

West of Lancashire Community Rail Partnership: Preston to Ormskirk Line (Manchester) Southport to Wigan Line Action Plan 2016



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Adopted at the AGM held on the 27th July 2016

Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction

- 1.2 This Action Plan sets out the proposed activities for the West of Lancashire CRP during 2016. The CRP is able to call on the resources of the 2 Community Rail Development Officers (CRDO) employed through Community Rail Lancashire Ltd. Brian Haworth is the lead CRDO and is assisted by Simon Clarke who manages the website for the CRP www.communityraillancashire.co.uk/lines/west-of-lancashire/ which forms part of www.communityraillancashire.co.uk
- 1.3 The CRP attends the regular meetings of Community Rail Lancashire Ltd which brings together the four Lancashire CRP's along with the Bentham Line CRP. CRL has recently become a not for profit company limited by guarantee and has established its main office at Accrington Railway Station. Richard Watts is Chair of the Board and currently there are three other Directors. CRL has taken on an initial three year project on behalf of Northern to develop and expand its educational engagement programme across the Northern franchise area.
- 1.4 The terms of reference for the CRP are set out in appendix 1 to this Action Plan.

1.5 Background

1.6 The Routes and Services

- 1.7 The **Preston to Ormskirk** line is a 15 mile long branch with 13 trains a day each way Monday to Saturday; this is an increase of one round trip per day starting in May 2014. There is no Sunday service. Connections are made at Ormskirk with the frequent Merseyrail electric service to/from Liverpool Central. At Preston connections are made into a variety of local services and also with West Coast services to Scotland, London and Birmingham. However, due to the timetable no consistent connections are made. From December 2017 Northern plan to increase the weekday service to 17 round trips. At the time of writing this Action Plan no details of the proposed timetable have been shared with the CRP.
- 1.8 The line serves a predominantly rural area. For example, Rufford acts as railhead for a variety of rural communities including Mawdesley and Eccleston. Rufford also provides a link to the National Trust's Rufford Old Hall and to the Rufford Branch of the Leeds to Liverpool Canal.
- 1.9 The branch is currently operated by single car class 142 on Mondays to Fridays which has approximately 100 seats and a class 153 on Saturdays which has approximately 75 seats.

- 1.10 The **(Manchester) Wigan to Southport** line is a twin track railway offering generally two trains an hour between Southport and Manchester. The link to south Manchester and the Airport is highly valued by the tourism sector in West Lancashire and Southport.
- 1.11 Through its links with OPSTA, the CRP has been able to carry out a series of passenger surveys along the line to establish the travel patterns of existing users. These surveys enable the CRP to advise Northern on how best to develop its train service to meet passenger requirements.
- 1.12 The CRP is very concerned that Lancashire County Council is actively considering closing the staffed facility at Burscough Bridge Interchange. A number of options for its continuation are being looked at by interested parties including Burscough Parish Council.
- 1.13 Context**
- 1.14 The Community Rail Development Strategy, published in November 2004, sets out 3 key priorities for Community Rail Partnerships, as follows:
- *To increase patronage and revenue;*
 - *To seek the greater involvement of the local community; and*
 - *To manage costs downwards;*
- 1.15 In the **Review of Community Rail Development Strategy** published by the DfT in March 2007 a fourth priority was set out, as follows:
- *To contribute to local social and economic regeneration.*
- 1.16 **The West of Lancashire Community Rail Partnership** was formed in 2000 to develop both the Preston to Ormskirk and Wigan to Southport lines. The Partnership's aims and objectives are aligned to those in the SRA's Community Rail Development Strategy published in 2004 and as updated by the DfT in 2007. **The Preston to Ormskirk line was formally designated by the DfT as a Community Rail line and service** on the 23 September, 2011 at the Community Rail Awards in Sheffield. The agreed Route Prospectus is at Appendix 2.
- 1.17 The Wigan to Southport line has not been formally designated.
- 1.18 The aims and objectives of the WofLCRP are contained in its Terms of Reference are as follows:
- To develop the business case, in conjunction with Network Rail and Northern, for the introduction of a standard pattern service on the line;

- To develop the business case, for the introduction of a year round Sunday service;
- To develop gateway stations in particular at Croston, Rufford, Burscough and Ormskirk;
- To develop a marketing and media strategy for the line;
- To develop links with adjacent CRPs; and
- To improve the financial viability of the service to ensure a secure future for the line.

