

Prospectus
for
Community Rail Service Designation
Darlington to Bishop Auckland
Railway Line

Darlington to Bishop Auckland Line Prospectus

1. Geography and History

The line extends from the East Coast Main Line at Darlington (Bank Top) Station to Bishop Auckland, passing through North Road, Heighington, Newton Aycliffe and Shildon stations, and is one of the routes listed by the Department of Transport Rail Development Strategy as being suitable for designation as a community rail passenger service. The line continues, as a privately owned railway, towards Eastgate where recent planning permission has been granted for an 'eco-village'. The line has been actively supported by the area's local authorities since 1974. They have been working in partnership with the rail industry and community interests with an early success being the construction of Newton Aycliffe station funded by Durham County Council in 1978 to serve a growing new town. Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council have jointly funded the Sunday train service on the line since 1986. Following local government re-organisation in County Durham in 2009, the former district councils, including Wear Valley and Sedgefield, were dissolved and a new unitary Durham County Council was created to deliver all local authority functions across the County. The Darlington – Bishop Auckland line is exclusively served by Northern, as an extension of its busy Saltburn – Darlington service.

2. Community Rail Partnership

The Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership was recreated in 2003 to coincide with the establishment of Community Rail Partnerships by the Strategic Rail Authority. The partners include the two local authorities, Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council, together with all town councils through which the line passes. There are representatives of the rail industry, Association of Community Rail Partnerships, British Transport Police, Network Rail, Northern Rail and Rail Trade Unions. There is also membership by Community and Voluntary based groups together with Rail Heritage organisations.

The Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership has been assisted by a Steering Group comprising representatives of the rail industry and the local authorities. The application for designation has been discussed and agreed with the partnership.

The core objectives of the Bishop Line Community Rail Partnership are:

- a) To work with existing and future businesses along the rail corridor to encourage use of the railway and sustainable forms of transport.
- b) To work with partners to develop the quality and frequency of the train service along the line (Darlington to Bishop Auckland).

Darlington to Bishop Auckland Line Prospectus

- c) To significantly increase revenue on the line over a 5 year period.
- d) To contribute towards reducing congestion on the highway network by offering an attractive alternative to the car for commuting and student journeys into Darlington and Tees-side.
- e) To support tourism initiatives and contribute towards sustainable tourism by encouraging inward journeys to Darlington and the Wear Valley by train.
- f) To contribute towards more healthy lifestyles by encouraging walking and cycling to and from stations along the route, for both leisure and commuting/business and education.
- g) To actively involve children and young people by promoting rail as safe, healthy and environmentally friendly through work in schools and the wider community, whilst promoting a strong message discouraging trespass and vandalism.
- h) To promote the line as one of the world's most historic rail corridors.
- i) To encourage a high level of community involvement in the line and its stations, including active involvement by young people.
- j) To increase awareness of the line to the local community and to visitors.
- k) To seek the continuance and improvement of the through service to destinations beyond Darlington.

3. Local Area Agreements

The line is covered by two LAAs – for County Durham and for Darlington and the strategic fit is shown below.

Given that both Durham and Darlington highlight the importance of children and young people, the objectives of the Community Rail Partnership will reflect these priorities as part of a wider community-led approach.

Darlington to Bishop Auckland Line LAA Strategic Fit

Strategic Fit

There are two local authorities along the route, Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council and each has a vision for their area which is included in their Local Area Agreements. These comprehensive strategies provide number of priority outcomes and targets against which the strategy can be measured. The Community Rail Partnership assists these outcomes in the following ways:-

County Durham

Co. Durham's LAA has a number of themes particularly under the headings, 'Health and Well Being'; 'Safe'; and 'Positive Contribution' in which the activities of the Community Rail Partnership can assist Durham C.C. in meeting these objectives. Additionally Durham C.C. has an economic strategy, "Competitive Business, Competitive People and Competitive Places" which has several targets which the Community Rail Partnership can help with. It also has a Regeneration Statement to which the Community Rail Partnership can add value. These latter documents specifically relate to the Bishop Auckland to Darlington rail corridor, as part of the corridor falls within an area recently designated as a Growth Point. Consequently, the Community Rail Partnership can assist in the regeneration of the area by serving new housing developments and helping related employment opportunities in the future.

Outcome	Target	HLCRP Contribution
Health and Well Being	Reduction in Obesity	Self Guided and Guided Railway Walks Provision for Cyclists Wear Valley Food Festival
	Achieving Independence for older people	Information and Facilities along the line Station Adoption Real Time displays Horticulture at Stations Talks Programme
Safe	Dealing with concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime	CCTV Station Adoption
Positive Contribution	Participation in regular volunteering	Station Adoption Station Partnerships Talks Programme
	Young People's participation in regular volunteering	Station Adoption Station Partnerships
	Improved street and environmental cleanliness	Station Adoption
	Access to public services and facilities by public transport	Line Guides Website and Real time displays Rail Bus Information Rail Bus Ticketing Improved Bus links
	Planning to adapt to climate change	Promotion of sustainable travel by rail/bus and cycling
	Progression in Key Stages	School Projects / DVD Station Adoption Initiatives with Locomotion and

Darlington to Bishop Auckland Line LAA Strategic Fit

		Head of Steam Museums
--	--	-----------------------

Darlington

Darlington's LAA sets out a number of targets which the Community Rail Partnership can help in achieving including reducing obesity amongst children and young people; encouragement of walking and cycling and use of sustainable transport; school travel plans; and access to education, training and employment.

Outcome	Target	HLCRP Contribution
Prosperous Darlington	Quality of life	Line Guides Initiatives with Locomotion and Head of Steam Museum Horticulture at Stations Branding of Line
	Accessible Darlington	Line Guides Website and Real time displays Rail/Bus/cycle Information Rail Bus Ticketing Improved Bus links Promotion of rail travel to festivals/events
	Sharing Prosperity	Promoting Hourly Service Links to Saltburn
	Diversity of Opportunity	Community Ambassadors
Aspiring Darlington	High Quality Education	School Projects / DVD Station Adoption School talks
	Engaging with Employers	Liaison with Northern Rail and engagement with employees
	Aspiration and lifelong learning	Initiatives with Head of Steam Museum and Locomotion Horticulture at Stations
Healthy Darlington	Access to sport and leisure	Website Self Guided Railway Walks Provision for Cyclists
	Obesity in Young People	Self Guided Railway Walks Provision for Cyclists
	Plan for an aging population	Information and Facilities along the line Station Adoption Real Time displays
Greener Darlington	Sustainable Transport	Line Guides Website and Real time displays Rail /Bus/Cycle Information Rail Bus Ticketing Improved Bus links
Safer Darlington	Anti-Social Behaviour	CCTV Station Adoption Station Improvements
	Public Re-assurance	CCTV Station Adoption Station Improvements New North Road Station