



Dear Councillor,

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE STRATEGIC PLANNING JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER 2020

The next meeting of the Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee will be held on Tuesday, 10th November 2020 at 6.30 pm. This will be a hybrid meeting taking place in the Lancastrian, Chorley Town Hall and via Microsoft Teams. If attending in the Lancastrian the entrance to the Town Hall can be gained from the doors on St Thomas's Road, opposite the Police Station.

The agenda and accompanying reports for consideration at the meeting are enclosed.

The agenda papers are being sent to both appointed and substitute Members. Any appointed Member who cannot attend on Tuesday, 10th November is asked to first contact their substitute to see if he or she can attend instead. Then please contact Nina Neisser either by telephone or email at the address below to give their apology with an indication of whether the substitute Member will attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Hall', written in a cursive style.

Gary Hall
Chief Executive of Chorley Council

Nina Neisser
Democratic and Member Services Officer
E-mail: nina.neisser@chorley.gov.uk
Tel: (01257) 515140



CENTRAL LANCASHIRE STRATEGIC PLANNING JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

AGENDA

1 **Appointment of Chair for the Meeting**

2 **Welcome by Chair and Introductions**

3 **Apologies for absence**

4 **Declarations of Any Interests**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda.

If you have a pecuniary interest you must withdraw from the meeting. Normally you should leave the room before the business starts to be discussed. You do, however, have the same right to speak as a member of the public and may remain in the room to enable you to exercise that right and then leave immediately. In either case you must not seek to improperly influence a decision on the matter.

5 **Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 28 January 2020 of Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee (Pages 5 - 8)**

6 **Central Lancashire Local Plan Update (Pages 9 - 14)**

Report of the Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Coordinator (enclosed).

7 **Planning for the Future Planning White Paper Consultation (Pages 15 - 20)**

Report of the Central Lancashire Authorities (enclosed).

8 **Central and West Lancashire Rail Study (Pages 21 - 56)**

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (enclosed).

9 **City Deal Update Report**

A verbal update will be provided at the meeting. City Deal latest quarterly monitoring update (to follow).

10 **Education Update**

A verbal update will be provided at the meeting from Alison Marland and officers from LCC.

11 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To consider the exclusion of the press and public for the following items of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

By Virtue of Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Condition:

Information is not exempt if it is required to be registered under-
The Companies Act 1985

The Friendly Societies Act 1974

The Friendly Societies Act 1992

The Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978

The Building Societies Act 1986 (recorded in the public file of any building society, within the meaning of the Act)

The Charities Act 1993

Information is exempt to the extent that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Information is not exempt if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning General Regulations 1992(a).

12 **Draft SRFA - Presentation from JBA Flood Consultants**

JBA Flood Consultants will provide a presentation at the meeting.

13 **Dates of Future Meetings**

To note that next meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee is to be held on Monday, 25 January 2021 at 6.30pm.

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MINUTES OF **CENTRAL LANCASHIRE STRATEGIC PLANNING JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MEETING DATE **Tuesday, 28 January 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Bill Evans, Alistair Bradley, Alistair Morwood, Debra Platt, Peter Moss, John Potter, Michael Green, Keith Iddon and Barrie Yates

OFFICERS: Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Property), Steven Brown (Head of Development Management), Charlotte Lynch (Democratic and Member Services Officer), Carolyn Williams, Zoe Whiteside, Chris Hayward, Chris Blackburn and Marcus Hudson

91 Appointment of Chair for the Meeting

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That Councillor Bill Evans be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

92 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair, Councillor Bill Evans, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced those present.

93 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sue Whittam (Preston City Council).

94 Notification of any Substitute Members (if any)

There were none.

95 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

96 Minutes of meeting Monday, 28 October 2019 of Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the meeting of the last Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee, held on 28 October 2019, be signed as a correct record.

97 Central Lancashire Local Plan Update

The committee received a report of the Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Coordinator which provided an update on the progress of the Local Plan review.

Members were informed that the Issues and Options Consultation was ongoing until mid-February and that over 200 online responses had been received to date with 685 people attending consultation events.

A Developers' Forum had been held in December 2019 with members and officers from South Ribble, Chorley and Preston Councils attending. Another session would be scheduled in 2020.

Work was still ongoing with regards to the viability of the Local Plan and members were informed that a consultancy firm would be appointed and tasked with this work.

The impact of concerns around climate change was discussed. South Ribble, Chorley and Preston Councils had declared climate emergencies and members were informed that the impact of climate change would need to be considered within the Local Plan. The possibility of appointing a climate change officer to work across the three councils had been suggested but remained to be scoped.

Although Lancashire County Council had not formally declared a climate emergency, assurances were given that measures were being taken to reduce the effects of climate change.

Members acknowledged that a lot of work would be undertaken within the next 18 months and noted the report

98 Draft Revised Central Lancashire Local Development Scheme (LDS)

The Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Co-ordinator, Carolyn Williams, presented a report on the Draft Revised Central Lancashire Local Development Scheme (LDS).

As work on the Local Plan review is fluid, the timetable for works is regularly updated to reflect any changes to the anticipated timeframe. Adoption of the Local Plan is now anticipated for December 2023.

Members acknowledged a delay in progress due to the extension of the Issues and Options consultation as well as the need to undertake reviews on strategic flood risk, education provisions and the spatial strategy. The potential need to undertake a review of Greenbelt land may also cause further delay to the publication of the Local Plan.

Members requested that the report be amended to clarify that the anticipated targets for completion of work are ambitious and variable.

The report was noted.

99 Consultation of the Revised Joint Memorandum of Understanding

Members received a report of the Director of Early Intervention and Support (Chorley Council) which provided an update on the consultation responses to the revised Joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU was reviewed and amended following the introduction of the Standard Housing Method for Local Housing Need by the government, which altered the methodology for calculating annual housing requirements. Adoption of the revised Joint MOU had been approved by South Ribble and Chorley Councils and would be debated by Preston City Council in February 2020.