1.19 The partnership has successfully undertaken a range of projects including:

- 1.19.1 The refurbishment of Parbold station and extending the booking office opening hours with a grant from the Countryside Agency;
- 1.19.2 The development of the Burscough Bridge Interchange project including the provision of a new booking and information office – with grants from the Countryside Agency and the NWDA's Investing in Business initiative;
- 1.19.3 The refurbishment of the grade 2 listed Ormskirk Station including drawing in grants from the NWDA Investing in Business, Merseytravel, Railway Heritage Trust, Network Rail and the County Councils Local Transport Plan. The project has won national awards.
- 1.19.4 The installation of passenger help points at Croston, Rufford and Burscough Junction;
- 1.19.5 The refurbishment of Burscough Junction and Croston stations along with the provision of CCTV at Burscough Junction station linked to Burscough Bridge Interchange;
- 1.19.6 Marketing campaigns aimed at increasing local awareness of the rail service; and
- 1.19.7 Engagement with key 2 stage pupils and taking them on escorted journey to Preston station in conjunction with Virgin Trains.

1.20 OPSTA (Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers' Association)

- 1.21 The line is also supported by an active user group. The group was formed in 1981 as the Ormskirk to Preston Travellers' Association (OPTA) and subsequently changed its name to OPSTA (Ormskirk, Preston, Southport Travellers' Association) to reflect its wider interest in rail development in West Lancashire and in particular the restoration of rail infrastructure at Burscough.
- 1.22 OPSTA has developed station partnerships at Meols Cop, Burscough (covering Burscough Junction, Burscough Bridge and other smaller stations on the Wigan to Southport line) and Croston. These groups have raised funds to develop a range of

small initiatives at these stations. At Burscough Junction and Croston the station partnerships are licensed by Network Rail to work on the redundant platform.

1.23 Action Plan

1.24 The Action Plan was initially based on the three reports prepared by Eden Business Analysis for Lancashire County Council in advance of the designation of the Preston to Ormskirk Line as a community rail service & line. The reports were developed to provide the County Council and partners with hard evidence on which to base the action plan for the CRP.

- o The reports are as follows:
 - 'Preston to Ormskirk Rail Line: Report of January 2009 Market Research, including passenger counts', 12 March 2009
 - 'Preston to Ormskirk Train Service Analysis of ticket information', 25 February 2009
 - Preston to Ormskirk Train service Analysis of population and demographics 14 March, 2009.

1.24.1 The Action Plan has subsequently been reviewed and updated based on the annual community rail monitoring commissioned by Lancashire County Council and Community Rail Lancashire.

1.25 Summary

1.26 The headline figure is that the line is carried 232,000 passengers in 2014/15 giving an average load factor of 29 per train. Further details are set out in section 2 of this Action Plan.

1.27 The market research carried out by Eden Business Analysis states ***"The frequency of the train service was not only a main source of customer dissatisfaction it was rated as the highest priority for improvement – by a significant margin."*** It would seem that if growth is to be generated then a more regular timetable is the essential starting point.

2. Market Analysis – a summary

Table to show annual journeys on the Preston to Ormskirk line

Year	Journeys	Annual growth
2006/07	192,990	
2007/08	185,983	-4%
2008/09	194,887	5%

2009/10	188,070	-3%
2010/11	199,011	6% (a)
2011/12	212,218	7%
2012/13	217,853	3%
2013/14	250,816	15 % (b)
2014/15	231,896	-8%
2015/16		

Note

- a Improved Timetable introduced December 2011
- b One additional trip from May 2014 taking the total to 13 tpd each way

