



## **REQUEST FOR RAIL PASSENGER FEASIBILITY STUDY: NORTH OF MORPETH LOCAL SERVICE**

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 SENRUG (The South East Northumberland Rail User Group) aspires to see the existing Metrocentre – Newcastle – Manors – Cramlington – Morpeth service, currently operated by Northern Railway, extended northward beyond Morpeth to Pegswood, Widdrington, Acklington, Alnmouth, Chathill, Belford (re-opened station), Beal (re-opened station) and Berwick.

1.2 The service should be minimum hourly, with a southbound arrival in Metrocentre from Berwick before 08:45 and a northbound departure from Metrocentre to Berwick after 19:00. All trains should call at all stations with no skip-stopping patterns.

1.3 The service would include and not be additional to the existing single morning and single evening service from Newcastle to Chathill and return.

1.4 The envisaged service may be linked with a similar all-stations stopping local service between Berwick and Edinburgh which will include re-opened stations at East Linton and Reston (now a commitment of the Scottish Government), and may be run as a through service between Metrocentre and Edinburgh, jointly by Northern Railway and Scotrail (or subsequent franchise holders) in much the same way as the Newcastle – Carlisle – Glasgow service is run.

1.5 The proposed service is not intended or expected to carry passengers between Newcastle and Berwick or Newcastle and Edinburgh because the existing non-stop intercity services will always provide a better option for such journeys. The service is however intended to provide smaller communities in north Northumberland with rail access to employment and further education and to facilitate development of the tourist and leisure sector. It should be noted that there is potential for commuting from North Northumberland to both Newcastle and Edinburgh, and likewise from the Scottish borders to both Edinburgh and Newcastle.

### **2. FEASIBILITY STUDY REQUIREMENT**

A FEASIBILITY STUDY is required to:

2.1 Determine if the required train paths between Morpeth and Berwick would be available, taking into account:

- All existing services, passenger and freight.
- Additional services which have already been approved by the ORR (eg additional VTEC, CrossCountry or freight services and the First Open Access service from 2021)
- Additional services not yet approved by the ORR but which form part of a published passenger service franchise commitment (eg the extension of TPE services from Newcastle to Edinburgh from 2019).
- Existing passing loops and their availability.

And assuming that the rolling stock deployed by the operator would be capable of running at 100 mph (which is the current maximum permitted line speed for the majority of the route) and would be 3 coach units of approximate length 75 metres.

Should it be found that there is insufficient track capacity, the study should advise of the approximate location of additional passing loops required, and approximate cost of constructing them. (There is a preference for any additional passing loops required to be at station sites, though this is not essential where it does not fit with operational requirements).

2.2 Approximate cost of constructing new unstaffed stations at Belford and Beal, at approximately the same location as the former (now closed) stations and using existing road crossings for access between northbound and southbound platforms (ie costs without new pedestrian footbridges).

2.3 Whether there are suitable reversing facilities at Berwick (ie siding and crossover). Not necessarily a problem if there are not because of the aspiration for a through service as per 1.4

2.4 Whether it would be technically feasible to construct a station at the site of the former Warkworth station within existing railway land. Note: The former railway buildings are now in private ownership. A station here would serve Amble – population (population 5,800 as well as Warkworth itself (population 1,300) – see <http://www.citypopulation.de/php/uk-england-northeastengland.php>

### **3. QUOTATION REQUIREMENTS**

Prospective suppliers of the study should provide:

- a fixed price for undertaking the study,
- whether VAT is applicable,
- the expected time to complete and deliver the study,
- any information they would require from Northern Railway to complete the study, and
- any information not otherwise publicly available they might require from other parties to complete the study and whether the supplier expects to be able to obtain such information from the party in question without any further cost (note that the co-operation of other parties cannot be guaranteed by SENRUG).

**End**