

Rail North West

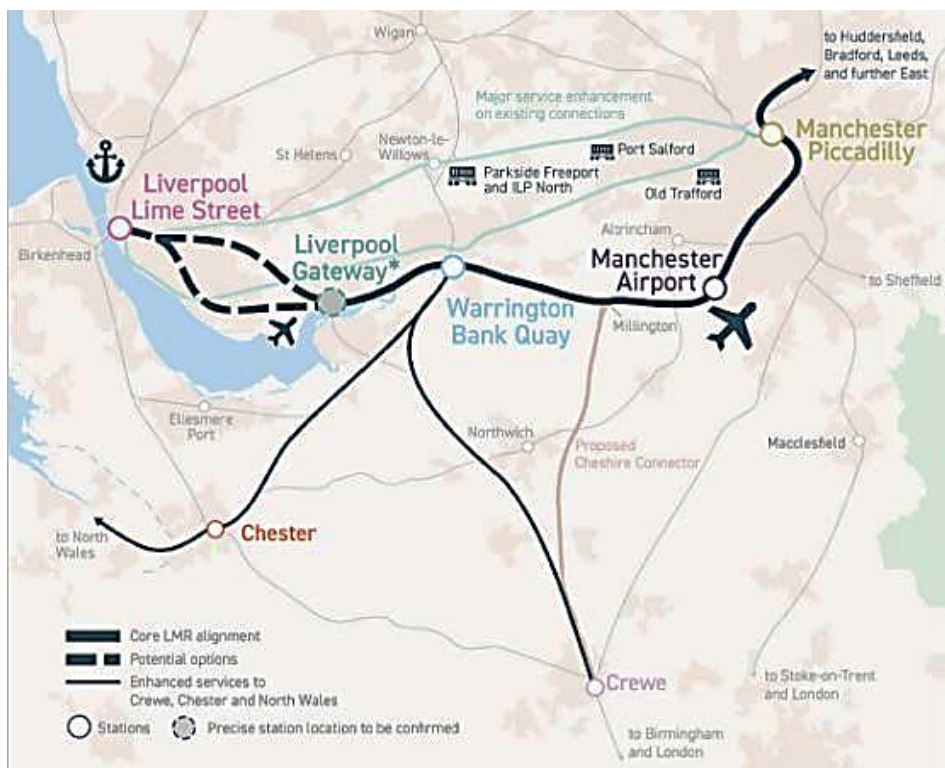


Diagram of possible new Liverpool – Manchester route. Courtesy GMCA

Northern Mayors launch Northern ARC

The Mayors of Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Region, Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham have been promoting their plans for growth in the North West, taking plans for a “Northern ARC” to the Treasury.

The ARC is a scheme for investment centred around a new Liverpool to Manchester railway (above) and the plans say that with the right investment,

it would create a growth corridor, stretching from the Mersey to the Pennines and connecting into West and South Yorkshire, underpinned by transport networks that would include this new railway linking Liverpool and Manchester.

The Northern Arc area spans regions, with close economic ties to Lancashire, North Wales, Hull and the North East.

With international connections through the Port of Liverpool and Manchester Airport, the potential for expanding global trade is also seen as a key factor and the case is being made that by investing in key net-zero growth sectors across the North, some £90 billion of extra economic growth can be unlocked, of which an extra 22,000 jobs and approximately £15 billion would be during the construction period.

This compares favourably with the expected £78 billion of economic growth from the Oxford – Cambridge Arc.

Mayor Andy Burnham said, “The Northern Arc can be the fast-track to green growth. With new investment we can connect crucial low-carbon energy schemes across the North, from Mersey tidal power to the HyNet project – powering thousands of new net-zero homes and helping the UK hit its 2050 target. This isn’t even a question of fairness – it’s one of good economic sense. If the whole country is to get the green growth that it needs, the North of England is where to look – because it’s where that growth can be delivered.”

The world’s first inter-city rail line needs a “change the world” replacement to make the area fit for a high-speed future, say the mayors of Liverpool and Manchester. They are challenging the Labour government which was elected on a “change” manifesto to give the go-ahead for a line to reduce journey times

between the cities main stations by 20 minutes and bring significant necessary capacity increases.

Westminster is urged to support investing in the line, part of their Northern Arc growth corridor from the Mersey to the Pennines and into Yorkshire.

The two Labour mayors launched the report by their combined authorities in May compiled with support from former Conservative rail minister Huw Merriman who now chairs the Liverpool-Manchester Railway Partnership Board. A fresh approach to infrastructure delivery is needed, with local knowledge, private investment and the latest technology to deliver value for money

The new line would have stops at a new Liverpool Gateway station, Warrington Bank Quay and Manchester Airport.

