



## **ROUTE PROSPECTUS**

### **For the Service Designation for the Furness Route (Carnforth – Barrow)**

#### **Introduction**

The Furness Line serves the diverse communities around the north coast of Morecambe Bay and provides the shortest route from the West Coast Main Line and the M6 at Carnforth to the industrial town of Barrow-in-Furness. It also serves the small Edwardian resort of Grange-over-Sands, the market towns of Ulverston and Carnforth and the Arnside & Silverdale AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The line has an approximately hourly service to the larger stations and a less frequent service to the stations of the smaller coastal and rural communities. Some services continue through to Manchester Airport and others continue up the Cumbrian Coast Line to Carlisle. The line is currently served by two Train Operating Companies (TOCs), First TransPennine Express and Northern Rail.

The Furness line is particularly scenic with fine views over Morecambe Bay to the south for much of its length. In addition to its coastal location, it passes through part of the Lake District National Park and through the Arnside & Silverdale AONB. The line cuts across two estuaries on lengthy viaducts, one of which, the Kent Viaduct at Arnside, has recently seen major investment. This follows similar investment on the Levens Viaduct approximately five years ago and recent investment at Lindal Tunnel.

The investment in the line's infrastructure shows the importance of this route for communications around Morecambe Bay and in southern Cumbria. The line provides a faster and safer route between Lancashire and Barrow than the longer and often

congested road routes including the main A590. Many of the minor roads were designed for the rural farming and fishing communities and are not suited to the influx of tourists' vehicles. Modal shift, from road to rail, would be very beneficial in this area and fits with the strategic aims of the National Park and AONB in particular. Many people come to the area to enjoy walking and the scenery and this can be accessed by rail without the need for additional car parks at tourist destinations.

The Furness Line Community Rail Partnership (FLCRP) was founded in 2010 and embraces local authorities, the rail industry, rail users and private sector businesses. The Partners are:

- Cumbria County Council                      £
- First TransPennine Express              £
- Northern Rail                                      £
- South Lakeland District Council
- Barrow Borough Council
- Lancashire County Council              £
- Lancaster City Council
- Network Rail
- Morecambe Bay Partnership      (£)

£ = main funding partners. (£) = future project funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In addition, there is support in kind from parish/town councils, the Arnsdale & Silverdale AONB, businesses and volunteers.

## **Prospectus**

This prospectus sets out ideas for the development of the line using service designation to facilitate improved outputs for both the railway and particularly for the communities and industries served by the railway.

This Prospectus aligns with the Strategy & Action Plan for the Furness Line which was approved by the Furness Line CRP Board on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2011, and with Cumbria County Council's LTP2 (2006-2011) and the draft LTP3.

The agreed development programmes include:

- Sustainable access to and from southern Cumbria and Barrow

- Sustainable access to jobs and services beyond the line
- Heritage, culture and landscape
- Local community involvement
- Social inclusion and community cohesion, and
- A welcoming station and on-train environment.

Service Designation of the Furness Line will assist the FLCRP in playing a vital role in achieving these aims.  
Future Action Plans will have a three year view rather than being annual plans.

### **Key Aspirations of Service Designation**

The FLCRP is seeking to:

- Improve train services – in particular to introduce more stops to accommodate school children and students travelling for education and training and to support the important tourism industry. This also includes better weekend services for tourism development and for access to leisure/social services for local people. Improved train services and additional stops will increase revenue for the TOCs and provide enhanced access to work, education and leisure activities. Continued rises in passenger numbers, and resulting increases in revenue, will help to reduce the taxpayers' support for rail services. Additional provision of CIS will give local people more confidence in the reliability of the train services.
- Improve station environments through increased community involvement – to encourage community involvement through: 1) planting and garden maintenance schemes; 2) public art at stations using schools and colleges, and; 3) seeking to establish “hub” stations for interpretation and better integrated access to the natural and cultural heritage of the area. Hub stations will also provide enhanced access to natural and cultural destinations for people with disabilities. At the smaller stations, bringing currently derelict buildings into community use will improve the passengers' experience, reduce vandalism costs and integrate the stations more closely with the settlements they serve. This is to build on the investment made in the line by Network Rail, TransPennine Express, Northern Rail and local authorities.

