



## BLYTH TOWN CENTRE TO AIRPORT RAIL LINK



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[www.senrug.co.uk](http://www.senrug.co.uk)

## What Is Proposed?

Once the Northumberland Line is fully operational, SENRUG proposes an additional rail route be established between Blyth Town Centre and Newcastle Airport, via Newsham, Northumberland Park and Regent Centre. A service frequency of 2 trains per hour is proposed.

Between Blyth Town Centre and Newsham (approx 1.5 miles) trains would run on new track laid along the former rail alignment, which is still fully intact\*. This new section would only need to be single track, and the new station at Blyth Town Centre would require a much smaller footprint than the former station. Trains would run on this section either under battery power, or it could be electrified to Metro 1500V DC standards.

From Newsham to Northumberland Park, a distance of 5.9 miles, trains would run on Northumberland Line tracks, under battery power.

Then from Northumberland Park to Airport, trains would run on Metro tracks, utilising the service line between Longbenton and Regent Centre. Trains would run under electric power for this section, using the Metro dc system.

*\* A very minor diversion within the footprint of Council owned land will be required around Blyth Sports Centre.*

**What Are The Benefits?** The new line would connect Blyth Town Centre into the rail network, avoiding the need to take a bus or drive to Blyth-Bebside or Newsham station to enjoy the benefits of the Northumberland Line. This would greatly assist in the regeneration of Blyth, currently Northumberland's largest town with a population almost 40,000, and significantly reduce traffic congestion on the access roads into Blyth.

The route to Newcastle Airport would create access to the 3,500 jobs at the airport itself (plus more on associated "off airport" sites) for residents of Blyth and the Seaton Valley. There would additionally be access to the Airport from locations such as Ashington, Bedlington and Whitley Bay by changing at Northumberland Park. The route would also make leisure and business travel to and from the airport by public transport much simpler, avoiding road congestion.

Passengers from Blyth Town Centre to central Newcastle could change at Northumberland Park for a choice of Northumberland Line or Metro services to the city centre.

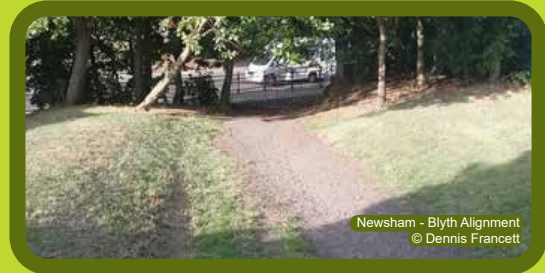
New Stations

**Blyth Town Centre:** This station, at the start of the new route, would be between the Community Hospital and Morrisons supermarket in the heart of the town centre. Only a single track, single platform and minimal infrastructure would be required so the station footprint would be much smaller than the original station that closed in the 1960s. However, there might need to be some minor diversions of car park access roads or acquisition of some single storey business units already in government ownership.

**Seghill:** This station would serve and help regenerate the community of Seghill, connecting it to the Airport, plus the ability to reach Newcastle by changing trains at Northumberland Park. SENRUG has always campaigned for a station at Seghill and was disappointed when this was omitted from the final Northumberland Line proposals. The station should be constructed so trains on the Northumberland Line route could also stop at Seghill, should that become desirable in future. SENRUG rejects the notion that people from Seghill would travel back to Seaton Delaval in order to catch a train to Airport or Newcastle.

**Benton East:** This would be an interconnection station at the point where the Metro lines cross the East Coast Main Line, serving both routes, though no physical connection between the lines is proposed. It would allow passengers on local services on the East Coast Main Line (Carlisle to Morpeth and SENRUG's proposed new route from Newcastle to Berwick) to transfer to trains on the Blyth to Airport line. This would make access to the airport considerably simpler and faster from stations such as Cramlington, Morpeth, Alnmouth & Berwick as passengers would no longer need to travel into central Newcastle and then back out, as well as improving access to the airport from stations on the Tyne Valley Line.

New Proposed Map of the Route



## Rolling Stock

SENRUG envisages the new service should utilise Metro stock or similar light rail vehicles, with dc overhead electric compatible with the Metro system. Trains should also have upgraded batteries capable of covering the 5.9 miles between Newsham and Northumberland Park, or possibly the 7.4 miles between Blyth Town Centre and Northumberland Park. Whilst this is slightly beyond the range of the batteries on the new Metro trains currently being introduced, battery technology is advancing rapidly, and it is expected that the next generation of train batteries will easily accommodate this. A rapid charge facility would be installed at Blyth Town Centre station.

## Road Crossings

The new section of track, laid along the former alignment, will include 3 road crossings. These are at Plessey Road, Princess Louise Road and the A193 Cowpen Road. SENRUG believes that in each case a level crossing to Metro standards can be installed, though other solutions such as underpasses could also be considered as part of the initial engineering feasibility studies.

## Why Not Blyth to Cobalt & Silverlink?

Some people might think it would be advantageous for trains from Blyth to continue on the former Blyth and Tyne alignment through Cobalt and Silverlink to Percy Main. The difficulty with this route is that it could not serve Northumberland Park station or offer an interconnection possibility with the Metro Lines on the north section of the Metro Coast route.

Instead, SENRUG supports subsequent creation of a 3rd Metro route from the Airport to Northumberland Park, then on to Cobalt and Silverlink and then either west back to St James or east to North Shields or Tynemouth (which both have capacity for trains to terminate and turn back). This would create a key interchange hub at Northumberland Park serving 7 rail routes: to Ashington, Blyth Town Centre, Whitley Bay, Silverlink & Cobalt, Newcastle direct, Newcastle via Gosforth, and Airport. The station also has good Park & Ride facilities and it is expected that the range of bus connections at the station facilities could be enhanced.

## How Can I Support This Campaign?

### Join SENRUG

The more people we speak for, the louder our voice is heard, and the more effective our campaign.

#### Annual membership rates:

£5.00	Individual or Couple
£2.50	Concessions
£10.00	Corporate or statutory bodies



Join online at [www.senrug.co.uk/join](http://www.senrug.co.uk/join) via credit card, debit card or from your Paypal account. Or scan the QR code to reach the website.

**Lobby Your Elected Representatives:** Ask your Town or Parish Councillor, County Councillor and MP for their support. They may already be on board, but they need to know how many of their constituents support them.

**Get Others On Board:** Talk to other people about this campaign and ask them to support us. Contact SENRUG if you are able to leave copies of this leaflet in places where it will be seen.

**Talk to Influencers:** When you meet people of influence, ask them to support this campaign, and explain that it would help revitalise Blyth Town Centre and Seghill, as well as South East Northumberland and North Tyneside in general, through better public transport connections to the Airport.

**Contact the Media:** Write letters to local newspapers, or phone radio phone-in programmes on relevant topics and express your support for this campaign. When phoning radio programmes, expect to be challenged by the presenter and be ready to articulate the arguments in support of this campaign.

**Join Railfuture:** SENRUG is affiliated to Railfuture, the national pro-rail campaign organisation. Find out more and join at [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)