

At a Glance

# The campaign to reopen the Skipton-Colne railway line 2018

**Secretary of State for  
Transport commits  
to full feasibility  
study**

**Line on cue to  
reopen 2022**

CONNECTING  
COMMUNITIES  
ACROSS  
THE NORTH



## At a Glance 2018

The campaign for the reopening of the former rail line linking Skipton, North Yorkshire, with Colne, Lancashire:

Where it's at

Where it's headed

Arrival time at its destination



### FRONT COVER

**Saturday 3rd February 2018; Colne station.**

**A date with destiny: 48 years [and a couple of days] after the last train left the town and headed for Yorkshire.**

**Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State for Transport is pictured outlining a Government funded study that, he anticipated, will pave the way for reopening the line to Skipton.**

### WHERE THE CAMPAIGN IS AT

"Best ever" sums up SELRAP's situation right now. Since the last edition of *At a Glance* was published, there have been a number of key developments in progressing proposals to reopen the Skipton to Colne rail line. With each and every one of them headed in the right direction. And on cue for arrival at its destination early in the next decade.

Indeed, readers will have noticed already: there's so much to tell, *At a Glance* has had to get bigger!

### SUPPORT FOR SELRAP'S PROPOSALS .....

..... is stronger than ever, and growing:

There's a quote from someone the writer can never recall the name of. Famous, he supposes. Quite what for, again, he cannot remember! What he can remember, however, is the quote:

**"Good ideas don't go away!"**

Proposals to see the Skipton to Colne rail line reopened have been gathering momentum for the best part of an awful long while. And in all of those years the notion of the new East - West route via Skipton and Colne for passengers and freight has not gone away. It figures, then, that:

### SELRAP's proposals *must be a good idea!*

This conjecture also explains why so many sorts: politicians at all levels, big businesses, passenger and freight train operators et al, have thrown their weight behind those proposals. And, in doing so, have taken taken the notion of creating the new route via Skipton and Colne to the highest level of Government. The rationale for this extraordinary level of interest being the fact that reopening the line and upgrading the Colne branch will, at a stroke, create .....

#### ..... THE NORTHERN LINK:

- **A fast & modern new commuter route from East Lancashire to Leeds and, additionally,**
- **An inter-regional and strategic East-West route for both passengers and freight.**

The writer closed the last edition of *At a Glance* with the following statement:

**"A new trans-Pennine rail route via Skipton and Colne: closer than you believed possible!**

**So watch this space!**

**Better still, help us fill it ....."**

### MEANWHILE .....

..... members of SELRAP's Executive Committee routinely liaise with a raft of those in a position to apply pressure where it is most needed ..... at all levels of business, industry and the political scene.

### SIGNIFICANTLY .....

..... within *At a Glance* 2018 there are contributions and/or quotes from no less than eleven high profile individuals:

- **Two MPs and a Member of The House of Lords**
- **The Skipton Building Society**
- **Network Rail**
- **Transport for The North**
- **Arriva Northern Train Operating Company**
- **Peel Ports**
- **Drax Power and**
- **Quotes from the Secretary of State for Transport and the Prime Minister**

The reader would be right to ask just why those contributors chose to do so. Fact is that SELRAP's proposals have hit the high notes.

### THE SUPPORT OF KEY PLAYERS .....

..... is not accidental. It is the result of ceaseless and ongoing lobbying by SELRAP. A group that, together with its membership of over 500, is widely recognised amongst the great and good as a dedicated team promoting in a professional fashion a proposal that study after study confirms will have a "transformational effect" on The North.

### FROM THE CHAIR

**This time last year, in my chair's remarks for the 2017 edition of *At a Glance*, I wrote that I was taking over the reins as chairman at a very exciting time: I was not wrong! I am therefore delighted to say that the past 12 months have been a most productive period for SELRAP's campaign.**

**In the remarkably short time since that last publication, SELRAP has successfully built on the rock-solid foundations that we had so painstakingly laid down during the past two decades of solely voluntary work. During this last year, we have not only passed a number of key project milestones; we have also achieved a whole series of remarkable successes.**

**Just by seeing who else is contributing to this edition, you will realise that we have massively increased the amount of support from, and the involvement of many professionals. Their own words tell a remarkable tale of just how far, by gaining the credibility and trust of others, this project has moved forward. I can assure you that many more organisations are now seeking to see the Skipton to Colne rail line reopened: ideally sooner rather than later.**

