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SENUG DELIGHT AS NORTHUMBERLAND LINE GETS FINAL APPROVAL – TRAINS BY SUMMER 2024.

SENUG - The group that campaigns for better rail services in South East and East Northumberland, is delighted to welcome the news today that Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper has confirmed the Northumberland Line will open, with passenger trains running by Summer 2024.

SENUG Chair Dennis Fancett was invited to a special meeting with the Secretary of State at the Newsham station site, hosted by Northumberland Council Leader Glen Sanderson. SENUG's pivotal role in campaigning for the scheme over the last 18 years was profiled to the Secretary of State, and Dennis was given opportunity, as well as thanking the Minister for his support, to put questions about the need to simplify the rail re-opening process, and the need for Cramlington and Morpeth to be included in the new Metro fare zones along with Northumberland Line stations when the line opens.

"We are absolutely delighted with today's announcement" said Dennis. "It's taken a long time coming, but we applaud both the Council and the Government for this decision. It proves that campaigning really does work, as very few people were listening to us when we first put our ideas forward in 2005. Special thanks are due to the team at Northumberland County Council who have been working very hard going through the processes to turn this re-opening aspiration into reality. I'm very much looking forward to catching a train from my local station in Bedlington in just over a year's time!"

SENUG believes the Northumberland Line will have a transformational impact on public transport in South East Northumberland once it opens. The group will then want to see further extensions, to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, to Blyth Town Centre, between Bedlington and Morpeth, and a new station at Seghill. The group are also campaigning for a local service, calling at every station, between Newcastle and Berwick, and a new Metro route from Airport to Northumberland Park, then on to Blyth. The group invites those who support its

objectives to join the group. Chair Dennis Fancett added: “Today proves that campaigning – even though its hard work – is rewarding. At the end of the day, the more people we speak for, the louder our voice is heard, which is why we invite those who support our rail vision to get on board and join us, at www.senrug.co.uk.”

Ends (384 words)

Notes for Editors

SENUG – The South East Northumberland Rail User Group - is a voluntary pro rail campaign group: contact Dennis Fancett, Chair, tel 07810 353651, e: chair@senrug.co.uk. www.senrug.co.uk

The Northumberland Line is a new passenger railway along working freight tracks, that SENUG started to campaign for, originally under the name of “Ashington Blyth and Tyne” Line in 2005. Campaign Page <https://www.senrug.co.uk/Re-open-AshingtonBlythTyneLine.php>

The sponsoring authority is Northumberland County Council, press page <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Contact/Press-and-media.aspx>

Map (next page): The Northumberland Line. Credit Northumberland County Council.

Photo (next page): Secretary of State Mark Harper (left) with Ian Levy MP for Blyth Valley (middle) and Dennis Fancett (Chair of SENUG) at the announcement to confirm the formal opening at Newsham.



The Northumberland Line. Credit Northumberland County Council.



Secretary of State Mark Harper (front left) with NCC Leader Cllr Glen Sanderson (front right), Ian Levy MP for Blyth Valley (back left) and Dennis Fancett Chair of SENRUG (back right) at the announcement to confirm the formal opening at Newsham. Photo Credit Northumberland County Council