Members were informed that the MOU confirmed the annual housing need figures for each area of Central Lancashire, with South Ribble requiring 334 homes; Chorley 282; and Preston 410.

Consultation had initially taken place in November 2019 and was reopened between December 2019 and January 2020 following constructive feedback. Developers, agents, parish councils, elected members and county councillors were consulted, with 37 responses received. A number of key issues, such as failure to consult properly, were identified through the consultation and addressed in the report.

Members expressed satisfaction with the standard of officer's responses to concerns identified through the consultation and thanked the Central Lancashire Planning team for their work.

The report was noted.

100 Any Other Business

There was none.

101 Dates of Future Meetings

The next meeting of the Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee will be held at Chorley Council on Tuesday, 24 March 2020 at 6:30pm.

Chair

Date

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Central Lancashire Planning Local Plan Coordinator	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	10 November 2020

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. To note the contents of this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

2. This report provides an update on the progress of the development of the Central Lancashire Local Plan.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

3. None, for information only.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

4. None.

LOCAL PLAN PROGRESS – ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

5. The Central Lancashire Local Plan Issues and options consultation ran from Monday the 18th November 2019 until Friday 14th February 2020. A total of 1,606 stakeholders responded to the consultation, equating to 25,000 individual responses to the questions posed through the document. In addition to residents of Central Lancashire, the types of organisations that responded are listed below:

- Government Agency
- Non-Government Organisation
- Local Planning Authority
- Planning Consultant
- Developer
- Private Landlord
- Registered Social Housing Provider
- Land Agents
- Parish Council
- Community Group

- Not all residents who responded provided details of where they lived, however, for those that did the majority (46%) were from Chorley, 32% South Ribble and 4% from Preston.
6. A significant proportion of the responses were in relation to the site suggestions in Section 8 (Location for Future Development) of the consultation document. Of these questions there was most interest in sites located in Chorley, with 65% relating to the sites presented in Annexes 1 and 5 of the Issues and Options Consultation. 31% of responses related to sites in South Ribble (Annex 3) and 4% related to Preston sites (Annex 4).
 7. The sections on housing and site allocations received the most comments overall in the consultation, with the section on climate change and resource management seeing the lowest responses.
 8. The majority of responses, as expected, were around discussions on what the number of homes should be that Central Lancashire is planning for and where those sites should be located. There is significant concern that the homes being built are not affordable and are not being built in mind of providing a home to those people who currently live in the area.
 9. There was support for the provision of more employment opportunities, and in future to plan these nearer housing developments to reduce the need to travel and to promote sustainable modes of travel.
 10. In all areas there is concern that education provision at all levels is inadequate, and local infrastructure is insufficient to cope with current levels of population and traffic, therefore new developments will exacerbate this.
 11. A detailed outcomes report on the consultation has been prepared and is currently with officers at the 3 homes teams for sign off.
 12. To engage younger generations on the development of the Local Plan, a Youth Questionnaire was prepared, and this ran alongside the issues and Options. We received responses from 593 11-21year olds, mainly high school students to this consultation which is a positive step to engaging this sector on the development of the Local Plan. 407 responses (69%) were from the Preston area, 126 (21%) from South Ribble and 26 (4%) from Chorley with 34 (6%) not specifying.
 13. The issues of most concern to the youth were access to a good range of indoor and outdoor activities, safe environments for travelling around, less little (cleaner neighbourhoods) and good access to higher/further education. This latter point was the main reason they would consider leaving the area as many do not feel there are the opportunities for them here. However, there is good awareness of apprenticeship schemes and a real interest in gaining qualifications by this route, with 71% of those who responded saying this is something they would consider.
 14. There was also general concern about the wider environment and how we protect this and make better use of it. Many who responded commented on being lucky to live in such a beautiful area and wanted to protect it. Again, an outcomes report has been prepared regarding this and is currently with officers at each of the 3 home teams for sign off.

CALL FOR SITES AND SITE ASSESSMENT WORK

15. Alongside the issues and Options Consultation, a third call for sites stage was opened up. This generated 209 additional submissions, a 100 of which are in Chorley, 37 Preston and 72 in South Ribble. Of the total 209, 73 are completely new sites, with the remainder intercepting in some way with existing proposals. 36 of the completely new sites are within Chorley, 17 in Preston and 20 in South Ribble. No work has yet commenced on assessing these sites in detail, as such it is not known how many are currently in the Green Belt or on other land currently excluded from consideration in the site assessment process.
16. The sites received will be assessed against the criteria in the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). Following feedback received to the Issues and Options consultation there were comments received which suggested that the methodology is not in line with national policy. To reflect these concerns, the approach to site selection is being revised to ensure it does align with national policy and guidance, in particular to ensure that sites are not excluded from the assessment process prematurely. The fluid nature of the SHELAA process allows for this. As we are only just starting work on the site assessment, this allows us the opportunity to amend the methodology set out in the current version of the SHELAA (known as iteration 1) to ensure that we are applying a policy compliant approach to site assessment. The amendments to the criteria will be incorporated in an addendum to Iteration 1, rather than in a new document which would become Iteration 2.
17. The main changes to the SHELAA methodology to be set out in the SHELAA addendum are to include bringing back into consideration sites lying partially within protected areas / flood zones; sites in open countryside / area of other open countryside / protected open land; and wholly brownfield sites in the Green Belt. All remaining sites in the database will then be assessed in more detail as to their suitability, availability and achievability, taking into account identified site constraints, and making adjustments to site capacity where necessary. In accordance with national policy and guidance, this approach will mean that all sequentially preferable options for meeting local housing need will have been fully explored before alternative options are considered
18. Sites already received through Call for Sites 1 and 2 were initially looked at by each of the home teams during spring/summer 2019 and each team is currently reviewing the new sites from call for sites 3 and any others which now need to be considered due to the change in approach to the criteria as discussed above, against the SHELAA. Once this work is complete, we will have an initial indication of the amount of land that is potentially available for development, and we can then start to look at its suitability in more detail through site assessment work and site visits.
19. The comments received on sites through the consultation process will also be used to assist in the assessment of sites. Information has been received on a number of the suggestions from local communities close to the sites as well as statutory consultees and land promoters.
20. In relation to site assessments, work is ongoing to piece together Central Lancashire wide GIS data layers that will be used to undertake a desk-based assessment of all the suggested sites before moving on to sites visits as necessary. It is hoped this work can commence in Autumn.
21. In addition, work has also been undertaken to ensure that sites which have been parked or are duplicated are identified. This has ensured that time is focussed on assessing