**To cap an already good year, on the 3rd February 2018 came the very surprising ..... but very warmly welcomed ..... visit by the Secretary of State to Colne station. Standing in front of us all on Colne station, Chris Grayling made the game-changing announcement that not only would the government be funding the next feasibility study; the Minister also confirmed that that the leadership of this project would soon pass over to his own department. That Chris Grayling said what he said on that day is a tribute to the hard work that all of our local MPs, on both sides of the political divide (by which I mean MP's in both Lancashire and Yorkshire!), have achieved by working their own magic touches inside the hidden corridors of power.**

**Therefore this edition of *At a Glance* is being published at a timely moment: the moment when we as SELRAP are ..... after seventeen years of hard work ..... about to hand over the reins of this project to two professional organisations. We now obviously wait, with great interest, to see just how quickly both the Department for Transport and Transport for the North can take this project forward into the next exciting stage.**

**However this campaign is far from over: I know the executive committee will not rest until new trains start running along the Northern Link via the Skipton and Colne missing link. That is a prospect which could come rather soon .....**

**Peter Bryson, May 2018**

## SO WHAT'S SELRAP BEEN UP TO?

Beyond the routine meetings with politicians, councillors, representatives of big business and the rail industry et al, the most significant development has been the formation of the [Skipton to Colne] Project Development Team.

Chaired by SELRAP and hosted by Arup, organisations attending these meetings routinely include senior representatives from Transport for the North, Network Rail, Arriva Northern [train operating company], Peel Ports, Drax Power, Amey Ventures, GB Railfreight and the Skipton Building Society.



Delegates attending a recent meeting of the Project Development Team also included senior representatives from the Department for Transport and the Rail Freight Group (RFG).

The Project Development Team is tasked with exploring the options available for progressing the reinstatement of the Skipton to Colne rail line as part of a new Northern Link: an East-West route for passengers and freight. Over the past 12 months, the Project Development Team has met on a bi-monthly basis. The remit for the group includes:

- **Defining the scope of the proposals centred on the Skipton to Colne line**
- **The practicalities involved in re-building the line**
- **Passenger service options**
- **Use of the [wider] route for freight traffic**
- **Engagement with appropriate Authorities**

Representatives routinely leave meetings with "to do" lists, and are asked to report on their findings the next time the team convenes. These have included draft options for passenger service provision on the new route, costings for gauge clearance upgrades to adjacent lines to the East & West of Skipton and Colne. And the nature, pattern and anticipated volume of freight traffic that might use the new route ..... together with its potential impact on passenger services. The RFG have prepared a comprehensive report showing the potential for and practicalities of reopening the Northern Link as a freight route between Liverpool and Hull. This will be fed into the DfT study.

The reader should note that members of the Project Development Team are all senior professionals with highly responsible roles within the organisations they represent.

Meanwhile ..... timeframes for completion of all too many other UK-wide rail enhancement proposals disappear into the distance ..... with delivery by 2030, 2043, 2050, and the rest, being common parlance amongst the planning fraternity.

**Conversely, SELRAP's proposals are:**

- **Widely supported**
- **Low cost, low risk**
- **Entirely self-contained**

All of this, in the firm belief that, with all our ducks in a row, trains could be back on the Skipton to Colne line by 2022.

## SKIPTON TO COLNE & NETWORK RAIL

Ten years ago Network Rail took a peek into their crystal ball. And stated within their [then recently-published] Lancashire and Cumbria Route Utilisation Strategy that: "Should the promoters of the scheme to reopen the route from Skipton – Colne be successful in securing funding, then it is likely that this line will have been reopened."

What, then, is the current view within the nation's rail infrastructure provider on the increasing likelihood that the Skipton-Colne rail line looks set to reopen sooner rather than later ..... bringing with it the prospect of a brand new East - West Northern Link for passengers and freight?

This, then ..... from Network Rail. Albeit necessarily [at this stage] non-specific:

**"In terms of our view on it (Skipton to Colne) we support any ambition to invest in the railway to benefit passengers, local communities and the economy and we eagerly await the results of the feasibility study."**

**Paul McMahon, Managing Director, Freight and National Passenger Operators; Network Rail.**

## THE FACT THAT .....

..... Network Rail "*eagerly awaits the results of the feasibility study*" is encouragement, indeed.