3. Action Plan 2016

Activity	Task	Link to Community Rail Development Strategy (CRDS) and Terms of reference (TOR)	Output / measure	Update
AP1 Community Rail Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with 'Community Rail Lancashire Ltd' and ensure representation on the Board of Directors • Take a pro-active role in the development of the Arriva Rail North franchise. • To develop good working relationships with the ARN team and ComREG. • To agree a Service Level Commitment (SLC) with ARN/ComREG. • To arrange quarterly meetings and continue to review and update the terms of reference and membership of the CRP. • To work with LCC and the LEP to implement the recommendations of the Central Lancashire Highways and Transportation Master Plan. 	CRDS To improve the patronage and revenue & social and economic regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRL Ltd established February 2016 • Nominate Board Directors by April 2016. • To arrange quarterly meetings of the management group of which one will also be the AGM. • By June agree a SLC with ARN. • Receive reports on the work of ComREG throughout the year. • By April nominate West Area CRP representation on ComREG. • Contribute to the implementation of the West Lancashire and Central Lancashire Highways & Transportation Master Plans. • Work with Rail North to implement the actions in the LTRS for Community Rail and network development. • Attend the DfT's Designated Line Seminar on the 14th and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRL was been formally established on 10th Feb, 2016. • CRP attended the DfT Designated Line seminar. • Draft SLC has been circulated and commented on. • ComREG has met three times 08/02, 27/04 & 13/07- updates provided to CRP meetings. • Next ComREG meeting is on 19/10.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with ACoRP at national level and to maintain a place on the ACoRP Board. 		15 th March, 2016 and attend 2 x ACoRP member's seminars.	
AP2 Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To secure core funding for the partnership. • To develop funding bids to support a range of projects 	<p>CRDS Designation requires an active CRP</p> <p>TOR 5.1: Members of the West Lancashire Community Rail Partnership will identify on an annual basis the funding required to deliver the Action Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By January agree core funding with ARN. • By May agree core funding with other partners. • Make at least 2 bids to either the DCRDF and/or ACoRP small grants. • Funding updates to be presented at Management Meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core funding received from ARN. • Successful bid to ACoRP for DCRDF grant towards the 'I-Spy' booklet
AP3 Timetable Developments Champion RW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connections at Preston and Ormskirk between bus & other rail services. • Discuss the proposal to increase the P-O service to 17 trains each way on weekdays from Dec '17. • Discuss with ARN options for the development of services between Southport and Manchester. • Operate special Sunday services on the Preston to Ormskirk line. 	<p>CRDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve patronage and revenue • Support economic regeneration <p>TOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1.1: Work with partners to develop an improved timetable for the line • 2.1.2: to work with partners to develop the case for a Sunday service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting in June with ARN to discuss timetable developments for both lines. 	

<p>AP4 Station developments Champion BH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with ARN to develop a station improvement plan for West Lancashire. • To support station partnerships and help them develop projects based on their community and station. • To work with local communities and rail user groups to form new Station Partnerships. • To look at the potential for social enterprise at stations. 	<p>CRDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve patronage and revenue • Develop community engagement <p>TOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the CRDO to attend, where practicable, at least one meeting per year of each station partnership. • Work with ARN to develop a 'station action plan' for all stations covered by the Partnership. • Assist station partnerships in bidding into ARNs/ComREGs 'Station Adoption Fund'. • Look for opportunities to initiate a new station partnership at Rufford. • To bid into the Seed Corn and DCRDF to support station developments. • To work with partners to help secure the future of Burscough Bridge Interchange. • Liaise with Northern on the allocation of the 'Station Improvement Fund'. 	
<p>AP5 Marketing and school, college and university engagement Champion BH & RW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a marketing and media plan for the line in partnership with Northern. • To promote West Lancashire and Preston as a destination for residents of the Liverpool City region utilising links with Merseyrail and vice 	<p>CRDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase patronage and revenue & community involvement • Support economic regeneration <p>TOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree an annual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase patronage by 2% in 2016, over and above background growth to be measured by data to be provided by Northern. • Promote the new line guides in partnership with Sefton MBC and West Lancs BC & Merseytravel • To review & refresh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both line guides reprinted and distributed. • West End Primary School was the first West Lancashire primary school taken to Preston station in partnership with Northern and Virgin