those sites that need to be assessed. It is currently hoped that we can start detailed site assessment work in Autumn once the home teams have finished their initial assessment.

PLANNING WHITE PAPER

22. The Government published its Planning White Paper “Planning for the Future” in August for consultation. The Central Lancashire Team is considering its implications for the work being undertaken, but that work is continuing.

EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA)

23. A separate presentation will be given at the meeting by the Council’s consultants JBA Consulting.
24. The SFRA has identified Strategic Recommendations for each of the site suggestions put forward. These findings will be used by the Central Lancashire and planning Home Team officers as they review the list of sites suggestions against the SHELAA to assist them in recommending which suggestions are taken forward to the Local Plan. As such, the SFRA will be an important part of the evidence base to inform Members’ decisions regarding site allocations in the new Local Plan.

HOUSING STUDY

25. The Housing Study, prepared by Consultants Icenl, was updated following the consultation on the MOU. Further updates are planned this year to reflect the economic growth aspirations of the region and any changes proposed through the Planning White Paper and updates to the Standard Method. These updates will only be undertaken once the evidence base work being done at the County level and the update to the Standard method numbers has been finalised.

HOUSING NEEDS STUDY

26. Preston and Chorley Councils are partnering to commission a Housing Needs Study, South Ribble having undertaken a similar study in 2019. This study will look in more detail at housing needs of specific areas of Chorley and Preston and of the type of housing that is required. Commissioning of this work is in progress and is expected to begin in the Autumn.

CENTRAL LANCASHIRE TRANSPORT MASTERPLAN

27. Lancashire County Council (LCC) have now shared with us the findings of the first stage of work from consultants Jacobs in the form of an interactive baseline report which is in a digital format. We can now start to work with County to feed in the sites suggestions and look at the sites in more detail to understand any issues which may be apparent for potential allocation in the Local Plan, and identify any infrastructure improvements which could be required to overcome them.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

28. Agreement has been reached to procure consultants to advise the Councils on policies to be developed through the Local Plan which will address climate change and carbon reduction measures, as well as looking at the potential for renewable energy generation across Central Lancashire and the areas where this could be achieved most efficiently. A budget of up to £30,000 has been identified for this work and will need to be added to the Central Lancashire local Plan budget.
29. Work to commission this study had been paused to allow for the outcomes from work which County have been leading on entitled “Measures Required to Reduce Lancashire’s Carbon Emissions to Net Zero by 2030 or 2050”, as the results of this work will directly relate to any work commissioned locally.
30. However, as result of the current epidemic, work on commissioning the study by County has been delayed. Initial results from this work had been expected in the summer. We are currently liaising with County over this, and other pieces of work, to understand better when to expect them and to assess what impact these delays may have on our own timetable and how we progress with work in this area.

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT (HRA)

31. HRA is a process which identifies the likelihood of significant effects of the plan on designated habitat sites, and any mitigation measures. The findings from the HRA will feed into the draft policies and sites for Preferred Options, and ultimately the submission Local Plan. There are essentially two separate stages to the HRA process. The initial stage will involve identifying habitat sites and their special characteristics and then screening them to identify whether there are likely to have any significant effects. If significant effects are identified, an Appropriate Assessment will then also be required, which will consider mitigation measures.
32. Given the specialist nature of this work, the joint authorities are seeking to procure experienced professionals to undertake all stages of the HRA, and a specification has been circulated to the Home Teams. Following conclusion of the procurement process it is hoped that the appointed consultants will be in a position to commence work on the HRA early in the new year.

LOCAL PLAN VIABILITY

31. As stated previously, we propose to appoint consultants to undertake work on assessing viability of the Local Plan. Consultants will be appointed to undertake work on plan viability and a Community Infrastructure Levy review (subject to the White paper Planning for the Future changes). This will be a jointly commissioned piece of work and run concurrently with the Local Plan Timetable. Procurement of this work will commence following completion of the initial assessment of sites by the home teams.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

32. The Local Development Scheme was been agreed by all 3 Councils. No changes to the timetable have been made to reflect any potential delays as a result of Covid 19. The Central and Homes teams are liaising regularly to progress work. If it is clear that there are impacts on work as a result of the current crisis, any changes required will be

reported to members and the timetable updated accordingly. Delays to work to date, since lockdown began, have affected the SFRA and Site Assessments programme of works. The key milestones for the Local Plan are set out below.

Key Stage	Timescale
Stage one Issues and Options Consultation	November 2019 to February 2020
Stage two Preferred Options Consultation	June 2021 to August 2021
Stage three Publication Draft	October 2022 to December 2022
Stage four Submission	March 2023
Adoption	December 2023

DUTY TO COOPERATE DISCUSSIONS

33. To ensure that we meet our duty to cooperate (DtC) requirements we are continuing to engage with relevant bodies on the development of the Local Plan. LCC continue to be a key partner and discussions with them on a number of issues will continue throughout plan preparation. We have also had received requests for DtC agreements with neighbouring areas to discuss housing numbers, we will continue to engage with these authorities as necessary to ensure we meet this requirement.
34. We have also had initial discussions with Stagecoach around how we can improve bus services across Central Lancashire and the need to ensure that the feasibility of how we can provide routes to new developments/settlements is considered at the Local Plan stage.