The mayors pointed out that the previous government had committed £17 billion to a new Liverpool-Manchester line following the cancellation of high speed rail's northern links. Now they want the Labour government to act.

The Department for Transport said: “We are reviewing the position we inherited on HS2, and will set out next steps in due course.” The full paper can be read here [Northern Arc Working Paper](#)

Access At Chinley

Chinley & Buxworth Transport Group (CBTG) are still pushing for improved access at Chinley.

Chinley station appeared on the [DfT's May 2024 list](#) of stations identified for the possible funding of improved access - the exact wording used by the [/\(cont\)](#)

DfT being, "these stations have been selected for initial feasibility work and if that is successful, will be taken forward as part of the Access for All (AfA) programme."

Chinley station has already had two studies commissioned by Network Rail, most recently the Forge Manor residential development under Section 106 funding. Both studies came up with feasible options for Chinley. [Read the 2021 GRIP survey here](#)

CBTG has itself conducted surveys and questionnaires about people's experiences travelling from Chinley station. The first survey was undertaken in 2011, [a major survey was carried out in 2016](#) and the [latest survey was carried out in 2024](#).

Better access for Chinley station has been local people's top priority for almost 15 years now!



Aerial view of Greek Street Bridge/roundabout in Stockport, photo courtesy Network Rail Operations

Stockport "Bridgeabout" Replacement

Work has started on replacing the "bridge that's a roundabout" in Stockport. The roundabout at the junction of Greek Street, Shaw Heath and Mercian Way, is actually a bridge that sits across the railway lines just south of Stockport station and Network Rail say its life expired and needs replacing. The work is expected to take a year and the roads leading up to the roundabout have been closed since the

end of March with diversions in place. The railway itself will remain open except for a 3-week period in August and closures in October and over Christmas. The plans include making provision for the planned future tram-train route in a new box tunnel to the west of the bridge which would link the Mid – Cheshire line onto new alignments and a new Metrolink stop west of Stockport station.

Avanti Cuts Blackpool Services

Avanti have reduced the number of return weekday direct services from Blackpool to London from three to two (all via the Trent Valley and not via the West Midlands as previously) and have changed the one Sunday Euston to Blackpool service to be one that splits at Crewe with a Chester service. Saturdays remained the same as before (two return services via West Midlands) but slightly retimed.

Following this decision, a local disability advisor has raised concerns, noting that most other services to/from Blackpool call at platforms 1/2 at Preston and Avanti's other services from there mostly use platforms 3/4, which means

using the lifts or ramps to the subway and are not ideally placed and would mean further delays.

As reported on Lancashire Live, local Councillor Paul Galley shared the concerns on the reduced services, saying: "...Blackpool needs a good volume of traffic to justify investment in our station and seeing services reduced is the last thing we want."

An Avanti West Coast spokesperson said: "Our services are timed to best serve the vibrant and growing tourism sector in Blackpool and now offer faster journey times to the capital." This is possible because they no longer travel via the West Midlands.

Network Rail Blocks Rochdale - London Direct

The Rochdale Times (a new online publication) reports that Network rail isn't supporting one of the Open Access bids to restore a direct rail link between Rochdale and London.

The bid, by open access operator Lumo, would have restored direct services between Rochdale and London Euston for the first time since May 2000 when the then North Western Trains ended its weekday service. Lumo are planning six return services each day, taking about three hours.

Network Rail say that while they can see the benefits of a through service, at present the southern end of the West Coast Main Line cannot accommodate any more services,

The local MP Paul Waugh supported the bid and is quoted as saying, "The Lumo proposal connecting Rochdale with London via Newton-le-Willows would have been a fantastic investment in connectivity for the North West of England. It would have brought jobs and economic growth to our region. I'm therefore deeply disappointed that Network Rail has declined to support this fantastic proposal and urge them to think again."

The Department for Transport said, "We're supportive of Open Access services if they can encourage growth, improve connectivity and capacity and provide more choice for passengers. But these benefits must not come at the cost of performance, better services or better value for taxpayers."

The ORR has yet to deliver its final verdict on this Open Access application, but Network Rail's opposition and the DfT response suggests that the economic benefit of the new jobs in the local area and (in the longer term) possible new trains for UK manufacturing, has been outweighed

The outcome of the other two applications to bring direct London services to North Manchester, those of

Virgin to Rochdale and Bolton and West Midlands Trains to Manchester Victoria has not yet been heard. Refusal of the latter would be particularly difficult to understand, as those plans would involve extending trains that already have a path south of Crewe to Euston so there ought to be no pathing difficulties on the southern end of the WCML, although platform space at Manchester Victoria may be at a premium.

