



S E L R A P

## **Re-opening of the Skipton to Colne Railway Executive Summary**

### **SELRAP**

SELRAP is the Skipton East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership. It was established with the objective of campaigning for the reinstatement of the railway between Skipton and Colne as a part of the national network to form a trans-Pennine route linking North and West Yorkshire with the towns of Pennine Lancashire.

A main objective of the Partnership is to repeat the success of the 1994 re-opening of the Clitheroe to Blackburn line which carried around 300,000 passengers in the tenth year of operation.

### **Vision**

Restoration of the missing link between Skipton and Colne will provide a strategic route connecting the towns of Central and Pennine Lancashire with the Leeds City Region. It avoids congested lines in and around Manchester and would relieve pressure on the busy Huddersfield and Calder Valley trans-Pennine routes.

### **Opening up opportunities**

The impact of re-opening the Skipton to Colne railway would be reinforced if considered in combination with investment in increasing line capacity between Blackburn and Bolton or reinstating Todmorden West Curve. It could become the catalyst that leads to the restoration of links from Colne, Nelson, Burnley and Accrington to Bolton and Manchester. In the longer term it could also provide a route linking Central Lancashire and the West Coast Main Line (WCML) with the East Coast Main Line (ECML) and West and East Coast ports.

In July 2007 the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) agreed to submit a bid to the Government's Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) for transport funding and the introduction of a road congestion charging system. If the bid is successful, the result will be increased numbers of commuters using rail over a wide area. Any future decision to extend free travel for pensioners to rail would also result in increased use of rail. In both cases, the case for restoring the Skipton to Colne rail link would be strengthened.

### **Regional strategy**

A key component of the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for North West England is a vision for a Central Lancashire City Region centred on Blackpool, Preston, Blackburn and Burnley. The expectation is that economic growth in the larger towns will be a catalyst for regeneration and growth in smaller towns such as Nelson and Colne.

Improvement of the city region's transport links is seen as one of the main elements of the overall regional strategy. Emphasis is placed on improving the accessibility of key employment locations

and Preston is identified as the 'gateway' to and strategic public transport interchange for the city region.

The priorities for investment in transport identified in the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) include better rail links between the Leeds and Central Lancashire City Regions and improved rail links between East Lancashire, Bolton and Manchester.

The Northern Way, a collaboration between the three northern Regional Development Agencies, is advocating the idea of a 'Northern Crossrail' to deliver stronger transport links between the northern city regions through investment in trans-Pennine rail links to support economic growth in northern towns and cities. It has proposed that investment in rail be focused on resolving capacity constraints on the trans-Pennine routes, around Manchester and on routes to the main northern ports.

Reinstatement of the Skipton to Colne railway would improve connectivity in a number of ways:

- Providing a missing link between the Central Lancashire and Leeds City Regions.
- Complementing investment in improving links to Manchester from Pennine Lancashire.
- Providing access to the 'gateway' interchange at Preston Station.
- Increasing overall trans-Pennine rail capacity.
- Improving journey times between Pennine Lancashire and the Leeds City Region.

## **How much will it cost?**

Estimates of the cost of constructing and operating a railway between Skipton and Colne were originally made by consultants in 2003 and have been updated in 2007. Options have been considered at the level of detail required for Network Rail GRIP (Guide to Railway Investment Projects) Stage 1 which requires a level of costing confidence of  $\pm 40\%$ .

### **Implementation costs**

The trackbed is largely intact and could be restored at a relatively low cost. Construction cost estimates have been provided for two options (at 2007 prices):

- A single track option with one intermediate passing loop, intermediate stations at Earby and Foulridge, and no improvement to the section of line between Colne and Gannow Junction, Burnley (the junction with the Halifax to Blackburn line) - £42.6 million.
- An option involving the provision of a double track railway between Skipton and Gannow Junction, with new stations serving Earby and Foulridge, and second platforms at all the stations on the Colne branch east of Gannow Junction - £80.7 million.