Contact for Further Information:

Carolyn Williams 01257 515555

Central Lancashire Local Plan Team



Report of	Meeting	Date
Central Lancashire Authorities	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	10 November 2020

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: PLANNING WHITE PAPER

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- Between 6 August and 29 October 2020 the Government published its Planning White Paper (Planning for the Future) for consultation. The White Paper proposes some very significant changes to the planning system, to the extent that by 2024 much of what is done in the planning system will be done differently to the way it is done today.
- The purpose of this report is to summarise the key changes to the system proposed in the White Paper for Members. The three Councils have submitted a formal response to Government on the White Paper separately.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The White Paper emphasises the need for a 'once in a generation' reform to the planning system, which Government state has become too complex, does not deliver enough new homes, suffers from a loss of public trust and simply results in delay to the development industry.
- The new system is proposed to continue the 'plan-led' approach, and will require Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to categorise all land in their administrative area for **Growth, Renewal** or **Protection** in the local plan. The categorisation will result in different approaches to securing planning permission.
- In addition, the Government propose to revert to 'top-down' housing requirements for LPAs to plan for in their local plans. The housing requirement is proposed to be binding, and will be based on the standard methodology calculation, albeit factoring in localised constraints on development, a so-called 'policy on' approach.
- The White Paper frames the proposed reforms in three separate 'pillars' to the new planning system. These pillars are set out in the next section of the report. This report does not set out all 24 proposals in the White Paper, only the key ones.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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BACKGROUND

Pillar One: Planning for Development

A New Approach to Plan-Making

Proposal 1: Role of Local Plans simplified to identify three types of land

- 8. Growth areas would be identified for substantial development, and would include new settlements and urban extensions. Sites in this category in the local plan would have automatic ‘outline type’ approval.
- 9. Renewal areas would be suitable for development, and would for example cover existing built-up areas. Densification and infill could be included, inappropriate development of garden land would continue to be resisted.
- 10. Protected areas would include sites with environmental or cultural characteristics, such as Green Belt, AONBs, Conservations Areas and open countryside.

Proposal 2: DM policies established at national scale

- 11. National planning policy would become the primary source of DM policies, not local plans. There would be no provision for the inclusion of general DM policies in local plans.

Proposal 4: National standard method for establishing a binding housing requirement

- 12. The national standard method would deliver the Government’s ambition to deliver 300,000 new homes annually and would remove the debate about housing numbers which dominates the plan-making process.
- 13. The binding housing requirement would factor in; the size of settlements; the affordability of places; the extent of land constraints, and; the opportunities to use existing brownfield land for housing.
- 14. This approach should ensure enough land is planned for and deliver certainty in to the process. This would mean that the continuing requirement to be able to demonstrate a five year supply would be abolished. The Housing Delivery Test would however remain.

A Streamlined DM Process with Automatic Planning Permission

Proposal 5: Growth Areas would automatically be granted outline planning permission

- 15. Under this proposal outline planning permission would be conferred by the adoption of the local plan in areas identified for Growth.

16. Detailed planning permission would only be required, and this could be achieved via a reformed reserved matters application, a Local Development Order or a Development Consent Order.
17. In Renewal areas there will be a general presumption in favour of development. For pre-specified development, a new route would be created to give automatic planning permission for schemes meeting prior approval requirements. A faster planning application process would be created for other forms of development.
18. In Protected areas, the normal planning application process would be required.

Proposal 6: Faster and more certain decision-taking

19. The statutory 8 and 13 week time limits for determining planning applications would be a firm deadline not an aspiration. In order to help achieve this there would be a standardisation of planning applications, where major development proposals for example would need to be accompanied by a single planning statement of no more than 50 pages in length.
20. Under this proposal all detailed planning decisions would be delegated to officers.
21. There would be potential for an automatic refund of the planning application fee to applicants where a decision has not been made within the specified time limit, or where a refused planning application is allowed at appeal.

A Streamlined, More Engaging Plan-Making Process

Proposal 8: LPAs and PINS will be required through legislation to meet a statutory timescale for key stages of the process

22. The plan-making process will cover five stages and should take no more than 30 months in total:

Stage 1 (6 months): Call for suggestions of areas under the three categories.

Stage 2 (12 months): LPA produces local plan and any necessary evidence.

Stage 3 (6 weeks): LPA submits local plan to PINS and publishes the local plan for public consultation. All responses will need to explain how the local plan should change and will have a word limit.

Stage 4 (9 months): PINS Inspector considers whether the local plan is 'sustainable' and proposes binding changes if necessary. Relevant parties can be heard by the Inspector at his/her discretion, and an Examination in Public is not essential.

Stage 5 (6 weeks): Local plan map and text are finalised and published.

23. LPAs who fail to get a plan in place within 30 months face Government intervention. The five year review requirement remains in place.

Proposal 9: Neighbourhood Plans retained as important means of community input

24. Neighbourhood Plans are to be retained in the reformed planning system and Government will consider the extent to which the content of such plans needs to be amended to reflect the proposals for local plans.

Pillar Two: Planning for Beautiful and Sustainable Places

Creating Frameworks for Quality

Proposal 11: Make design expectations more visual and predictable, design guidance and codes to be prepared locally with community involvement

25. A national model Design Code is to be published alongside revised national policy. That along with a revised Manuel for Streets is to have a direct bearing on the design of new communities. Local plans will move away from policies to including lists of design standards, requirements and specifications.
26. Under this proposal community involvement in the creation of design codes is essential, design codes produced with no effective community input will be given no weight in decision-taking. Similarly where there are no local design codes, the national one will be used.