Council Approves Golborne Station Plan

Wigan council has approved outline plans to build a new station at Golborne, some 60 years after the previous station was closed. Transport for Greater Manchester will now work with the Council and Greater Manchester

Combined Authority to develop the business case and detailed plans for the £32million station. Plans suggest there would be a new Wigan – Manchester Victoria electric service serving the station.

Keswick Railway Campaigner Cedric Martindale dies



Photo courtesy of James Ingrams

In early April of this year, Railfuture North West was sad to hear of the passing of Cedric Martindale, the renowned and inspirational campaigner

who had worked for a very long time to get the railway from Penrith to Keswick re-opened. He had died in March 2024 after being taken ill in December 2023 while living and working in Asia, but the news had not reached us before.

Cedric was a diligent campaigner, for example over the years many businesses in the area had plans to reuse the trackbed (on land they owned) which often would have stopped the line being re-opened, but they never escaped his attention and he was always ready with an alternative to try and find a solution that worked for all. He kept the local authorities on their toes too, ensuring they met their obligations to consider all transport needs. Railfuture extends its sincere condolences to his family and friends.

Direct Llandudno and Wrexham Trains to Liverpool?

The Welsh government has launched plans to improve the rail network in north Wales, many of which also are (or connect to) services in the North West.

The Chester to Wrexham route will see a doubling of services from next May (2026) while services from Manchester to Llandudno will divert to Holyhead and a new Liverpool to Llandudno service will be introduced.

Previous plans to have two trains per hour (tph) on the Wrexham – Bidston route have been delayed by initial issues with the new rolling stock, but the two tph service is prevented presently by the need for freight trains from Penryffordd to be split/joined on the main line, occupying it for some 40 minutes. Work to create a southbound connection and a longer siding at Penryffordd is now in the schedule.

The longer- term plan is to have through trains into Liverpool on this route, running a direct, four trains per hour service rather than ending at Bidston, with a 2035 completion date. Its thought this would probably mean the service

being run by Merseyrail's battery electric units, (more units would be needed). as the present diesel units would not be permitted in the Mersey rail network tunnels. Work on developing plans for this are expected to begin straightaway.

Pay as You Go tap in tap out technology will be introduced too between Gobowen and Rhyl, and along the full length of the newly redesignated Wrexham - Liverpool line and the plans also include improvements at key stations on that route over the next 12 months

The plans have the aim of a metro style service on the North Wales mainline, the Marches line (Chester to Wrexham), and a new direct rail link between Wrexham and Liverpool.

Options to re-open closed stations and open new ones are also part of the plans, looking at the potential employment growth areas, along with an innovation fund to develop electrification of the North Wales Main line.

Northern Sunday Working

Readers will no doubt be aware of the ongoing situation with Sundays not being part of the working week for Northern conductors in the North West, which has resulted in significant reduction in Sunday services from the previous timetables.

After a previous offer between Northern and the RMT was rejected by the latter's members in November 2024, a revised

package for Sundays to be part of the working week has been submitted to the Department for Transport and Treasury for approval (as its thought this involves extra costs).

Northern management are now awaiting detail after the Spending Review set budgets for the DfT before it can send the offer to the RMT so this can be put to their members in referendum

Government Invests in Major Manchester & Liverpool Transport Schemes

On June 4th, the Government announced funding for new transport schemes across the UK, a significant amount of which is in the North West

The Liverpool City Region has secured £1.6 billion, within in which for rail there are plans for three new trains stations, Woodchurch on the Wirral, Carr Mill near St Helens and Daresbury in Halton. This adds to the already committed new station at Liverpool Baltic and redevelopment of Runcorn station.

Manchester gets £2.5 billion, a significant amount of which will be spend on the Metrolink network, with a new line to Stockport, extending from East Didsbury and new tram stops at Elton Reservoir between Bury and Radcliffe, Sandhills, on the line between Manchester Victoria and Queens Road and Cop Road between Derker and Shaw and Crompton stops.

New house building schemes are related to the plans for all three of these new tram stops, with the Sandhills stop located within Manchester's £3.8bn Victoria North project, where a total 15,000 homes will be built across 155 hectares from Angel Meadow in the city

centre to Collyhurst in north Manchester.

The new Elton Reservoir stop, is part of a project to build 3,500 homes on formerly green belt land and the tram stop will also be a new park and ride station.

The area around the new Cop Road stop has plans for a further 1450 houses, part of the Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham's, Places for Everyone house-building programme.

