



PROPOSALS FOR NEW RAIL SERVICES IN SOUTH EAST and EAST NORTHUMBERLAND

Routes include:

Newcastle – Morpeth – Berwick
Bedlington – Choppington – Morpeth
Ashington – Woodhorn – Newbiggin
Ashington – Widdrington – Alnmouth
Blyth Town Centre – Northumberland Pk – Airport
Ashington – Cambois – North Blyth



Alnmouth
© Steve Miller



Bedlington to Morpeth Branch
© Trevor Watson



Butterwell Line
© Andrew Carmichael

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New Service Proposals

The Northumberland Line will transform rail services in South East Northumberland. SENRUG additionally proposes several further new rail services and enhancements, bringing major economic benefits to a much wider range of communities in South East and East Northumberland.

Newcastle – Berwick Local Service

SENRUG's proposal for a local all stations service, hourly in each direction, between Newcastle and Berwick is covered in SENRUG's separate leaflet ***North Sea Coast Local Rail Service***. A Feasibility Study has already been undertaken, concluding the service is technically possible and commercially viable. It would boost the smaller village communities of Pegswood, Widdrington, Acklington and Chathill and new stations should be added at Belford and Beal. Cramlington would then be served by 2 trains per hour, with the new Newcastle – Berwick service augmenting the existing Carlisle – Morpeth / Bedlington route.

Bedlington – Choppington – Morpeth

This service could be established by simply extending the existing hourly Carlisle – Morpeth service on to Bedlington, via the existing freight tracks, rather than trains waiting in the siding at Morpeth before returning to Carlisle. The service would therefore offer extra revenue for Northern without requiring more staff or rolling stock, whilst connecting East Bedlington to Morpeth in 7 minutes rather than the current 25 minutes by bus. A simple station at Choppington, needing just one platform and minimal parking would help boost both Choppington and nearby Scotland Gate.

Ashington – Woodhorn – Newbiggin

The Northumberland Line should be extended beyond Ashington to new stations at Woodhorn and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, via the existing double track freight lines up to a point just east of the A189 Spine Road, from which 0.8 miles of new single track would be needed along the former intact alignment into Newbiggin.

Woodhorn station would offer direct access by public transport to the nearby Wansbeck Hospital and adjacent Woodhorn Museum, one of the county's premier attractions. It would also serve as a park and ride facility for communities such as Lynemouth, Ellington and Cresswell. Newbiggin station would assist in the regeneration of this attractive seaside village with unique Couple sculpture, linking it to Newcastle in around 40 minutes rather than 75 minutes by bus.

Ashington – Widdrington - Alnmouth - The North via the Butterwell Branch

The existing 4-mile freight route between Ashington and Butterwell Junction should be upgraded and double-tracked, and re-opened as a modern 40-60mph mixed-traffic route, in conjunction with a new north-facing junction at Butterwell (just south of the River Lyne). This would provide a much more direct route for freight trains travelling between Port of Blyth and Scotland without the need for any reversing, as is currently required.

Additionally, the 30-minute frequency passenger trains on the Northumberland Line could alternate at Ashington with an hourly service to Newbiggin, and an hourly service to Alnmouth and the North via Butterwell.

The modernised route would also provide a valuable alternative plus diversionary route for the ECML between Benton and Butterwell Junctions.

Ashington – Cambois – North Blyth

This new service could utilise the bay platform at Ashington, which would no longer be needed once Northumberland Line trains are extended on to Newbiggin. It would assist with the redevelopment of several brownfield sites at Cambois by connecting the area to the national rail network.

Blyth Town Centre to Airport

This proposal is covered in more detail in SENRUG’s separate leaflet “*Blyth Town Centre to Airport Rail Link*”. It involves Metro type trains running on a short section of new single track between Blyth Town Centre and Newsham, then to Northumberland Park under battery power before switching over to Metro tracks to the Airport. There would be new stations at Seghill and Benton East, the latter being an interchange for local services on the East Coast Main Line, offering faster access to the Airport from the north.



What Else Does SENRUG Want?

Station Infrastructure and Services: SENRUG believes there should be a minimum set of standard facilities provided at all stations, including level access to all platforms, Customer Information Screens, tannoy announcements, printed timetable information and bike lockers. Larger stations that also serve long distance trains should have staffed ticket offices, waiting rooms and toilets open from first train to last train, with other services such as cafés, shops, bank ATM machines, parcel pick up lockers and taxi ranks.

Bus / Metro / Train Integration: SENRUG wants to see proper integration between trains, buses and Metro services, including both physical connection (buses should serve station turning circles), timetable connection (for rural services where both train and bus services are hourly or less, buses should be timed to reach stations just before and just after train services) and fares integration. SENRUG applauds the fact that stations on the Northumberland Line are to be included in the Metro Zone system, but wants the same for Cramlington and Morpeth and eventually all Northumberland stations.

Cramlington Station: SENRUG proposes moving the station 200 metres south, underneath the existing level access footbridge and next to the subway into Westmoreland Retail Park and Manor Walks Shopping Centre. The new location would be much nearer to Cramlington's town centre allow direct access from the main road (A1171), improved car parking, better integration with local bus services and a taxi waiting area, strengthening the case for more rail services to be added.

Manors Station: This should be redeveloped to create more capacity allowing all local trains to stop and better connecting it to the adjacent Metro station. Level access should be provided between the platforms, street and to the adjacent multi-storey car park, and the unsightly waste ground could be developed into a street café serving the adjacent university campus and halls of residence, and other local businesses.

Simpler Fares: The existing rail fares system is far too complicated, and gives rise to both errors and mis-use. SENRUG has proposed its own radical reform of rail fares, suggesting there should be just 3 different fares for each class of journey between any two stations.

How Can I Support These Campaigns

Join SENRUG

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

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 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 these campaigns, and explain that it would help revitalise South East and East Northumberland along with North Tyneside through improved and better integrated public transport connections.

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 these campaigns.

Get Involved: SENRUG is always looking for enthusiastic and energetic people who share its passion for better rail services in South East and East Northumberland to join our Committee. If interested please use the "Contact Us" button at www.senrug.co.uk to get in touch with the Chair.

Join Railfuture: SENRUG is affiliated to Railfuture, the national pro-rail campaign organisation. Find out more and join at www.railfuture.org.uk