Proposal 14: Introduce a fast-track for beauty to incentivise high quality development

27. National policy will make clear that schemes which comply with design codes should gain swift approval. In addition Growth areas will have a site-specific design code as a condition of outline approval gained through the local plan.
28. The White Paper also discusses under this proposal the potential to widen and change the nature of permitted development to enable popular and replicable forms of development to be approved easily and quickly.

Proposal 18: Ambitious improvements to energy efficiency standards to achieve net-zero carbon by 2050

29. Under this proposal the Government ambition is for all homes built under the new planning system to not need retrofitting in the future to achieve carbon goals. The White Paper discusses the need to explore options for energy efficiency standards beyond 2025.

Pillar Three: Planning for Infrastructure and Connected Places

A Consolidated Infrastructure Levy

Proposal 19: CIL reformed to be charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a threshold, with a mandatory set of national rates

30. Under this proposal traditional Section 106 Agreements and CIL would be consolidated into a single new Infrastructure Levy. The Infrastructure Levy would be a flat-rate, value-based national rate. The new charge would be on final development value and would be levied upon occupation.
31. The new Infrastructure Levy would incorporate value-based minimum threshold below which a levy wouldn't be charged in order to prevent low viability development from becoming unviable.
32. In order to support timely delivery of infrastructure an option would be available for Council's to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy to forward fund.

Proposal 21: Reformed Infrastructure Levy should deliver affordable housing

33. Under this proposal securing affordable housing as a planning obligation would not be lost – the powers under Section 106 would be integrated into the Infrastructure Levy.
34. This could be via on-site delivery or off-site commuted sum. On-site delivery would be an ‘in-kind’ Infrastructure Levy contribution and as such would be offset from the final cash liability from the site.

Proposal 22: More freedom to local authorities on how they spend Infrastructure Levy

35. Once core infrastructure obligations are met there is scope under this proposal for increased flexibility on how the remainder could be spent. This could include improving other Council services or reducing Council Tax.
36. However it remains an important part of the Infrastructure Levy that funding is spent close to where development takes place to ensure the neighbourhood share remains part of the reformed planning system.

Delivering Change*Proposal 23: Develop a comprehensive resources and skills strategy for the planning sector to support reform implementation*

37. The White Paper states that the cost of operating the new planning system should be covered by the principal beneficiaries of planning gain – landowners and developers. In that context planning application fees are to remain, with a more standardised approach to pre-application charging to be introduced.
38. A small proportion of Infrastructure Levy should be earmarked by LPAs to cover ‘general planning costs’.

Stronger Enforcement*Proposal 24: Seek to strengthen enforcement powers and sanctions*

39. Finally the White Paper proposes to review and strengthen existing planning enforcement powers and sanctions available. This could include more powers to address intentional unauthorised development, including higher fines.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Chris Blackburn	01772 906570	02/11/2020	

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Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive	Central Lancashire Strategic Planning Joint Advisory Committee	10 November 2020

CENTRAL AND WEST LANCASHIRE RAIL STUDY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Members on the Central and West Lancashire Rail Study as attached at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. South Ribble, Chorley and West Lancashire Borough Councils commissioned a high level study to investigate potential rail improvements within our boroughs. This study was inspired by the possible funding available for new rail interventions via the Restoring Your Railway Fund, and the collective desire of the three authorities to improve rail connectivity on the Ormskirk-Preston line and to consider options for a new rail station at Coppull on the West Coast Mainline. The recommended options shortlist focuses on potentially extending the Merseyrail service from Ormskirk to Burscough Bridge (in West Lancashire), i.e. re-opening the Burscough Curves, and alongside that improving the service between Burscough and Preston, including potential new stations at Midge Hall and Coote Lane (both in South Ribble). In the medium-term, the report also recommends considering further the proposal for a station at Coppull as capacity on the West Coast Mainline improves.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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BACKGROUND

4. Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Councils jointly commissioned consultants WSP to look into rail improvement options on the Preston to Ormskirk line, the Southport to Wigan line and the Preston to Wigan line. The study was a high level study reviewing past work on both lines and looking at what factors may have changed since then and which could justify the investment required to deliver improvements to junctions, the reopening of stations or the delivery of new station options.
5. The focus of the study was to look at how improvements could be delivered in Burscough to better connect the two lines which pass through this area, as well as options for the reopening of Midge Hall Station in South Ribble and Coppull station in Chorley. Additional station options in South Ribble and Chorley and tram options were also discussed by WSP and are presented in the final report.

THE STUDY

Current Position

6. The Study highlights that all 3 councils have declared a climate emergency and are looking at ways to reduce carbon emissions to meet the pledge of carbon neutrality by 2030. A key consideration in this is reducing the number of journeys by car, as transport is the largest contributor to carbon emissions nationally, contributing 40 % of overall emissions.
7. It is clear that existing rail infrastructure is not sufficient to offer a viable alternative to road as the primary means of travelling around the area, however as travel by rail produces less CO2 than cars, it is clear that a modal shift is needed to help the councils achieve this aim.
8. The study highlights limitations with the current connections and potential areas to improve based on areas of known/planned growth and where the changes will improve the service offered to customers. It also identifies that there is a relationship between the population within 1 mile of a station, with larger populations showing greater usage of stations. This can be seen with Chorley being the busiest station in the area next to Preston. Furthermore, park and ride stations are also shown to increase the use of the trains, with Buckshaw Parkway being significantly busier than other stations in the area (except Chorley and Preston) with data for 2019 showing this to rank no.3 in passenger numbers in the study area with passenger numbers close to 367,000 compared to a population of 5,000, this station attracted more passengers than Leyland and Wigan Wall gate.
9. The study also reviews the existing highways network and notes that increased congestion, and slower journey times are expected in the coming years due to population increases predicted for the area, even with planned and delivered highways improvements, unless more sustainable modes of transport such as trains and buses can be improved.
10. Previous studies on the lines are as below
 - Burscough 2009 and 2015, both now considered out of date,
 - Midge Hall 2019, did consider the implications for potential demand of recent and planned developments in the area
 - Coppull 2015 as part of wider work by LCC, this concluded the works required to the west Costs Main Line (WCML) would be too expensive to make this station viable.