### **Annual costs**

Additional annual costs have been estimated for the following rail passenger service options – all operated by diesel multiple units and serving re-opened stations at Earby and Foulridge:

- Option 1: An hourly Skipton to Colne shuttle service - £0.86 million.
- Option 2: An hourly Skipton to Blackpool South service based on an extension of the existing service from Colne - £0.83 million.
- Option 3: An hourly Skipton to Blackburn service:
  - operated by only two additional trains resulting in a westbound 'clockface' hourly interval in combination with the existing Colne – Blackpool South service on the section of line between Colne and Blackburn. Eastbound, the services do not co-

- o ordinate as well with intervals between trains alternating between 20 and 40 minutes - £2.41 million.
- o timed to integrate with the existing Colne to Blackpool South service by deploying three additional trains to achieve a combined half-hourly service in both directions - £3.36 million.
- Option 4: An hourly Skipton to Manchester Victoria service in addition to existing services - £6.25 million.

## Demand and revenue

Demand and revenue forecasts are based on the use of travel data available from a variety of sources and a series of assumptions about diversion rates, generation rates and growth rates. Different scenarios have been developed based on these assumptions.

A Positive Policy scenario based on 4% growth per annum gives a forecast of 565,000 additional rail passengers each year and additional annual revenue of £1.51 million in the base year (2014).

A Central scenario based on 3% growth per annum gives a 2014 forecast of 341,000 additional rail passengers each year and additional annual revenue of £914,000. This compares well with the annual figure of 300,000 passengers using the Clitheroe to Blackburn service after ten years of operation.

By 2024 demand is forecast to rise to 759,000 for the Positive Policy scenario and 459,000 for the Central scenario; with annual revenue figures of £2.04 million and £1.23 million respectively.

## Economic appraisal

An appraisal of the following options has been undertaken in compliance with Government guidance:

- Option 1 - hourly Skipton to Colne shuttle.
- Option 2 - hourly extension of Blackpool South service from Colne to Skipton.
- Option 3a - hourly Skipton to Blackburn operated by two additional trains.
- Option 3b - hourly Skipton to Blackburn operated by three additional trains.
- Option 4 - hourly Skipton to Manchester Victoria superimposed on existing services.

In accordance with DfT guidance an increase of 66% (optimism bias) has had to be applied to capital costs and a premium of 41% has had to be added to annual operating costs. These premiums are usually managed down as schemes become better defined. The significance is that a positive benefit cost ratio can be achieved even with these premiums in place.

The results of a cost benefit analysis are shown in the form of benefit cost ratios (BCR) for each of the operating options with single and double track.

### Single Track Benefit Cost Ratios

Demand Forecast	Operating Option				
	1 Skipton Colne	2 Skipton Blackpool South	3a Skipton Blackburn	3b Skipton Blackburn (integrated with Skipton Colne)	4 Skipton Manchester Victoria
<b>Positive Policy</b>	2.41	2.43	1.49	1.20	0.76
<b>Central</b>	1.28	1.30	0.79	0.64	0.41

## Double Track Benefit Cost Ratios

Demand Forecast	Operating Option				
	1 Skipton Colne	2 Skipton Blackpool South	3a Skipton Blackburn	3b Skipton Blackburn (integrated with Skipton Colne)	4 Skipton Manchester Victoria
<b>Positive Policy</b>	1.52	1.53	1.09	0.93	0.64
<b>Central</b>	0.81	0.81	0.58	0.50	0.34

The appraisal shows that a positive benefit cost ratio can be achieved for the single track option under most growth and cost scenarios. The double track railway would require the higher demand forecasts to be achieved in order to achieve a positive result.

Although the single track options show a better financial performance than the double track alternatives, the limited capacity provided will limit opportunities to exploit the full potential of the line in the years after re-opening. Although a double track solution is less attractive financially and economically at re-opening, it becomes more attractive if account is taken of the additional costs of upgrading a working railway to double track at a later date.

Improvements to public transport will also have positive effects in reducing accidents through encouraging a shift away from car usage to safer public transport modes. Using standard accident rates it is predicted that re-opening of the railway would lead to a reduction in the number of accidents in the range 129 to 193 and an accident cost saving of between £6.2 million and £10.2 million.

## Wider economic benefits

Restoration of the Skipton to Colne rail link would improve connectivity for the towns of the East Lancashire City Region and Pennine Lancashire. It can be argued that the consequent improvement in accessibility would lead to an improvement in the economic performance of the City Region.

Investment in the rail link will result in a number of quantifiable impacts:

- Direct employment arising from railway construction.
- Permanent employment from operation of the railway.
- Indirect employment created in businesses supplying products, materials and services.
- New businesses attracted to the area because of improved rail links.
- Induced employment arising from increased spend in the local area.
- Net additional spend by increased numbers of visitors to the area.

