



Mr Tobyn Hughes
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By email to: railandmetro@transportnortheast.gov.uk

Dear Tobyn

Support for the Strategic Outline Case for the Development of the Washington Metro Loop

I am writing to express strong support from SENRUG for the proposed Metro extension to Washington along the former Leamside Line alignment, creating the so-called Metro "Washington Loop".

The Metro extension would allow residents of South East Northumberland and North Tyneside to reach Washington (and also Sunderland University), increasing access to jobs and education, whilst also allowing people in the Washington area better access to South East Northumberland, including access to the Northumberland Line, due to open at the end of this year or possibly early 2024. The proposals would therefore significantly assist with the regeneration of entire North East as a whole.

In addition to the Metro Washington extension as proposed, SENRUG believes that local rail services to and from Newcastle would be significantly augmented by the re-opening of the full Leamside Line alignment between Ferryhill and Heworth. However, SENRUG believes the Ferryhill – Heworth section will need to be to heavy-rail standards, to allow the route to be used as follows:

- For local heavy rail trains from Ferryhill in the South, which we would welcome being extended north of Newcastle along the Northumberland Line to Ashington, further assisting with the regeneration of both the Washington area and South East Northumberland areas.
- As a diversionary route for long distance trains to / from London, Birmingham and Manchester, when the East Coast Main line is closed through Durham, as is currently the

case at weekends through January.

- To provide a concourse level and possibly same platform interchange between trains from Washington, also from Belmont and Penshaw, with other heavy rail services operating to and from Newcastle station.
- For new freight flows to and from businesses served by the Leamside Line.

SENUG therefore envisages that the section of the route between where the alignment from South Hylton joins the alignment from Ferryhill would eventually need to be shared by both heavy rail and Metro trains. For this reason, SENUG seeks assurances that this section of the route:

- 1) Should be **double-tracked**, either initially, or with clear passive provision for subsequent double-tracking in future (ie cable runs not to be buried where a second track would go, and station designs to facilitate subsequent double tracking).
- 2) Should **not** be electrified to Metro 1500 volts DC standards, Metro trains running on this (approx 10 miles) should do so under battery power. This is to facilitate eventual electrification to heavy rail 25kv AC standards.

SENUG would be extremely grateful to receive your assurances on these two points.

Additionally, SENUG would welcome any suggestions as to how it can further positively support the Washington Loop Metro extension, and looks forward to working constructively with Transport North East to achieve our joint objective.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kindest Regards

Dennis Fancett

Dennis Fancett

Chair, SENUG: The South East Northumberland Rail User Group

Campaigning for better rail services in South East Northumberland
www.senrug.co.uk