Study Findings

11. A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of the current network has been carried out and the results of the report present Options for improving the existing rolling stock (greener/cleaner trains), improving the current routes offered and potential for reopening stations/or completely new stations. The opportunities identified are greater for expansion of services in South Ribble and West Lancashire than Chorley due to the financial costs associated with works in Coppull. Tram /train options are also considered and are of most relevance to South Ribble and Preston, with lines looked at around Penwortham and New Longton.
12. New stations are proposed in a number of locations as indicated below and at Appendix 1. These have been identified to reduce gaps between existing stopping points and could help to open up land for redevelopment. The station locations proposed may also have potential for park and ride. These are:
 - Burscough Junction – to connect Preston and Ormskirk line to the Southport to Wigan line or create a walking link between the two
 - Wymott and Garth to serve the prisons
 - Re opening Midge Hall

- Parker Lane/New Longton
- Coote Lane

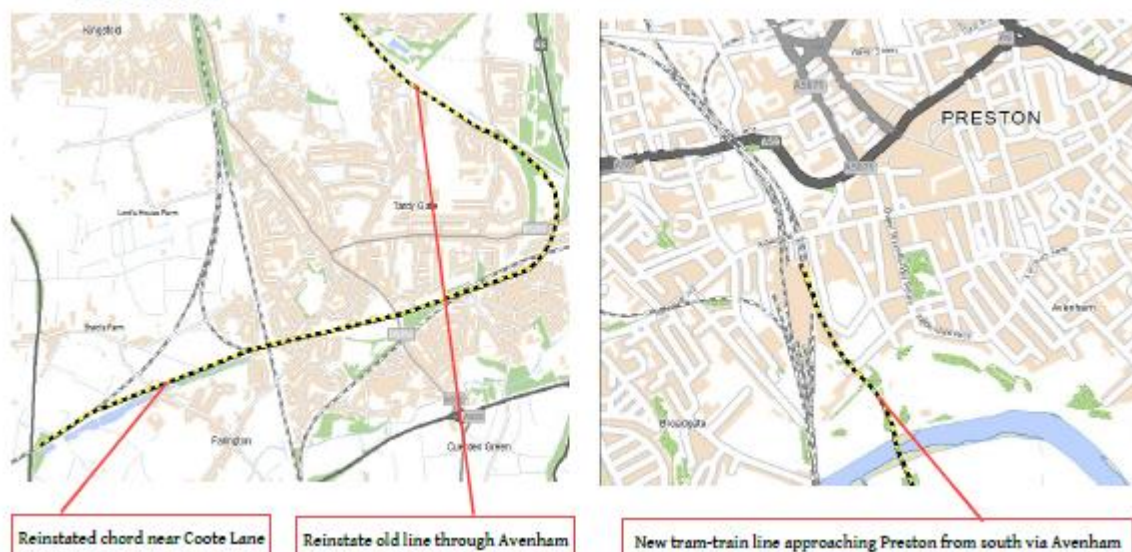
13. Of the Options presented, following qualitative assessment, Burscough curves improvements and re-opening of Midge Hall performed better than others and are identified as the main options to pursue in the short term. This is down to the cost of delivering the improvements and the known developments in the area which justify expectations of higher passenger numbers to recoup the costs associated with initial delivery.

14. **Tram- train options** towards Preston present a number of options for creating a much improved Lancashire network. This is because tram-trains are able to leave the railway alignment and run along the streets, opening up potential for routes which trains alone cannot reach. The report present 3 options (Appendix 1, page 21) as discussed below.

- 3 (a) Existing rail alignment – using existing rail, no on street running and would need to align with existing network. Option for a new station around Penwortham
- 3 (b) new Longton and Penwortham way – new service line to serve Penwortham and approach the City Centre of Preston from the west.



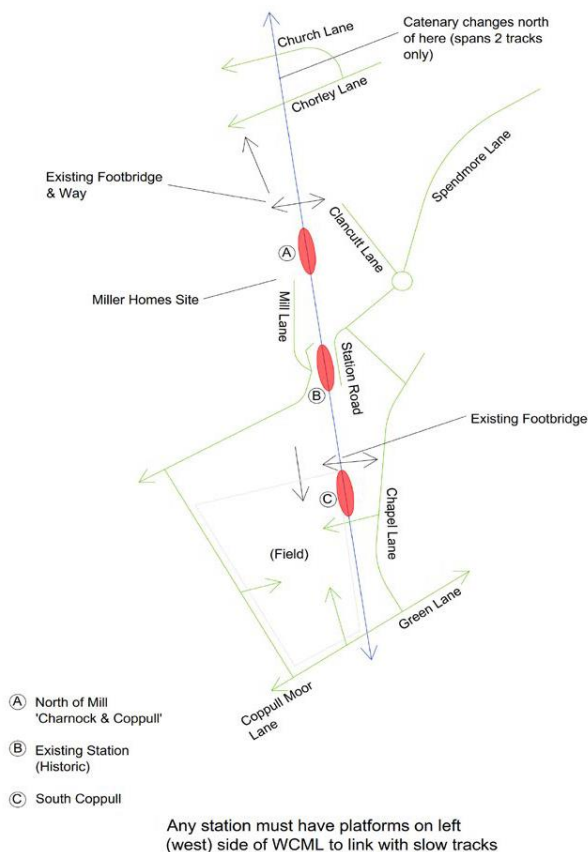
- 3 (c) Lostock Hall and Avenham – Achieved through rebuilding old chord near Coote lane and Farington old line from the east of Lostock Hall to Avenham. This would serve existing and new developments in the Lostock Hall area.



15. **New Stations** The study also identifies where new stations could be considered, for South Ribble, the study highlights potential for reopening of Midge Hall Station as well as considering new stations at Parker Lane/ New Longton and Coote Lane.