- Improve rolling stock/capacity – to eliminate overcrowding on some services and to identify rolling stock with sufficient baggage/cycle space for the passengers using the line. Newer rolling stock with reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will help to make the case for modal shift and will reduce running and maintenance costs.
- Measure increases in passenger numbers - through the use of regular surveys of passengers including actual numbers plus reasons for travel and off line destinations. Survey work will include volunteers from FLAG plus members of the CRP. Measure the use of the CRP website and customer comments and respond accordingly. Promotional activity can be planned around filling trains not already full, around special events and centres of population away from Cumbria but where people are interested in visiting the area by rail.

### **Relationship with wider strategies**

The Cumbria Community Strategy identifies the aspiration for the county:

*“Cumbria will be a place where we work together to energise safe, strong and inclusive communities, health and well being throughout life, a sustainable and prosperous economy, effective connections between people and places, a world class environmental quality”.*

Also, the Community Rail in Cumbria: Strategic Directions report, which forms the basis of the work programme in the Furness Line Strategy & Action Plan, has been the basis for the Key Objectives of the partnership. These are:

1. To identify key growth markets for rail services
2. To assist in the development of rural businesses directly or indirectly served by the railway
3. To support station development projects along the line and act as a catalyst for other projects (including disability access, bringing derelict structures into community use and enhanced local/train information provision)
4. To work positively with other transport providers (buses, Mountain Goat tours and local cycling schemes)
5. To work with the tourism industry to promote the use of rail (Cumbria Tourism and the Lake District National Park)

6. To ensure that the railway is an active participant in local regeneration strategies (particularly relating to the Energy Coast in West Cumbria plus BAE at Barrow)
7. To identify new potential stakeholders in the community (business sponsorship of projects)
8. To work with community organisations to harness people's energies and creativity (station gardening groups, student artists, Parish Councils)
9. To participate in community based events and activities which promote the local railway (Ulverston's Dickensian Festival, Morecambe Bay Partnership's events, promotion of rail access to the AONB)
10. To identify and secure external funding for projects which meet the CRP's strategic aims and objectives (sponsorship, HLF grants).

These key objectives will assist with improving employment and training opportunities, improving skills, improving life expectancy, strengthening local communities, reducing crime, improving sustainable access, minimising Cumbria's contribution to climate change and improving the local environment. They also shape the way that the partnership works, i.e. with businesses, local authorities, through marketing and promotion of the line, developing projects which encourage modal shifts and integration, developing funded business cases, encouraging local investment and voluntary work, developing ways to reduce costs and raise income and working with local businesses and educational establishments to develop rail commuting. This includes school children travelling to secondary schools in Barrow, Ulverston, Carnforth and Lancaster plus students attending the local colleges and universities (both Lancaster University and the University of Cumbria in Lancaster).

Travel to work can be addressed through providing additional car parking at stations like Dalton and Askam (Cumbria Coast Line) to help local people commute to employment in Barrow and Sellafield. Timetable changes can be proposed which will make it easier for people working shifts or needing to get to work at specific times to travel by train.

The Furness Line is linked to the neighbouring Cumbria Coast CRP and to the Lakes Line CRP through the developing Cumbria Rail umbrella organisation and is working closely with tourism organisations to enhance tourist development opportunities in southern Cumbria and north Lancashire. A "family" of CRP websites is being developed to extend leisure travel to all of Cumbria's railways.

The Furness Line CRP is also linked to the Leeds-Morecambe CRP (The Bentham Line) through the physical connection at Carnforth station. Both CRPs have aspirations for better east-west connections and station enhancements at Carnforth.

### **Stations included in the designation**

Barrow-in-Furness / Roose / Dalton / Ulverston / Cark (and Cartmel) / Kents Bank / Grange-over-Sands / Arnside / Silverdale / Carnforth.

Service Designation of the route would not hinder the use of the railway as a freight railway / excursion route / diversionary route or preclude investment in the future to support economic development.

Service Designation is intended to be a permanent arrangement, but it can be reviewed periodically, in line with RUS implementation and franchise renewal, to assess whether designation is still appropriate.



Department for Transport Community Rail Team

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