	<p>versa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve cycling and walking facilities at Preston & Ormskirk stations including routes to stations To agree an annual monitoring programme. To develop the use of websites and social media to promote the work of the partnerships. Develop links with Virgin Trains in particular to use their 'community room' at Preston station as a base for educational work. Engage with local primary schools. 	<p>marketing plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop links with tourism initiatives 2.3.5: develop links with schools and colleges. 	<p>www.communityraillancashire.co.uk in conjunction with the other Lancashire CRP's ongoing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote walking and cycling from the line. Ongoing throughout 2016. Contribute to the Lancashire CRP newsletter 'Reading Between the Lines' Update branded poster panels. Carry out an annual passenger survey with support from OPSTA. Develop links with local schools, colleges and universities. Develop links with Virgin Trains and the 'big railway'. 	<p>Trains.</p>
<p>AP6 Partnership Development Champion BH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop funding bids especially to the DLCRDF and ARN 'seed corn fund'. To continue to develop new ways to engage with stakeholders Build links with Maghull Town Council to promote the Ormskirk to Preston line in the Maghull area. To develop links with Mersey Tourist Board to ensure that opportunities are not missed 	<p>CRDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To engage with the community <p>TOR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To submit at least 1 DCRDF and /or small grants applications in 2016. To communicate with stakeholders at least three times a year inviting feedback via 'Reading Between the Lines'. Develop links with tourist organisations in Merseyside and Sefton through Merseytravel 	

Appendix 1 – WLCRP Terms of Reference

WEST OF LANCASHIRE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Aims

- 1.1 To develop the Preston to Ormskirk line as a showpiece regional railway with a high level of community involvement, attractive station facilities, good co-ordination with other forms of transport and a service that meets the needs of local people and visitors and in so doing provides value for money for passengers and taxpayers as well as benefitting the environment (People, Planet, Profit).
- 1.2 To develop the line as a national demonstration project focussing on improving the train service and encouraging sustainable development along the rail corridor.
- 1.3 To work with stakeholders to achieve the objectives set out in the Community Rail Development Strategy and the line Route Prospectus.
- 1.4 To develop links with other Community Rail Partnerships especially the East Lancashire and South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnerships and share best practice with them.

2. Objectives

2.1 Improved Rail Services and Facilities

- 2.1.1 To work with partners to develop an improved timetable for the line.
- 2.1.2 To work with partners to develop the case for a year round Sunday service.

- 2.1.3 To improve journey times.
- 2.1.4 To improve bus and rail connections at the key interchange locations of Ormskirk and Preston.
- 2.1.5 To work with partners to look at how bus links to the line can be improved.
- 2.1.6 To provide improved quality rolling stock.
- 2.1.7 To develop a programme of station improvements including information provision and park and ride facilities where these are justifiable and offer value for money.
- 2.1.8 Develop stations as gateways to the local community.
- 2.1.9 Improve walking routes between stations and their hinterland.

2.2 Sustainable Development

- 2.2.1 To develop links with business, regeneration and tourism agencies in the corridor to ensure that the railway is at the heart of sustainable development strategies. This may include:
 - Links with and participation in environmental projects.
 - Encouraging community enterprise and innovation along the line.
 - Develop links with tourism initiatives.
- 2.2.1 To develop links with all levels of government to ensure that strategy and other documents reflect the requirements of the line.

2.3 Community Involvement

- 2.3.1 To encourage community participation, particularly at stations.
- 2.3.2 To support and encourage the work of the line user groups.
- 2.3.3 To establish 'station friends' groups wherever possible.
- 2.3.4 To encourage community art initiatives at stations and on the train.

2.3.5 To develop links with local schools and colleges.

2.3.6 To encourage local railway staff involvement in the CRP.

2.3.7 To involve local and regional organisations in informing the work of the partnership through the development of a stakeholder reference group.

2.4 Landscape and Heritage

2.4.1 To develop the railway as a means of accessing the natural landscape, country parks and other recreational facilities.

2.4.2 To maintain and improve the railway heritage on the line and strengthen links with other heritage attractions and the natural landscape.

2.4.3 To ensure that the railway plays its part in mitigating the environmental impact of transport and travel.

2.5 Line Identity

2.5.1 Develop a strong identity (name, logo etc) either for the Preston to Ormskirk line, West Lancashire line, that is featured on publicity, at stations and on trains.

2.7 Communication

2.7.1 To develop a web site jointly with the other Lancashire CRP's.

3. Partnership Area

3.1 The partnership will cover the Preston to Ormskirk line. The communities of Preston, Croston, Rufford, Burscough and Ormskirk will form the core area. However, the Partnership recognises that the catchment area of the railway extends beyond these communities in particular towards the Liverpool City Region

3.2 The West Lancashire Community Rail Partnership will work closely with the East Lancashire and South Fylde Line Community Rail Partnerships and with any other CRPs that may be formed from time to time.