16. Midge Hall station is still in existence; however, it has not been a stopping point since 1961. The findings of the study note the recent expansion in development around this area since that time, and recent permissions at the Test track site could justify the cost of reopening this station. There is also strong public support for this to happen.
17. Parker Lane /New Longton – this option would be to provide a new station to residents around the A582 Tank Roundabout linking Penwortham, and west Leyland which are all poorly served by rail. This station options also has the potential to offer park and ride which has been particularly successful at Buckshaw.
18. The final option, Coote Lane, is 3.5km from Preston and near to potential new housing allocations. It would also service existing populations around Penwortham, and Kingsfold.
19. Of the Options presented, following qualitative assessment, Burscough curves improvements and re-opening of Midge Hall performed better than others and are identified as the main options to pursue in the short term. This is down to the cost of delivering the improvements and the known developments in the area which justify expectations of higher passenger numbers to recoup the costs associated with initial delivery.
20. Coppull Station is looked at with 3 potential locations considered as shown below. For any station to be delivered here, significant work is required to improve the West Coast Main Line (WCML) which has previously ruled out reopening this station, this is the most costly of the options assessed through the study. However, improvements to the WCML will be required to deliver HS2 and this could offer the opportunity to develop a station on a spur away from the main track as is the case at Euxton Balshaw Lane. The track in this area could only extend to 3 tracks not 4, so any station serving Coppull would be a single platform station with an island configuration. However, Coppull alone would not support the costs needed to develop this line, it would either need the investment from HS2, or if it is not provided by the rail industry, justification for development would come from demand for higher passenger numbers from surrounding areas such as Charnock and Standish resulting from increased housing delivery in this area. A park and ride facility may also assist in attracting higher number as has been the case on Buckshaw Village aided by an increase in local housing delivery.
21. Coppull Options (Appendix 1 pages 26-27):
 - Option A: Coppull North by Coppull Ring Mill, north of the village centre towards Charnock Richard
 - Option B: Coppull Central – original station location, Spendmore Lane/Station road
 - Option C: Coppull South - Chapel Lane, south of the village centre
22. Coppull South (Option C) is likely to be the most feasible station option of the 3 presented, and land has been suggested around this location for future housing growth. This option could also offer the potential for park and ride which has shown already at Buckshaw to be a popular option for commuters.

Coppull Options



Assessment of Options and Short List

23. The Study concludes its findings with a RAG analysis and subsequent shortlist of the options presented. This identifies Options with the most potential to be explored further at this stage and they are:
 - Burscough Bridge improvements – this relies on either electrification or use of new rolling stock on hybrid (electric-battery) power. A low cost scheme and easy to deliver
 - New station at Midge Hall – this would service existing and planned developments but is dependent on enough housing to justify passenger numbers being high enough to cover the costs
 - New station around Parker Lane/New Longton/Coote Lane area – again this is dependent on enough housing built in sufficient numbers to justify passenger numbers.

24. Coppull Station is identified as medium term option due to the high investment costs needed to upgrade the WCML, and the need to be able to evidence the necessary wider growth in the area which could sustain the infrastructure costs needed if it is not provided by the rail industry. This option also performed worst of all the options presented in the RAG analysis, with only the South option deemed potentially deliverable. If the Council wish to pursue this option, work will need to be done as stated, to identify future expansion of the area which will be sufficient to generate enough revenue to make this option a justifiable investment.

25. The tram/train option to improve services offered between Burscough and Preston is also presented as a medium term option, although this did perform well in the RAG analysis for improvements close to Preston around new Longton and Penwortham.

Next Steps

26. The Study has been shared with planning and transport colleagues in Lancashire County Council (LCC) working on the Transport Masterplan for the area. Further discussions will be had with the County to set out which options should be taken forward into the Masterplan.
27. These options will be addressed directly with LCC and the operators to look into the feasibility of these further.
28. The MP for West Lancashire is already engaged in supporting developments to improve connections in Burscough and raising the profile of this option with full support of all local councils and MPs covering Southport, Chorley, South Ribble and Preston.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Alison Marland	01257 515151	2 November 2020	

Central and West Lancashire Rail Options



INTRODUCTION

Central and west Lancashire is an area with considerable potential for growth, with sites potentially to be allocated in Local Plans for residential and employment developments. At the moment some parts of the area are poorly served by public transport, which leads to residents, workers and visitors making many journeys by car. Rail services in the area are poor – infrequent, at times unreliable, and slow.

Chorley, South Ribble, and West Lancashire Councils have all declared climate emergencies, and all aim to achieve net carbon zero by 2030. With transport as the largest contributor of carbon emissions across the country, action to reduce carbon emissions from all modes of transport is imperative.

When petrol and diesel car trips are replaced with journeys by train, carbon emissions are reduced – especially when trains are electric or powered by other zero-carbon sources.

When new developments are brought forward, easy access to sustainable transport is vital in preventing the creation of new car trips. High-quality fixed track (rail) services, in particular, can help unlock new sites by providing attractive and fast connections.

The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed travel behaviours during the time we were working on this report, and we cannot yet know when public transport use will return to previous levels. This report is looking ahead - and assumes that the fundamentals of why people travel, and where, are likely to return to previous patterns in the medium term.

It's time to take a renewed look at public transport opportunities in the area – particularly around the under-utilised rail corridors. This report, commissioned by Chorley, South Ribble, and West Lancashire Councils, sets out ambitious options for a step change in rail services in the area – to transform connectivity and help decarbonise central and west Lancashire.