SELRAP is in ongoing dialogue with senior Network Rail representatives. And looks forward to further.

## BIG BUSINESS SUPPORT, TOO

The clamour for the reopening of the Skipton to Colne rail line as part of a new East-West route for passengers and freight extends into the world of big business, too.

**David Cutter, Group Chief Executive for the Skipton Building Society, writes:**

"We are seeing increasing momentum on this campaign – something that is the culmination of a significant amount of time, effort and collaboration from the volunteers at SELRAP, and their supporters, to get to where they are now. The visit by Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, and the commitment to a feasibility study, is yet another breakthrough for the campaign. It is an encouraging sign of intent from the Government for improved rail transport in the area."



David Cutter, Group Chief Executive (right); Skipton Building Society interviewed by BBC Look North reporter Tom Ingall. With 1,650 members of staff, The "Skipton" is the town's biggest employer.

"Speaking on behalf of one of the biggest employers in the area, the reopening of twelve miles of track between Skipton and Colne will support the opening up of jobs, housing, and recreational opportunities for scores of local people. It is important that we stay focussed, and hold TFN accountable, as there's still a long way to go, but without a doubt everyone supportive of this campaign is encouraged by the progress made over the past few months."

**ON PASSENGER SERVICES**

The Project Development Team referred to earlier has been involved in discussion on potential service patterns for a reopened Skipton to Colne line.

High Priority Ticket	
From: EAST LANCASHIRE	HIGH PASSENGER NUMBERS
To: LEEDS CITY CENTRE	NEW STRATEGIC EAST-WEST RAIL FREIGHT ROUTE
Route: DIRECT VIA SKIPTON & COLNE	IMPROVED NETWORK RESILIENCE
Journey time: Burnley and Pendle to Leeds: LESS THAN ONE HOUR	INVESTMENT REQUIRED=£100 MILLION NEW SERVICE STARTS=2022

**SELRAP** Regeneration & Economic Growth

"Arriva Northern" ..... who provide passenger services throughout the north of England ..... have been entirely supportive of proposals to re-open the Skipton to Colne rail line from moment one.

With their existing stations sited close to densely packed housing, the East Lancashire conurbations that the new route via Skipton and Colne will serve [as per ribbon map below] are archetypal "heavy rail territory."

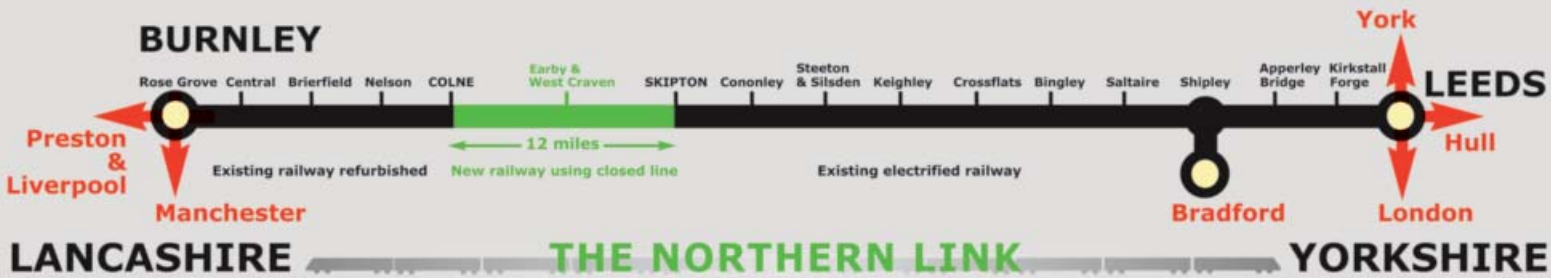
**WAIT AND SEE .....**



Inside the class 195. Photo: CAF

..... is the best the writer can come up with re the new trains' eventual use on "our" line. 'Cos it has to be said that there's a whole lot of study work to be carried out before fundamental decisions concerning a final package for the new 12 mile Skipton to Colne line can be made. Inclusive of options re the use of diesel, electric or bi-mode trains. Which would be dependent on whether the new route is electrified, of course. That's a decision for the future .....

For the record, SELRAP's contention is that the minimum requirement should be passive provision for electrification of both the greenfield site of the Skipton to Colne section and upgrade of the Colne branch.