4. Management of the Community Rail Partnership

4.1 Management Group

4.1.1 This group will be composed of the following people to be nominated by the named body:

- 1 representative from Lancashire County Council
- 1 representatives from Merseytravel
- 1 representative from West Lancashire Borough Council
- 1 representative from Chorley Borough Council
- 1 representative from Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
- 2 representatives from Northern (of whom one should be the RCSM (Regional Communities and Sustainability Manager)
- 1 representative from Network Rail
- 1 representative from Merseyrail
- 1 representative from Transport for Greater Manchester
- 1 representative from OPSTA (Ormskirk Preston Southport Travellers' Association)
- Other representatives may be invited to join the group

4.1.2 The Community Rail Development Officer will form an ex officio member of the group.

4.1.3 A representative from ACoRP may attend as an ex officio member of the group.

4.1.4 Remit

- To set and guide the strategic framework for the development of the Preston to Ormskirk railway line.
- To set the agenda for the line's development in terms of building business cases for rail service developments and enhancements; interchange developments; station developments and infrastructure improvements in partnership with the railway industry.
- To develop a 5 to 10 year strategy for the line and agree an annual Action Plan.
- To take on and manage appropriate staff to undertake the agreed Action Plan targets.
- To monitor and review the Action Plan during the year.
- To agree an annual Marketing Plan.

- Handle all media relations relevant to the line.
- To meet at least every 2 months or more frequently if the volume of business requires. A meeting of the Management Group will be quorate if there are 4 members of the Group present.
- The Management Group will appoint a Chairman, Vice - Chairman and Secretary and other officers as required. All officers to be appointed on an annual basis with an AGM to be held in April each year.
- The Management Group may establish sub groups to bring forward projects for implementation. Any sub groups that are established will be issue focused and will use the specialist knowledge of the individuals within the particular sub group. Sub groups will work within the terms of reference of the West Lancashire Community Rail Partnership.

5. Funding

- 5.1 Members of the West Lancashire Community Rail Partnership will identify on an annual basis the funding required to deliver the Action Plan.

Appendix 2 Route Prospectus issued by the DfT

Community Rail Route Prospectus for the railway line between Preston and Ormskirk

The line between Preston and Ormskirk is one of the routes listed in the Department for Transport Community Rail Development Strategy as being suitable for designation as a community rail line along with the local passenger service on this line. This document sets out ideas for development of the service subsequent to the proposed designation during 2011.

Unlike earlier designations, it is intended to actively change the route capacity to reduce the costs of operation in order to improve the service and the long term viability of the route.

The key measures of success will be:

- Reduction in operating costs associated with the simplification of track and signalling systems; and
- Increase in passengers - partly arising from the increased services on the line

The prospectus has been discussed and agreed with the West Lancashire CRP (which presently consists of Lancashire County Council, West Lancashire Borough Council, Sefton MBC, Wigan MBC, Merseytravel, Transport for Greater Manchester, Network Rail, Northern Rail and OPSTA).

Designation of the line is intended to bring focus to the development of the line and in particular the implementation of the Lancashire and Cumbria Route Utilisation Strategy.

Key actions of the partners:

- Examine the feasibility of reducing the operating costs of the line through the simplification of the track and signalling systems and to concurrently to look at the scope to improve the line speed to enable a more regular timetable pattern to be introduced.
- To take steps to secure the funding required enabling the above track, signalling and service changes to take place.

- To take steps to introduce a Sunday service.¹
- To work with local councils and Merseytravel to develop integrated transport initiatives to improve accessibility to the area.
- To explore the opportunities of alternative fare structures to ensure they are appropriate to the local market.
- To explore innovative ticketing and marketing schemes with the aim of making it easier to buy tickets away from staffed stations, effective collection of revenue and higher service awareness and take-up by the local population.
- To evaluate the delivery of cost effective station improvements.
- To encourage and support community involvement at stations.
- To explore the opportunities to develop Gateway Stations at Ormskirk and Rufford
- To develop a Marketing Plan for the line.

It is intended to build on the work already undertaken on the route by the West Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, Northern Rail and other local stakeholders in developing the line.

This Prospectus does not prejudice longer term proposals for the Burscough Curves.

Designation is intended to be a permanent arrangement, but it can be reviewed periodically to assess whether the designation is still appropriate.

¹ The Sunday service is very difficult to justify when the signal box needs to be staffed at Rufford.