

SENRUG PRESS RELEASE 2nd December 2019

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RAIL TRANSFORMATION AT MORPETH

SENRUG, the group that campaigns for better rail services in South East Northumberland, is advising Morpeth residents that train services at the town's station are going to be doubled in just over a week's time, with direct trains introduced to a number of new destinations such as Manchester & Liverpool.

Starting Sunday 15th December, hourly services from Transpennine Express will commence, running north to Edinburgh and also south to York, Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester and Liverpool.

Dennis Fancett, Chair of SENRUG, who lobbied for these new services, believes the addition of 32 more trains per weekday day firmly puts Morpeth on the map as a regional intercity station. He commented "This demonstrates that campaigning actually works. We first put the case for Morpeth and Northumberland to TransPennine Express back in 2015. They in turn proposed this service as part of their new franchise agreement, and now, after the required planning and new train procurement, it has finally come about".

"But you don't need to wait until Sunday week to take advantage of these new journey opportunities. Advance tickets are already on sale offering considerable discounts, so whether it's a business trip to Manchester, visiting relatives in Liverpool, or Christmas festivities in Edinburgh, we're advising people to go on line and grab a bargain now. From February, there will also be one direct train a day direct to Manchester Airport, which is worth bearing in mind as you plan your next summer's holiday".

Graham Meiklejohn, Regional Development Manager for TransPennine Express, said: "TransPennine Express is delighted that on 15 December 2019 our new five carriage Nova 1 trains will start calling hourly at Morpeth. We believe that these new services will transform journeys made to and from Morpeth for work, business, education and leisure

while also providing a significant economic boost to the economy of Northumberland. We look forward to welcoming you on board!"

SENUG have invited Graham to be their guest speaker at their public meeting on Wednesday 11th December at Morpeth Town Hall, starting at 19:30. "This will be a great chance for anyone who wants to know more about this new service, or indeed the new trains it will use, so please come along" said Dennis. "Our meetings are open to all, and refreshments are available before we start".

The group has also created a combined intercity timetable for Morpeth which is available from their website. On Monday 16th December, the first weekday of the new service, volunteers from the group will be handing out free mince pies and mulled wine at the station along with an information pack covering a range of developments and campaign points, during the morning rush hour between 06:30 and 09:30, thanks to donations from Northern the station operator and TransPennine Express. "We want to celebrate what successful campaigning can achieve and encourage more people to join us as we continue to lobby for other improvements across the rail network, most notably re-opening the line to Ashington, more trains for Cramlington, and a local service to Berwick" said Dennis. Those wishing to join the group can do so at www.senrug.co.uk.

Ends (516 Words)

Notes for Editors

SENUG – 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

Transpennine Express Press Office: e: tpepress.office@firstgroup.com or call 0161 228 8475 (08:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday).

Photo captions: The new Transpennine Express Nova 1 train, seen here at Newcastle, will soon be running on to Morpeth and Edinburgh. Credit Dave Shaw. (Photos on next page)