Think about it: the suppressed demand for rail travel for some of the UK's most economically deprived communities that currently have no alternative but the car. The spoof ticket and ribbon map above are pointers to SELRAP's proposals ..... the current thinking being that of extending some of the current Leeds - Skipton commuter services [via Colne] to a turnaround at Burnley Rose Grove. Which would be upgraded to an interchange station for services beyond.

This would place Burnley and Pendle within an hour's commuting time of Leeds. With the self-contained new service impacting minimally on existing paths.

But planning service patterns for a route that does not currently exist is fraught with difficulty. Mindful of the fact that the knock on effect to pathing for and synchronisation with other services of any timetable change is not insubstantial, the more so.

**THERE'S A LOT MORE GOING ON .....**

..... at Train Operator, "Northern": improved services, upgraded stations, smart ticketing et al. And now the news we've all been waiting for:



Northern's brand new Class 195. So new, this one had to be photographed in the factory. Photo: CAF

New trains will soon replace the mightily unpopular, unreliable and slow Pacer trains. Diesel and electric versions, as appropriate, will be seen on selected services across The North as early as next year.

**Proposals to reopen the Skipton to Colne line by 2022 tick all the boxes within the Government's new "Strategic Vision for Rail" document: Ed.**

**Barry Graham, Senior Rail Advisor for "Arriva Northern" writes:**

"We will continue to support the development of the project and to work with the SELRAP team, DfT, TfN and other industry parties by participating in the preparation of the feasibility study. The Secretary of State's announcement that the Government will fund the feasibility study is particularly noteworthy and we look forward to continuing our involvement in this project to help deliver the outputs that the Secretary of State has identified."

**The fact that "Northern" will work with the team to prepare the feasibility study is encouragement, indeed: Ed.**

**"NOT SO LONG AGO .....**

..... managed shrinkage of the nation's rail network and its services was the mantra for politicians and planners alike. The flawed belief [then] being that road transport could handle the future need[s] for goods and personnel to be some place else.

We know differently now. With road transport a victim of its own success, and recognised as an increasingly unreliable means of getting anything or anyone anywhere on time.

If ever there was a need for an alternative means of carting people and goods around that will heave us out of our cars and trucks, it's now. The result being that the rail industry is now taking a 180 degree shift in its direction of travel.

**THIS, THEN, FROM THE MINISTER .....**  
 ..... with a "commitment to explore opportunities to restore capacity lost under the Beeching and British Rail cuts of the 1960s and 1970s, where this unlocks housing and growth, eases crowded routes, meets future demand and offers good value for money."  
 Letter to Ed.

But here's the rub. For, whilst it's a fact that today's political leaders and planners ..... the rail industry, train operators et al ..... finally accept that, actually, we need more railways, not less ..... few appear to have cottoned on to fact that we need them **NOW**.

## ON RAIL FREIGHT ACROSS THE PENNINES

**Gary Hodgson, Strategic Projects Director, Peel Ports: the UK's second largest port group has this to say:**

"Making best use of our rail freight capacity and expertise is a strategic priority for Peel Ports in 2018. We see it as a critical logistics enabler, allowing our cargo-owning customers to transport goods to and from their markets with reduced costs, road congestion and carbon emissions.

Rail was built into the design of our flagship facility, the Liverpool 2 Deep-Water container terminal, which opened in 2016, to provide shippers with a seamless link between inland distribution and the sea, whether coastal feeder services or deep-sea connections across the globe."



**Photograph: Peel Ports**

"It's all part of our green highway strategy that is creating a truly multi-modal logistics hub right in the heart of the UK, improving supply chain efficiency and reliability for our economy. For UK PLC to take full advantage of these investments we need Government intervention on critical road and rail upgrades.

At Liverpool, the Port's proximity to the West Coast Main Line provides efficient access and journey times to markets in Scotland, the Midlands and the South East. Available train path capacity to the Port is currently amongst the highest of all major ports in the UK and for intermodal traffic, the port has W10 gauge clearance. However, if congestion is to be reduced on the East-West road networks, gauge clearance across the Pennines is a major issue that must be addressed.