The impact of the railway on Gross Value Added is estimated to range from £4 million and 97 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs created for Option 1 to £7million and 179 FTE jobs created for Option 4. Over a 60 year appraisal period, initial construction and ongoing operational economic benefits total between £48million and £138million.

The railway would improve access for leisure trips to the Yorkshire Dales National Park and visitor destinations across Lancashire. The net annual additional visitor spend generated is estimated to be in the range £446,000 to £670,000 giving an impact of between £38 million and £57 million over a 60 year appraisal period.

## Inclusion

The 2003 Social Exclusion Unit report *Making the Connections* highlighted three key issues - people may not be able to access services as a result of social exclusion; problems with transport provision and the location of services can reinforce social exclusion; and socially excluded areas and individuals suffer disproportionately from road traffic impacts (e.g. higher accident rates, above average exposure to road traffic emissions, greater community severance).

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) give an indication of the levels of deprivation experienced in all wards in the country. Of the 279 wards along the line of the railway between Shipley, Skipton and Blackburn, 148 are in the most deprived quartile at the national level. Some of these wards rank highly in terms of deprivation – 18 are in the 2.5% most deprived nationally including six in the 500 most deprived wards.

Restoration of the rail link between Skipton and Colne will improve access to healthcare and higher and further education. In particular, it will improve access to specialist units in hospitals and to specialised courses offered by only some universities or colleges.

## Environmental impact

Reopening of the Skipton to Colne railway would result in a net reduction in emission of greenhouse gases as a result of the transfer of travel demand from road to rail. The net reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the monetary value that can be attached have been determined for the Positive Policy and Central demand forecasts.

	Positive policy demand forecast	Central demand forecast
Net CO <sub>2</sub> saved (tonnes)	581	331
C saved (tonnes)	159	90
Total Value (to 2066)	£1,623,000	£869,000

## National, regional and local support

Lobbying by SELRAP has ensured that the alignment for a reinstated railway between Skipton and Colne has been safeguarded in development plans. The North Yorkshire and Lancashire Local Transport Plans for the period 2006 to 2011 contain statements of support in principle for the restoration of a rail link between Skipton and Colne.

There is strong parliamentary support for re-opening of the railway from more than 25% of UK MEPs, 70 MPs, 20 Peers and two members of the Cabinet. Local support comes from two unitary authorities (Blackpool & Bradford), 24 County Councillors and three Borough, four Town and 30 Parish Councils.

Support has been expressed by 17 businesses including Oswaldtwistle Mills, Boundary Mill Stores, Homeloan Management and two football clubs. All three Rail Unions, the TUC, 25 non government organisations and local and national faith leaders including the Archbishop of York and eight Anglican and Catholic bishops. The campaign group SELRAP now has more than 300 members.

## Key messages

- Re-opening of the railway between Skipton and Colne has strategic and regional value – it will connect the Leeds and Central Lancashire City Regions.

- The trackbed is safeguarded and it is feasible to construct a single or double track railway at a cost of between £43 million and £81 Million.
- In a Central Scenario based on assumptions reflecting current policy, annual demand is forecast to be 341,000 at 2014 giving additional annual revenue of £915,000.
- In a Positive Policy Scenario assuming policy decisions favourable to rail, annual demand is forecast to be 565,000 at 2014 giving additional annual revenue of £1.51 million.
- By 2024 demand is forecast to have grown to 459,000 for the Central Scenario and 759,000 for the Positive Policy Scenario giving additional annual revenues of £1.23 million and £2.04 million.
- The economic appraisal demonstrates that a number of the options will provide value for money.
- Restoration of the rail link between Skipton and Colne will reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, reduce the number of accidents and deliver environmental and safety benefits of between £7 million and £12 million.
- Re-opening the railway will deliver improved accessibility, benefiting areas with high levels of deprivation.
- Benefits gained through additional employment and visitor spend are estimated to have a value in the range £86 million to £195 million over an appraisal period of 60 years.
- The scheme enjoys strong local, regional and national support.

## **Acknowledgements**

SELRAP is grateful to the following organisations and individuals for their generous contributions towards the cost of this study:

- North West Rail Campaign
- Craven District Council
- Pendle Borough Council
- Colne Connected
- Railfuture
- Members and supporters of SELRAP who made individual donations towards the study