

## Future Train Services on the West Coast Main Line: How Carnforth station can add value to West Coast Main Line Services.

The basic idea of this document is to demonstrate an innovative, progressive and environmentally sustainable method of increasing and enhancing rail service provision by optimising existing resources with minimal financial investment: The reinstatement of the West Coast Main Line platforms at Carnforth Station.

Its aim is to promote Carnforth as uniquely positioned to add substantial value to the West Coast Main Line.

Carnforth station is a forgotten and invaluable strategic asset situated in arguably the most beautiful of regions served by the West Coast Main Line.

The table below shows some of the key areas of the Intercity West Coast Main Line consultation document in which reinstatement of the platforms can add operational value. It highlights how support for this project will significantly benefit passengers, the franchise and the wider rail network:

Scheme/Initiative	Consultation document Ref.	Benefit to franchise of Platform Reinstatement.
Better Railway Stations	Pg 58-59	<p><b>Access to Station</b> - served my M6 and A6 with extensive car, coach, disabled and cycle parking.</p> <p><b>Modern amenities</b> - including Visitor Info Centre, manned ticket office, and tourist attractions.</p> <p><b>Station Travel Plan</b> - proven track record of integrating transport methods. Eg. On-site bus station serving surrounding area and rural locations.</p>
Access For All & DDA 1995	Pg 59-60 & 67	<p><b>Access for All</b> - Unique station layout with ramp access to all platforms. Existing, modern and comprehensive disabled facilities and amenities.</p>
Value for Money	Pg 61	<p><b>Substantial increase in efficiency of network utilisation-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• linking East-West rail with North-South destinations at one key interchange.</li> <li>• Eliminating inefficiencies of services between Carnforth, Lancaster, Kendal and the Lakes.</li> </ul>
Safety & Security	Pg 62	<p><b>Safe and Secure</b> station environment with Secure Station Accreditation (SSA) and CCTV coverage.</p> <p><b>Additional Disaster &amp; Contingency Planning options</b> - Major road network links at Carnforth provide invaluable routes in the event of incident on the WCML.</p>
Community Rail Partnerships	Pg 67	<p><b>Increased community/rail links</b> - Carnforth station is a case study in Community endeavour.</p>
Environmental Performance	Pg 69	<p><b>Contribution to sustainable rail transport</b> through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased transport integration and potential displacement of road traffic from the Lake District.</li> <li>• Ending inefficient use of rolling stock between Lancaster, Carnforth, Kendal and the Lakes.</li> <li>• Potential for Increased Lancashire &amp; Cumbria Network utilisation (CUI Currently &lt;60% on most lines<sup>1</sup>).</li> </ul>

### Summarised Opportunities to Enhance the West Coast Main Line Franchise.

1 Lancashire & Cumbria Rail Utilisation Strategy, August 2008 (Sect 3.6 - Pg 48 & 49)

### Background

Carnforth station is the result of a successful £1.5m regeneration project undertaken by local people. It is the epitome of Big Society principles, and a triumph of community endeavour. An acclaimed and popular tourist attraction, surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty, wildlife reserves and historic towns, railways and heritage sites, Carnforth station lies at the centre of a once-pivotal rail interchange reaching to the four cardinal points. It is a natural gateway to the Lake District and beyond.

As a stand-alone tourist attraction and the setting for David Lean's "Brief Encounter", it has the prestige to attract, and all the required facilities to cater for, the large numbers of visitors and travellers it already consistently enjoys.