Our Drax biomass service, referred to in the last edition of *At a Glance*, has proven to be an operational success story since its introduction. Nonetheless, the extended journey times graphically demonstrate the pressing requirement for greater investment in trans-Pennine rail freight upgrades. The timely realisation of proposals such as the SELRAP campaign would be a catalyst for wider route upgrades to provide the much needed capability and capacity boost to help grow trans-Pennine container rail freight. So the recent announcement from Chris Grayling on the Government's commitment to funding the next stages of the route study is really positive news

In 2017, we announced our intention to launch a new rail container service for customers using the Port of Liverpool. The new service will complement Liverpool's wider logistics offering, such as multi-user warehousing, offering cargo owners a single service provider from ship to warehouse and complete quality control over the journey.

At a strategic level, such an integrated approach provides much stronger opportunities for developing terminals and transport solutions that enable more environmentally responsible and cost-efficient supply chains. That is good news for businesses and everyone in the local community."

**The only available route for East-West container traffic is the M62. Described by the Project Development Team as a "Lorry Park."**

## PROSPERITY COMING DOWN THE TRACK:

**Graham Backhouse, Head of Transport & Logistics, Drax Power: the UK's biggest power generator writes:**

"In February, the Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling confirmed that funds had been made available to Transport for The North to conduct a feasibility study into the re-opening of a rail line between Skipton, in Yorkshire and Colne, in Lancashire. It is a project that Drax has backed for a number of years.

The announcement was welcome news and if the scheme gets approval would be very beneficial, not only for Drax Power Station, but across the whole of northern England. For Drax, it connects our ports at Goole, along the Humber Estuary and the east coast to ports and markets in the west.

Drax's transition from a coal fired power station to running on sustainable biomass meant a complete overhaul of the supply chain. We began deliveries of biomass from a dedicated terminal at Port of Liverpool in October 2015, completing the final stage in a robust supply chain of northern ports which deliver the sustainable wood pellets we use in generating 13% of the UK's renewable electricity."



**Photograph: Drax Power**

"But even today, despite a highly successful and collaborative partnership with Network Rail, the quickest delivery time we can achieve from Liverpool is six hours. For some deliveries the journey time is 10 or 11 hours.

The problem is capacity on the rail network and the route our trains have to take being extended: a journey that if we took the direct route would be no more than 90 miles. This results in our trains travelling at an average speed of 14 mph for the 140 mile journey.

The feasibility study will consider the opening up and gauge-clearing of the route from Liverpool to join the gauge-cleared routes east of Leeds by reopening Skipton to Colne line. If the scheme is delivered it has the potential to reduce the delivery time between Liverpool and Drax from up to 11 hours, to just three hours, and the return journey to less than two hours. This would help Drax to further improve productivity, efficiency and cost effectiveness, giving us the resilience to maintain our performance into the future. It is a prime example of what this newly-opened line could enable across The North. We believe the positive impact could be realised quickly, too.

Drax is helping to bring together other partners to help drive this ambition. Projects such as the Liverpool Humber Optimisation of Freight Transport (LHOFT) project run by Hull University is one such partner. Linking Liverpool through a central Trans-Pennine corridor to the Tyne, Tees and Humber more quickly and efficiently could allow high volume freight trains to move goods between ports and start to shift goods off roads on to rail. This would completely change the dynamic of supply chains in The North."

**For the record, during last winter's harsh weather, Drax provided fully 10% of the UK's total power requirement.**

## SELRAP IN WESTMINSTER

November 1st 2017 was a key date in SELRAP's diary. This being the occasion of an important meeting in Westminster. Hosted jointly by MPs Andrew Stephenson and John Grogan, and held at Portcullis House, significantly it was chaired by SELRAP.



Portcullis House meeting; November 1st 2017. Five MPs attended, together with senior representatives from Lancashire & North Yorkshire Councils, the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities ..... and all members of the Project Development Team referred to on page 3.

Delegates expressed universal and unequivocal support for reopening the Skipton to Colne rail line as part of a new East-West route for passengers and freight.

The rest, as they say, is history: this meeting setting the scene for the game-changing visit to Colne by the Secretary of State for Transport. More on this later!

## TRADITIONAL BOUNDARIES TRASHED

### **A long-term supporter of SELRAP's aims & objectives, Lord Tony Greaves has this to say:**

"I have been quite keen on Transport for the North (TfN) since it was first set up. It recognises that the regional unit for looking at transport in the north of England is – well - the North of England as a whole. It is run by quite high-powered people with a reputation for getting things done - though like others in the slowly developing group of North of England bodies its representative membership is very big city based. It might even be a very early step in genuine devolution to the North of England from Whitehall and Westminster, to match (at least in part) Scotland and Wales.

