



2015 Annual Report Update

Updates on progress are shown in italics.

Future Plans

Once the new franchises are announced in December 2015, CRC will be meeting with the new operator of the Northern franchise and finalising plans set out in the draft Strategy & Action Plan for 2016-2019. With additional funding for CRPs being promised as part of the franchising process, it is likely that infrastructure projects will be a priority as new rolling stock will take a couple more years to deliver.

There is now a good working relationship with Northern (Arriva Rail North) staff, many of whom have worked with the Cumbrian CRPs during the last six years. However, there has been a perception of a change for the worse as former TPE rolling stock has been moved away from the Lakes and Furness lines and has been replaced with shorter, older and less reliable rolling stock. Rolling stock problems are likely to persist until new stock is delivered and the new Northern Connect services are introduced in December, 2017. Northern has provided additional funding for each of the CRPs and a new Strategy & Development Plan has been produced by Community Rail Cumbria for the three lines. In addition, a Stations Improvement Plan has also been produced.

CRC will also maintain a close working relationship with the other TOCs providing services into Cumbria and connections to the community rail lines.

A working relationship has been maintained with TPE as they continue to operate the Manchester- Scotland services along the WCML and connect with our lines at Lancaster, Oxenholme and Carlisle. There has been no financial support from the new TPE franchise but bid can be made to a small fund for connectivity projects (e.g. marketing). Virgin Trains continues to provide in-kind support for the CRPs to an approximate value of £2,000 every year plus a free site for the Community Rail in the City promotional event.

The CRC future projects list includes the following:

- Continued promotion of the Cumbrian lines through an agreed marketing plan with the new TOC.
The “family” of leaflets (Walks from the lines and Discover Cumbria by Train) have been reprinted by Northern and 150,000 copies are being distributed across the north of England. A draft Marketing Plan has been produced but action will have to be limited until suitable rolling stock can be provided in order to avoid

disappointment. The emphasis has remained on the updated leaflets and on the websites including the new Community Rail Cumbria website.

- To work closely with the new franchise to get the best possible train service for the line during the life of the new franchise.
The performance problems have been closely monitored by the CRPs and the Rail User Groups but until new units are provided and the new timetables are implemented in December, 2017, the existing train services will continue to be “not fit for purpose” as stated in the 2014 Cumbria Better Connected report.
- To assist with planning future train services and infrastructure investment that meets the needs of the nuclear and engineering sectors of the economy.
Although this is primarily for the Cumbrian Coast Line, discussions have taken place with Northern and Network Rail about investment in the Furness Line’s infrastructure.
- To develop long term plans for access improvements at Arnside, Burneside, Silverdale, Staveley and Ulverston stations.
A Stations Development Plan has been produced and is being integrated with Northern’s plans for station investment. A feasibility study is planned for Staveley and Burneside when funding becomes available.
- Continue to seek funding for station improvements and restoration work at Askam, Carnforth, Dalton, Silverdale and Wigton stations, along with the development of Hub stations at Millom, Workington and Whitehaven.
Plans and costs are being developed for Carnforth, Grange and Dalton stations and funding bids have or will be made for funding. The Friends of Silverdale station, the CRP and Northern have all made considerable improvements to Silverdale station and its old shelter. Similar improvements, including work by Network Rail, are taking place at Kents Banks station which also has a very active Friends group.
- Continue to lobby for investment in the lines including future electrification of the coastal routes.
Network Rail has now electrified the loops and platform 3 at Oxenholme station as part of the future Lakes Line electrification. This scheme is now expected to be completed in 2019 in time for the introduction of Northern’s new electric rolling stock. The electrification of the other lines remains a long term aspiration and depends on development in west Cumbria.
- Seek the installation of Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) and Customer Information Screens (CIS) at more unstaffed stations along the lines.
This is now included in Northern’s plans for station investment, along with additional shelters. Access and parking problems remain to be addressed.
- Launch the “Walks from the Lakes Line” brochure in early 2016 with the funding partners.

This leaflet was launched at Oxenholme station with all three TOCs participating. However, due to franchise changes and winter storm damage, this leaflet was revised, reprinted by Northern, and is now being re-distributed.

- Work with the Morecambe Bay Partnership to provide a viewing area across Morecambe Bay at Kents Bank station.
This project is currently on-hold due to other developments at Kents Bank station. The Morecambe Bay Partnership has been requested to part fund the proposed Hub station development at Grange.
- Further develop plans with the TOCs for additional “Hub stations” at Arnside and Grange to utilise HLF funding becoming available through the Morecambe Bay Partnership.
Discussions are taking place with Northern regarding the need for Kendal, Carnforth and Arnside stations to be brought up to the standard needed for inclusion in the proposed Northern Connect network. There are ongoing discussions with The Morecambe Bay partnership, Northern, and Network Rail regarding Grange “Hub” station.
- Seek improved and closer engagement with local and regional business and industry leaders to encourage their greater involvement and partnership with the CRC.
There has been little progress on getting local industry involved with the Furness or Lakes Lines, partly due to the current timetables plus overcrowding and reliability problems. Members of staff at Cumbria Tourism who worked closely with the Lakes Line CRP have left due to financial constraints. However, the friends groups at Silverdale and Kents Bank stations have become well established and have been joined by groups at Arnside and Cark. The Lakes Line RUG has registered with Northern as Friends of the line. It is hoped that Dalton and Grange will also have Friends groups very soon.

Since the Annual Report was written, Dawn McGough has become the full-time Community Rail Manager and Claire Bradshaw has become the full-time Community Rail Assistant. The CRP officer for the Furness and Lakes Lines has become part-time from the 1st September with some duties being taken on by his other colleagues. He continues to work closely with Laurence Hilland, CRP Officer for the Cumbrian Coast Line, on the education room project at Millom Heritage Centre as this will benefit children from across the areas served by the Cumbrian community rail lines.