengers are lost to the rail network	
6	Ashington Blyth & Tyne Line		
6.1	Phase 1: Choppington & Bedlington: <i>Extend MetroCentre – Newcastle – Cramlington – Morpeth services on to Choppington and Bedlington (via existing, fully maintained freight line).</i>	A passenger rail service to Bedlington would assist in the regeneration of Bedlington (especially access to jobs in the City Centre). The former station at Bedlington remains in tact.	North East Assembly led study has costed this at £4.1m capital plus annual operating subsidy of £50k for option 1 (hourly service until early evening) or £101k for option 2 (half-hourly service until midnight)
6.2	Phase 2: Ashington. <i>Extend beyond Bedlington (by reversing) to Ashington (via existing, fully maintained freight line).</i>	A passenger rail service to Ashington would assist in the regeneration of Ashington (especially access to jobs in the City Centre). The former station at Ashington remains in tact with level access to both platforms. It is situated in a prime town centre location within the pedestrianised shopping area, with adjacent car parks.	
6.3	Phase 2A: Woodhorn. <i>Extend beyond Ashington to new station at Woodhorn (via existing, fully maintained freight line).</i>	This station would serve one of Northumberland’s prime visitor attractions (The Woodhorn Experience) which borders the track. It would also serve the County Public Records Office which is on the same site, and potentially Wansbeck General Hospital.	
6.4	Phase 3: Newcastle to Ashington via Northumberland Park and Newsham: <i>Re-open main route from MetroCentre via</i>	This would assist in the regeneration of Blyth through stations at Bebside and Newsham for Blyth, as well as providing a faster route from Ashington and Bedlington to Newcastle with a metro interchange at Northumberland Park or Palmersville.	Northumberland County Council are pursuing a GRIP 3 feasibility study from Network Rail

	<i>Newcastle, Northumberland Park, Seaton Delaval, Newsham, Bebside to Bedlington, Ashington and Woodhorn (via existing, fully maintained freight line).</i>		
6.5	Additional Phase: Newbiggin by the Sea: <i>Replace about 0.5 miles of track from east of Woodhorn along existing track bed to Newbiggin.</i>	This would assist in the regeneration of Newbiggin (especially access to jobs in the City Centre) and bring leisure and tourism travellers into Newbiggin which has recently undergone a transformation with restoration of its sandy beach.	
6.6	Additional Phase: Ashington – Linton – Widdrington: <i>Upgrade the existing coal line from Ashington to Butterwell, which rejoins the main line south of Widdrington.</i>	This would provide additional capacity between Widdrington and Newcastle without using capacity on the East Coast Main Line, and would be important if the Blue Sky Housing & Leisure Development at Stobswood goes ahead, as this would need an excellent public transport infrastructure.	
7	Newcastle Station Facilities		
7.1	Toilets: <i>Better, cleaner toilets are required, with additional toilets on main station concourse</i>	The existing toilets are poor quality and the night toilet disgusting, a discredit to Newcastle and the North East. They are difficult to find and are not located on the main station concourse.	
7.2	Information Point: <i>This should be open all the time, or some other way of contacting on-duty staff made available during the evenings.</i>	Assistance is not easy to find once the Information Point has closed. No visible staff, or directions to the office where night staff can be found. This is particularly difficult if an incoming train is late and passengers have missed the last connection of the day.	
7.3	Station opening times. The station currently closes before the arrival of the last train	The station is currently locked closed before the scheduled arrival of the last train, meaning meeters and greeters can not wait safely for arriving passengers.	

8	Bus / Rail and Bus / Metro Integration		
8.1	<p>Busses from Northumberland to serve Central Station. <i>Currently, all busses from Northumberland terminate at Haymarket Bus Station which is two stops on the Metro away from Central Station</i></p>	<p>Poor local rail connections, poor bus connections and insufficient / prohibitively expensive parking at Newcastle Central Station means potential long distance rail travellers from Northumberland can not easily get to Central Station and are likely to drive for their entire journey.</p>	
8.2	<p>Direct Bus Connection from Haymarket to Central Station. <i>Direct easy-access low floor bus from Haymarket Bus Station to Central Station required and could be achieved by the re-routing of routes Q1 or Q2 so that the same route serves both Haymarket and Central Station. This objective is less important if objective 8.1 is delivered.</i></p>	<p>For the benefit of those with children or luggage who find the 4 x lifts or staircases involved in the Metro connection unmanageable</p>	
8.3	<p>Through ticket option for bus / metro to Central Station. <i>Passengers on busses to Haymarket should be able to purchase a ticket that includes onward travel from Haymarket to Central Station. This is provided by the North East Explorer ticket but it is poorly advertised. It can not be purchased at Newcastle Station meaning through ticketing is not possible in the reverse direction.</i></p>	<p>To provide easy access to Central Station for onward long distance rail travel.</p>	
8.4	<p>Through ticket option for bus / metro to Newcastle Airport [via Regent Centre]. <i>Passengers on busses to Regent Centre should be able to purchase a ticket that includes onward travel from Regent Centre to Airport. This is provided by the North East Explorer ticket but it is poorly advertised. It can not be purchased at Airport Metro Station meaning through ticketing is not possible in the reverse direction.</i></p>		