But I never thought that TfN would be focusing its attention quite so soon on our local patch, so often



Lord Greaves, who lives in Colne, is a member of Pendle Borough Council.

one of the unattended "areas in between" the cities and the main routes. SELRAP, with the support of so many local people and local Councils such as Pendle, has kept alive the vision of being able to travel by train once again from Nelson and Colne to Skipton – and beyond. And the other way of course. For years it was a brilliant local campaign to get back our local service.

But it's much more than this that has now it has caught the attention of North of England visionaries: it's the need for a new modern freight link across the Pennines and between the west and east coasts. If that comes about, and comes our way, the new passenger services will be our local added value from the reinstatement of our missing link.

We should know as soon as the end of this year. This is the big chance we have dreamed about. Let's all do everything we can to grab this chance with every hand we can raise!"

## ALL MPs ON NEW ROUTE SUPPORT SELRAP:

Philip Davies, Shipley; Imran Hussein, Bradford East; Naz Shah, Bradford West; Judith Cummins, Bradford South; John Grogan, Keighley; Julian Smith, Skipton & Ripon; Andrew Stephenson, Pendle; Julie Cooper, Burnley; Graham Jones, Hyndburn.

## ACROSS THE PENNINES .....

### **John Grogan, MP for Keighley writes:**

"The Pennine old mill towns of Lancashire and Yorkshire have many cultural and economic links, but since the 1960s they have not had direct rail links that could provide a real boost to regeneration.

When I was the joint organiser with Pendle MP, Andrew Stephenson, of last year's meeting in Parliament regarding the Skipton - Colne link (the plan was hatched at a fish and chip lunch hosted by SELRAP at the Crown Inn in Colne just a stone's throw from the station!) what surprised me most was the level of big business interest. Not only were Skipton Building Society represented by their boss, eager to widen his employee travel to work catchment area but also in evidence were senior executives from Drax Power Station and the ports of Liverpool and Hull. Freight as well as passenger potential will be one of the big issues examined in the Government's feasibility study examining the case to reopen the line which was subsequently announced.

Given that Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, Andy McDonald, has also backed the project, a strong cross party alliance has been formed. There is a real possibility that we can get this done in the first years of the next decade.

To be honest I never really expected to return to the House of Commons last year as the MP for Keighley following a 13 year spell representing Selby ending in 2010. What I appreciate most second time around is the chance to speak up in Parliament."

"Since last June I have been lucky enough to draw two questions at Prime Minister's Question Time when I have chosen to ask respectively about restoring the Skipton- Colne Link and also the case for Yorkshire Devolution. If I can play a small part in completing these two projects it will have been well worth the effort to get back to the mother of Parliaments."



John Grogan MP is pictured in Parliament asking the Prime Minister if she would support restoration of the Skipton to Colne line.

Mrs May is shown responding:

**Prime Minister:**  
"We are looking very seriously, and have been supportive of this concept in relation to trans-Pennine rail."  
6th December 2017.

## COUNCILS, TOO

Citing its potential for boosting economic growth, employment, housing, regeneration, sustainable tourism et al, Councils throughout the length of the new route via Skipton and Colne are universally supportive of SELRAP's proposals. The most recent to express a willingness to do whatever it takes to progress the scheme as matter of urgency being Bradford City and Hyndburn (Accrington) Councils.

## WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

**"What a difference a day made  
Twenty-four little hours  
Brought the sun and the flowers  
Where there used to be rain"**

So have sung Aretha Franklyn, Amy Winehouse, Rod Stewart and many others. And right now, followers of SELRAP's convoluted journey have something to sing about, too.

Bearing "sun & flowers" ..... as prescribed by the songwriter ..... on Saturday February 3rd at Colne station, the Secretary of State for Transport made a commitment to Government funding for a full feasibility study into the reopening of the Skipton - Colne rail line.

### Andrew Stephenson, MP for Pendle sets the scene:



Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling MP, is pictured [left] on Colne station with Pendle MP, Andrew Stephenson.

"Ever since being elected as Pendle's MP back in 2010, I fully supported SELRAP's campaign and have been honoured to serve as your Patron. I mentioned SELRAP during my maiden speech and have led two debates dedicated to the argument for reopening the line. In November 2017, I co-hosted an event in Parliament with SELRAP, bringing together MPs, businesses and local authorities. Their response was unanimous and positive.