The Bury-Heywood-Rochdale-Oldham corridor is to be reconnected to the rail network with plans for tram/trains along the route, although if those take the route of the former Bury – Rochdale railway line, it will no doubt be the subject of negotiations with the East Lancs Railway Heritage line, as they currently run trains through to their eastern terminus at Heywood along that route. The plans say these will be battery/electric tram/trains, using the tram line overhead 750 V on the tram network and batteries on the conventional rail network and would be part of these plans to have a fully electric public transport network by 2030.

Railfuture North West Facebook Page

Railfuture North West now has a Facebook page where we try and post news and other items about the latest developments. We encourage all members to subscribe and like the

page, you can also post anything of relevance yourselves. The page can be found at;

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1469070153787148>



Work underway on the third platform at Salford Crescent. Photo Arthur Thomson

Salford Crescent New Platform Connections

Work is well underway to build a third platform at Salford Crescent which will add some welcome relief to capacity in the Manchester area, but local Rail User Group STORM has some concerns about how services stopping patterns might affect connections at the station, particularly for those with mobility issues.

With the existing island platform, connections are straightforward, but the concern is that with some services then calling at the new platform, this will entail use of the footbridge/lifts, and may reduce the number of previously viable connections particularly for the mobility impaired.

Although it's very tight (<3 minutes) the current cross-platform connection at Salford Crescent from the Leeds – Wigan service onto the Blackpool – Manchester Airport service is possible, and the alternative (changing at Victoria for the once hourly TPE service from Redcar to Manchester Airport) is presently a 45 minute

connection, and does seem to be subject to frequent disruption, probably leading travellers to try to make the Salford Crescent connection, as they would still only have a 30 minute wait there if they missed the very tight one.

TFGM's spokesperson said "Cross-platform changes on the current platform at Salford Crescent are relatively easy, given it's an island platform, although passenger facilities aren't great. Services heading north-bound there will use the existing platform. There is a passenger lift, and the station is manned for any changes to the new platform for south-bound services

It's still the aspiration that there's a service from Calder Valley stations via Ordsall Chord to the Airport (to make the 2nd tph across there).

This is a long-standing TfGM wish, as we recognise the lack of alternatives and lengthy Metrolink journey times from RCD stations."

SELRAP: Chancellor “Forgets” East Lancashire.

Skipton East Lancashire Rail Action Partnership (SELRAP) is disappointed that the Chancellor Rachel Reeves has not included the re-opening of their line between Colne and Skipton in their recent announced, major transport investment plans.

The scheme has been praised by Rail Minister Lord Hendy as having a strong strategic case, but it seems that was not enough to persuade the Chancellor to go ahead with the re-opening, despite the socio-economic benefits the project would bring to the deprived communities there.

Future branch meetings.

Our next branch committee meeting is planned to be on Thursday 4th September 2025 at *The Railway* in Rose Hill Marple. Because of opening times and service arrival times we are aiming for a **slightly later meeting start at 1330**, the meeting should finish no later than 1530.

The following meeting will be on Thursday November 6th, 2025, at the Merebrook Bromborough at our usual time. Further dates/details will be on our website but do please get in touch with your branch committee, Chair, Vice Chair or Secretary (details on the back page) to confirm and if there are any issues you wish to raise.

LASRUG

Lancaster and Skipton Rail User Group

www.llmr.co.uk www.lasrug.btck.co.uk

The group was formed in 1989 to support and improve the Lancaster to Skipton railway. This links the towns and cities of West Yorkshire with the city of Lancaster and the seaside resort of Morecambe. It also gives access to the Yorkshire Dales, Forest of Bowland and Furness.

If you would like to help us promote the 'Little North Western' line, please contact our Membership Secretary, Lakeber House, Robin Lane, High Bentham, Lancaster. LA2 7AF.

Membership costs £7-00 annually. You will receive a Newsletter quarterly and we invite a speaker from the Rail Industry to the AGM each September.