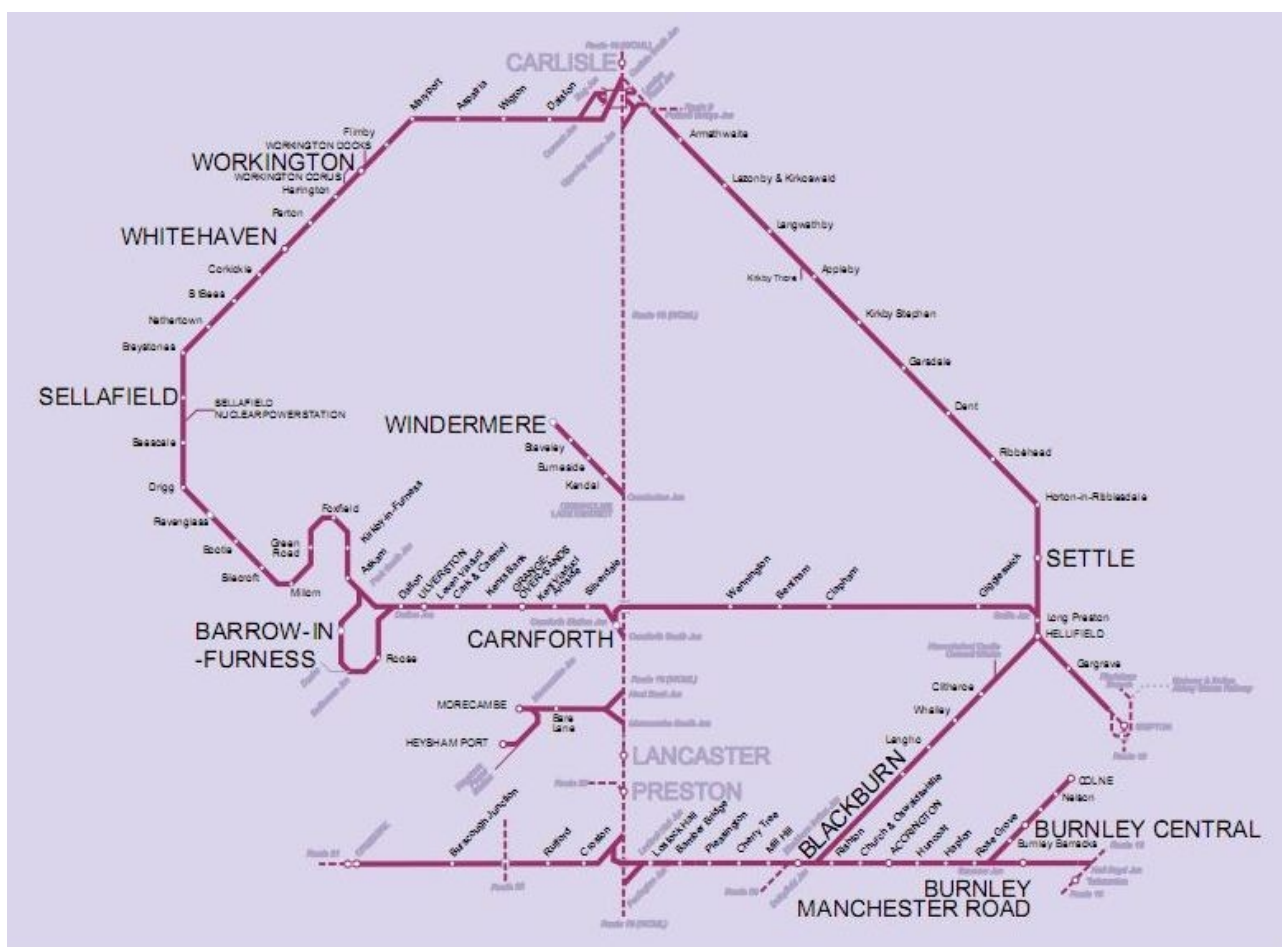


Figure 1. (From Figure 2.2, Lancashire and Cumbria RUS (August 2008) www.networkrail.co.uk)

Currently significant direct rail travel is only possible to and from the East and West. The restoration of the main line platforms would further open up the North-South direct travel route, and provide a gateway for travellers to access, for example, the Lake District to the North and London to the South (Figure 1). It would follow that the existing services to the West (incorporating the beautiful Furness Peninsula) and the East (to the Dales and beyond) would then be conveniently accessible as tourist destinations from the West Coast Main Line.

From the earliest days of its regeneration the station complex has been at the heart of plans to enhance Carnforth town. Consequently, there is ample capacity to accommodate growth in visitor numbers and station throughput.

Existing amenities and services include:

- Victorian market-town Location.
- Unrivalled disabled accessibility including, uniquely to the region, ramp access to **all** platforms.
- Manned ticket office, with exceptional staff committed to the travelling public.
- Retail units housing local businesses.
- Vast visitor centre and award-winning tea rooms
- Quality public conveniences.
- Parking for cars, coaches, disabled bays and cycles.

The station is designed to serve as a lively, bustling tourism hub. Ancillary services such as function room hire at the Visitor Centre and regular social events held in the complex all add value to the local community.

Grant funding has recently been obtained for a **Visitor Information Centre (VIC)** to be located in one of the Station's retail units, which will provide information to visitors about the countless other tourist attractions around the local area, further enhancing the station's viability as a tourism hub.

Carnforth has remarkable transport links originating from its industrial heritage as an iron works town. From the railway station, there are established transport links including:

- The M6 motorway accessible at Jct 35.
- The Main A6 running North-South.
- Rail links to the North, South, East and West
- The Lancaster Canal.
- Various cycle paths and walkways.

The opportunities for integration of all forms of travel cannot be overlooked. One exciting consequence of establishing such links could be the displacement of road traffic from the Lake district relieving the congestion it currently suffers. The environmental benefits coupled with the additional contingency planning options available would benefit not only the local area, but the entire West Coast Main Line.

Carnforth simply by virtue of its location within the rail network has the potential to once again become a valuable interchange, allowing more passengers wider direct travel opportunities with the added benefit of enabling more efficient utilisation of local commuter trains and other vital links. All this is possible from one of the most historic and romantic stations on the national rail network.

Although brief, the above starts to present some of the many benefits to the franchise of restoring the main line platforms at Carnforth station. The infrastructure and existing facilities are all accessible and in place, ensuring minimal required investment.

Within the new franchise system a powerful, efficient, community-driven and sustainable solution to many of the region's and the main line's rail issues is within easy grasp, and few rail improvement schemes tabled today are backed by as much operational credibility, history, romance and sheer common sense as that presented by Carnforth.

Peter Yates MBE.  
February 2011

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References:

- Intercity West Coast Main Line Consultation Document. Department For Transport. January 2011.
- Lancashire & Cumbria Rail Utilisation Strategy. Network Rail. August 2008.