I was therefore delighted to be joined by SELRAP's Peter Bryson and Andy Shackleton on a rainy Saturday morning as the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling MP, visited Colne to announce funding for a feasibility study into reopening the Colne-Skipton line.

The study will look into a variety of options, and be completed later this year. It confirms that after years of hard work from SELRAP, the Colne to Skipton line is firmly on the Government's agenda when it comes to improving transport links across the North.

If the feasibility study finds that the line would be beneficial to the North of England, there is funding available to make it happen. Last year, the Government made an additional £300 million available to help push forward plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail to improve links between northern towns and cities with better rail services.

This is in the wider context of a rebalancing of UK infrastructure spending towards the North. Across the North's rail network, £1.2 billion is being invested. 500 new carriages will create room for 40,000 more passengers. We will see the fruits of this in Pendle before long, when we finally see the back of the old Pacer trains that currently rattle, slowly into Colne. I can't wait.

The rationale for reopening the Colne - Skipton line is also significantly strengthened by HS2, which will add essential capacity to the spine of the rail network bringing many more rail users to Leeds and Manchester. I want them to be able to make that further journey to Pendle, whether for business, or to see our incredible countryside, quickly and conveniently by rail.

We have come a long way. There is real momentum to reopen the Colne to Skipton line. People who once claimed it was a 'non-starter' are now on board. The progress we have made is greatly encouraging and I look forward to building on it so that we can get our line back up and running."

### REMEMBER THE BIT ABOUT .....

..... a new trans-Pennine rail route via Skipton and Colne being closer than you believed possible. And the suggestion that you might "watch this space!" Or, better still, help us fill it ....."

At a stroke, the Secretary of State for Transport made a start on filling that space ....."

**"I would like to thank you for the work you and SELRAP have done to raise the profile of the case for a reopened route between Skipton and Colne."**

Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling: in a letter to the editor

## THAT MINISTERIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Chris Grayling said that a full feasibility study will be carried out by consultants appointed by the DfT/TfN. With the results of their findings due by Autumn 2018.

Beyond that, the timeline for progressing the Skipton to Colne rail reopening project might best be summed up by the Secretary of State for Transport:

**"I am expecting that if the study establishes that there is a case for re-opening the Skipton to Colne line, as with other new enhancement schemes, it will be taken forward for consideration through the new enhancements process for CP6"**

Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling

NB. CP6 is 2019 - 2024

### REACTION .....

..... to The Minister's announcement was swift and positive. With universal praise within the media for SELRAP's "dogged campaign" ..... followed by a flurry of press releases that combine to be singularly supportive of proposals for the new route. Lancashire and North Yorkshire County Councils and the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities have universally welcomed the study and look forward to working with the DfT/TfN consultants on the project.

### TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH WILL WORK WITH DfT ON FEASIBILITY STUDY

As described in its draft Transport Plan, Transport for the North is now progressing work on development of a strategic outline business case for investment in improving transport connectivity within the Central Pennines corridor. This includes consideration of options to improve direct rail services between East Lancashire and Leeds/Bradford. Work on the Strategic Outline Business Case, which will include a proposed investment programme for road and rail networks is due to conclude in the autumn.

In parallel with this study, TfN are working with the Department for Transport on commissioning a study specifically considering the potential for reopening the Skipton - Colne rail line. The study will look at the costs and benefits of reopening the line, including the need for enabling work on the wider rail network, and is expected to report before the end of the year.

In response to the announcement of the study, Transport for the North Chief Executive, Barry White, said: "We are delighted that the Department for Transport has committed to exploring the possibility of reopening the railway line between Skipton and Colne. We will now work with the Department, taking note of previous work undertaken, to produce a cost and economic benefit study for re-opening the line.

"In our recently published draft Strategic Transport Plan for the North, we identified the Central Pennines as one of seven Strategic Development Corridors vital to future economic growth in the North. This work could help to improve connectivity in the Central Pennines and a reopened rail link between Skipton and Colne could create a new, faster freight-route across the Pennines as well as benefiting passengers with new services between Lancashire, Skipton and Leeds."

Mr White added: "This supports our vision of a thriving North of England, where modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life."

## SKIPTON-COLNE: NEEDED MORE THAN EVER

Road transport is widely recognised as a victim of its own success. And commonly regarded as an increasingly unreliable means of getting anything or anyone anywhere on time.

