



34 Front Street East
Bedlington
Northumberland
NE22 4AA
Tel: 01670 825500
E: dennis.fancett@btopenworld.com
13th September 2013

Rail North
Wellington House
40-50 Wellington Street
Leeds
LS1 2DE.

Copy to:
Jonathon Brown
Rail Officer
South Yorkshire PTE
11 Broad Street
Sheffield
S1 2BQ

Dear Sir or Madam

Response to Consultation on Strategy for Rail In The North

We are aware that your organisation has recently published its long term strategy for rail in the North and is now consulting on its strategy and inviting response. We also understand you hope to become the franchising authority for the north of England which will specify service levels and manage ongoing compliance with them for the new local rail services franchise(s) that will commence in February 2016.

SEN RUG is a pro-rail campaign group representing the interests of existing and potential rail travellers within, to, from and through South East Northumberland. By "potential" we

mean people who would travel by train if only the trains went where they wanted to go, at a convenient time, at a reasonable price and in a safe, clean and accessible manner. As such we have already developed both a Rail Vision for Northumberland, and more specifically, our aspirations for the next local rail service franchise for this area. Given that the current franchises operated by Northern Rail and TransPennine Express now expire in February 2016, we expect the specification for the new franchise to be released later this year and finalised after consultation with stakeholders sometime in 2015.

Our commercially viable aspirations for the next local franchise are best summarised in the article on page 2 of our most recent Newsletter, which is enclosed. We can also supply this in electronic format if required. We ask you to note these aspirations and incorporate them into your own deliberations particularly if you do indeed become the authority that establishes the base service specifications for the new franchise.

You'll note we include reference to the re-introduction of passenger services to Ashington and Woodhorn along the Ashington Blyth & Tyne Line which is currently a fully maintained freight only line. Having campaigned for this for some years we are pleased to report this is a scheme Northumberland County Council are now progressing with urgency. The GRIP 3 Study from Network Rail has been commissioned and we anticipate passenger services will be introduced early into the lifetime of the new franchise.

Our wider Rail Vision and longer term strategy for Northumberland as a whole, including a number of initiatives that should be delivered post successful re-introduction of passenger services to Ashington, is available in presentation form and we would be most happy to share that with you particularly if your organisation is successful in establishing itself as the franchising authority.

We'd be grateful for your acknowledgement of this letter and confirmation the points we are making will be taken into account.

Dennis Fancett

Chair, SENRUG: The South East Northumberland Rail User Group

Re-open the Ashington Blyth & Tyne Line: View this short BBC video of our campaign:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/politics_show/regions/north_east_and_cumbria/7444010.stm