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GET READY FOR MASSIVE BOOST IN TRAIN SERVICES

SENRUG – The group that campaigns for better rail services in South East Northumberland – is advising local residents to get ready for a massive boost in rail services, starting from 10th December.

Three train companies will be adding extra services at Morpeth, whilst Cramlington will see the introduction of a new Sunday service.

CrossCountry will increase the number of its services that call at Morpeth from 3 to 5 each way per day, making a total of 70 services per week.

CrossCountry Managing Director, Andy Cooper, said: “We are delighted to be increasing the number of our trains that call at Morpeth in our December timetables. SENRUG has been a strong advocate for an enhanced CrossCountry service for many years, and now their efforts have been rewarded with five of our trains each way every day, so Morpeth’s rail users will have more of the country open for direct journeys. We look forward to working with SENRUG and our other stakeholders to continue developing Britain’s geographically largest rail franchise, and to encourage more people to travel by rail.”

Virgin Trains will also be introducing extra Saturday trains at Morpeth. Their General Manager, Chris Cunningham, said: “After listening to feedback from stakeholders, including SENRUG, we’re delighted to bring three additional services to Morpeth on weekends. This follows the 26 additional services per week which Virgin Trains introduced last December, representing a major uplift and improvement in intercity connections to the town. And we’re now just 12 months from the introduction of our new fleet of Virgin Azuma trains which will transform travel on our east coast route, with more services, faster journeys and greater comfort for customers.”

And Northern are introducing a Sunday service from Morpeth and Cramlington to Newcastle and Metrocentre, with the first train leaving Morpeth at 08:50. Regional Director Mike Paterson, commented: “The improved services between Morpeth and Metrocentre will offer new weekend commuting possibilities and will also boost travel options for leisure travellers. These timetable enhancements mark an important step forward for our customers and are part of a wide-ranging modernisation programme that will see us add more than 2,000 extra services each week across the Northern network by 2020.”

Dennis Fancett, Chair of SENRUG, the group that has campaigned tirelessly for these extra services said: “Many people don’t believe campaigning to improve things works. Whilst it has taken us some time, Sunday 10th December will surely prove it does. We have now almost achieved our objective of an intercity service every 2 hours each way at Morpeth, which is a very different station now from when SENRUG was formed. The single daily morning service to and evening from London per day has mushroomed into 153 intercity services per week. And of course, we are delighted to welcome Northern’s Sunday trains that at long last will provide a service at Cramlington too. We are keen to attract more support for our other campaigns – the Ashington Blyth & Tyne Re-opening, the North of Morpeth local service, and a doubling of service frequency at Cramlington, and we urge those that support us to go to www.senrug.co.uk and join up.”

SENRUG are holding a public meeting at Morpeth Town Hall on Thursday 7th December with a guest speaker from CrossCountry, starting at 19:30. The meeting is open to everyone, with tea and coffee available before, and those attending will hear about improvements and innovations across the CrossCountry network.

Ends (570 Words)

Notes for Editors

SENRUG – The South East Northumberland Rail User Group - is a voluntary pro rail campaign group: contact Dennis Fancett Chair, tel 01670 825500 or 07810 353651, e: chair@senrug.co.uk. www.senrug.co.uk

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Suggested photo caption: "More Trains On The Way at Morpeth". Photo credit: Trevor Watson