Feed into the frame, the fact that the traffic congestion costs the nation a staggering £30 billion [2016 figures] per annum. With goods arriving late, personnel missing key meetings, turning up late for work; missing flights. And the rest. Added to that is the air pollution issue as vehicles idle in the jams.



Remember this? March 2018: more than 3000 drivers stranded 'indefinitely' as snow closed the M62. Described by the haulage industry as a 'Lorry Park', delays are routine, come rain or shine.

It doesn't take rocket science to tell us we need an alternative means of carting goods and personnel around the place.

A new East - West rail route via Skipton and Colne: it has a lot going for it. Think about it .....

### THEN FEED INTO THE FRAME .....

*..... a couple of concluding comments from Graham Backhouse, of Drax Power:*

"Skipton to Colne will open an economic vein across the country for freight and we can continue to build on that with more goods onto rail and off our congested roads and motorways.

It's not just beneficial to industry, either. Aside from the trade routes that will be opened up, there is disparity in quality of life on different sides of the Pennines that we feel should be addressed, as fervent supporters of the Northern Powerhouse.

The differences across the Yorkshire and Lancashire border can be told in just one key statistic: on average, house prices, which give a rough barometer of economic activity, are nearly double the value in Skipton, Yorkshire, when compared with Colne in Lancashire – despite there being only 12 miles between these two not dissimilarly sized towns.

Instead of passenger journey times topping over an hour and a half, East Lancashire will be brought to within 20 minutes of Skipton and a further 13 minutes from the large town of Keighley.

The SELRAP link between Skipton and Colne delivers on so many fronts; that's why we are supporting it."

**Meantime, SELRAP will continue to lobby all those in a position to make a difference.**

**You could help ..... by doing the same. By contacting your Councillor[s] MP, Government Ministers, rail industry representatives et al.**

**We cannot let this opportunity for the new rail route slip through our fingers!**



**SELRAP's only source of regular income is via membership fees. Supporters will appreciate that costs for running our increasingly high profile campaign are not inconsiderable.**

**You could help further by making a donation ..... regardless of whether you are a member of SELRAP or not!**

**You might also care to join SELRAP:**

- Please get in touch with our Membership Secretary, whose contact details can be found below.
- Annual subscription fees: £8.00; £5.00 concessions; Life Member £60.00.

**Membership Secretary:**

**Derek Jennings, 3 Hamilton Rd,  
Barrowford, Lancashire BB9 6DE**

**Tel: 01282 690411**

**e mail: derek.jennings01@gmail.com**

### THERE'S NO OTHER WAY TO SAY THIS:

There's an awful lot hanging on the outcome of the feasibility study. It is the game-changer that SELRAP has been steadfastly working towards since the start of its increasingly high profile campaign 17 years back.

The study will do exactly what it says on the box. It will scrutinise all the options for the re-build of "our" line, analyse potential service patterns for both passengers and freight. And balance anticipated overall costs of those options against the benefit[s] to society to firm up the business case for the proposal. Put simply, it will determine, whether reopening the Skipton to Colne rail line is ..... get this ..... feasible! And, ultimately ..... how soon it happens!

It has to said that the signs are good: why else would the Secretary of State for Transport commit hundreds of thousands of pounds to a detailed examination of SELRAP's proposals?

**BURNLEY(CEN), COLNE, SKIPTON,  
KEIGHLEY, BINGLEY, LEEDS(CITY)**

From Accrington station in the 1950s. A sign of the times. And a peek at the future .....

**Summed up: with all our ducks in a row, the reopening of the Skipton to Colne rail line remains on cue for 2022.**

**MEMBERS' MEETINGS: open to the public**

- Mon. 9th July 2018 @ 7.00pm: New Road Community Centre, Earby.
- Mon. 10th September 2018 @ 7.00pm: Crown Hotel, Albert Road, Colne.
- Mon. 12th November 2018 @ 7.00pm: Herriots Hotel, Broughton Road, Skipton.
- Mon. 28th January 2019 @ 7.00pm: New Road Community Centre, Earby.
- Mon. 11th March 2019; Annual General Meeting @ 7.00pm: The Lesser Municipal Hall, Albert Road, Colne.

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**Step outside the box  
with SELRAP:**

**'Cos:**

**If you only do what  
you've always done .....**

**You'll only get what  
you've always had .....**