Rail User Groups within the North West area

(for those viewing in pdf format, those underlined have embedded links to the group's websites or social media pages)

- [Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users' Association](#)
- [Bolton Rail Users Group](#)
- [Chinley & Buxworth Transport Group](#)
- [Friends of Castleton Station](#)
- [Friends of Denton Station](#)
- [Friends of Eccles Station](#)
- [Friends of Littleborough Stations \(Lancashire\)](#)
- [Friends of Reddish South Station](#)
- [Friends of Rose Hill Station](#)
- Friends of St Annes Stations email brussell_2019@outlook.com
- [Friends of Settle Carlisle Line](#)
- [Furness Line Action Group \(FLAG\)](#)
- [Lakes Line Rail User Group \(LLRUG\)](#)
- Lancaster, Morecambe Rail & District Rail User Group (no link presently)
- [Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users' Group \(LASRUG\)](#)
- [Mid Cheshire Rail Users' Association \(MCRUA\)](#)
- [North Cheshire Rail Users' Group \(NCRUG\)](#)
- [Ormskirk, Preston and Southport Travellers Association \(OPSTA\)](#)
- [Ribble Valley Rail](#)
- [Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership \(SELRAP\)](#) (reopening campaign)
- [Support the Oldham Rochdale Manchester line \(STORM\)](#)
- [Stalybridge to Huddersfield Rail User Group](#)
- [Wirral Transport Users' Association \(WTUA\)](#)
- [Wrexham-Bidston Rail Users Association \(WBRUA\)](#)

Blackpool and Fylde Rail Users Association (Incorporating South Fylde Line Users Association)

Chairman; Paul Nettleton
8, Balham Avenue,
Blackpool,
FY4 3QP

Vice – Malcolm Richardson
Chairman 135, Branstree Road,
Blackpool,
FY4 4SR,



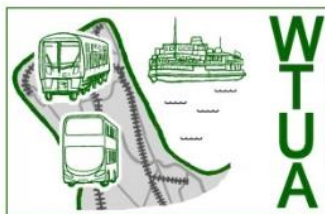
Join us, it's only £3/year, £5 for family membership.

Contact; Membership Secretary, c/o 8, Balham Avenue, Blackpool, FY4 3QP. Contact through our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/BAFRUA> and click on "Sign Up"

Wirral Transport Users Association

We believe in modern public transport systems for Wirral, Merseyside and the Chester area. The WTUA has a watching brief over the public transport operations in the Wirral and their connections to the rest of the country. It represents the interests of transport users in the local area and has representation on various transport user groups.



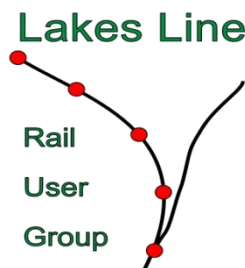
We publish our newsletter once or twice a year. Our AGM includes a talk from an expert on some facet of the transport world. We aim to run coach excursions to heritage railways and other places of transport activity or interest once or twice a year.

For more info, see website- www.wirraltua.org.uk, email wirraltua@gmail.com, or phone Brian Grey on 0151 648 3070.

Annual membership- Individual: £8, Couple at same address: £10. Send for an application form to: Brian Grey, 56 Coombe Road, Irby, Wirral CH61 4US.

THE LAKES LINE RAIL USER GROUP

Formed in 1984 to promote and support Cumbria's only branch line for locals and tourists alike. Travel the lakes line into scenic Lakeland.



Join Today!

Contact: Mr. P Bell 9, Vicars Hill,
Kendal,
Cumbria

Membership: £6.00 Individuals,

£7.00 Family, £13.00 Corporate

LA9 5DA

PLEASE NOTE the email addresses below won't correctly copy from the pdf (electronic) edition, this is to prevent spam, you will need to type them in manually.

Railfuture North West Branch Officers

<i>Chairman</i> Trevor Bishop	4 Butterfield Close Cheadle Hulme Cheadle, Cheshire SK8 7AE	trevor.bishop@railfuture.org.uk Tel 0161 485 8426 mobile 07973 725254
<i>Vice Chairman & Treasurer</i> Malcolm Conway	34, Castlestead View, Castlestead Close, Oxenholme, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7FY	malcolmconway@aol.co.uk Tel 01539 756272 mobile 07956 345130
<i>Freight Officer</i> (vacant)		
<i>Secretary and Returning Officer</i> Christopher Norton	26 Handsworth Road Blackpool FY1 2RQ	cjnblackpool@btinternet.com 01253 623338
<i>Media Officer</i> (vacant)		

Rail North West is the newsletter of the North West branch of Railfuture. Contributions in the form of articles and letters are welcomed. Please send them to Arthur Thomson at arthur.thomson@railfuture.org.uk. Text files e-mailed are particularly welcome. The opinions expressed in *Rail North West* are those of any individual contributors and not necessarily those of Railfuture.

www.railfuture.org.uk

Railfuture Limited. Registered in England and Wales No 05011634, a Company Limited by Guarantee.
Registered Office: Edinburgh House, 1-5 Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset BS21 7NP (for legal correspondence only).
All other correspondence to 3 Chandos Court, Martlesham, Suffolk IP12 4SU

Newsletter of the North West England Branch of Railfuture