CONTENTS

Location and economic geography	4
Climate emergency	5
Carbon emissions	6
Current rail service	7
Highway network	9
Strategic context	10
Current & future rail services	11
Benchmark	12
Options	13
Rolling Stock	14
Infrastructure & station improvements	16
Service options	17
New station options	24
Coppull Station	26
Sifting	28
Options shortlist	29



LOCATION AND ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

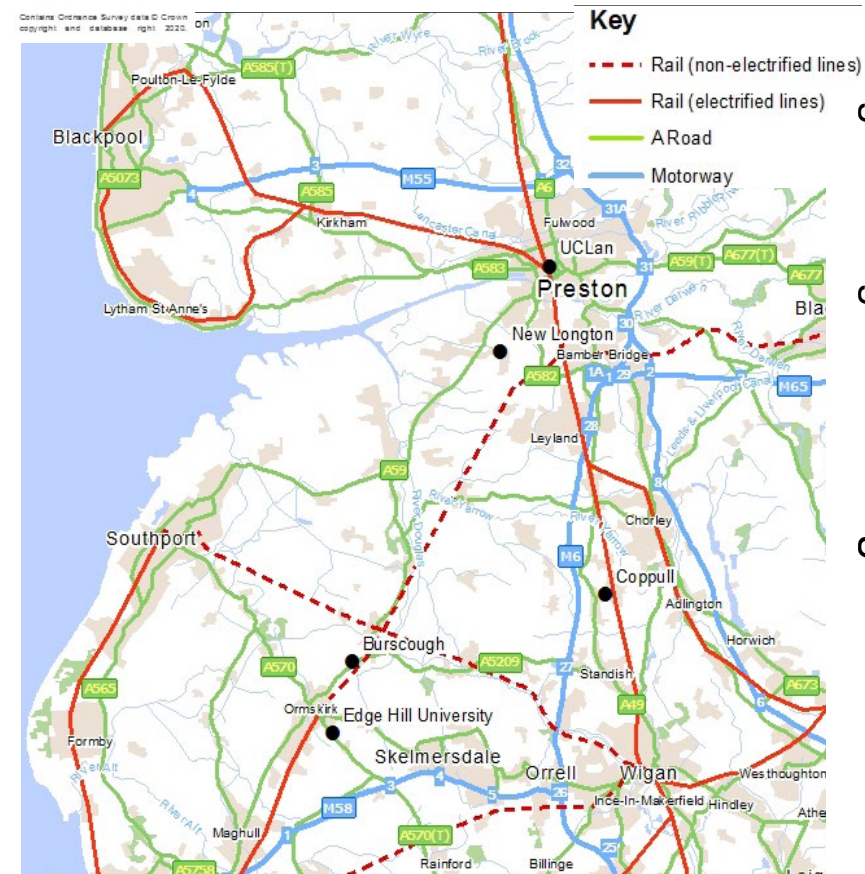
Central and west Lancashire – the area covered by Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire Councils – combines urban and rural areas between the North West cities and is characterised by smaller market towns and villages. Many residents travel out of the area for work and leisure, to Preston, Liverpool and Manchester, and also to neighbouring towns including Southport and Wigan.

The area is served by the West Coast Main Line between Preston and Wigan and the Leyland-Bolton branch towards Manchester. Two unelectrified lines cross the western section of the area: the Ormskirk-Preston line and the Southport-Wigan line. These cross in the small town of Burscough – but serve two separate stations with no convenient interchange between them.

The M6, M58, M61 and M65 motorways carry national, regional and local traffic. The A59 and A565 – dual carriageway in places – are key regional connections between Southport, Ormskirk and Preston.

Place	Population
Preston	122,719
Penwortham	23,047
Southport	90,381
Ormskirk	24,196
Skelmersdale	38,813
Burscough	9,182
Wigan	103,608
Leyland	35,600
Chorley	34,667

Towns within the area shown in red
Source: 2011 Census





CLIMATE EMERGENCY

South Ribble Borough Council proclaimed a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and is aiming to achieve zero net carbon by 2030.

West Lancashire Council also aspires to carbon neutrality by 2030 and has pledged, amongst other things, to work to explore the expansion of community energy, work with partners in West Lancashire to deliver carbon reductions and grow the local economy, and require new-build homes to be carbon zero and new commercial properties to meet carbon reduction design codes.

Chorley Council is taking steps including installing electric vehicle charging points in the town centre, providing electric vehicles to its neighbourhood officers and investing in home energy efficiency service – sharing the same target of net zero carbon by 2030.

“The economic system is enriching a minority while leading humanity towards climate catastrophe. ... We can achieve more for our environment by working cooperatively than we do alone.” – West Lancashire Council motion declaring climate emergency

Full council believes that [...] local governments recognise this cannot, and should not, wait for their national government to act; it is important for the residents of Chorley that its Council commits to reducing CO2eq emissions and work towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible; bold climate change can deliver economic benefits by way of new jobs, economic savings, market opportunities and improved well-being.” – Chorley Council motion declaring climate emergency, 2020

“This is a global issue and on a local scale South Ribble sees daily the negative effects of poor air quality and increased carbon emissions. The Council are driving this forward but we can’t do this alone. We need to work together to take action and make a difference. I can’t wait to see how we progress.” – Cllr Paul Foster, Leader, South Ribble Borough Council

“It’s vital that we as a council do what we can to tackle the dangerous levels of pollution in our borough. We have set a goal to be carbon neutral by 2030 and we can’t do this alone.” – Cllr Susan Jones, Cabinet Member for Environment, South Ribble Borough Council

“All relevant outside organisation member representatives, Cabinet Members and senior officers [must] work with partners, including individuals and community action groups across the borough to identify ways to make Chorley carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.” – Chorley Council motion declaring climate emergency, 2020

“We now have to do everything in our power to make [the necessary changes] happen.” – Cllr Steve Holgate, Chorley Council

“The economic system is enriching a minority while leading humanity towards climate catastrophe. ... We can achieve more for our environment by working cooperatively than we do alone.” – West Lancashire Council motion declaring climate emergency



CARBON EMISSIONS

“Unless we set ourselves a tough challenge, we aren’t going to make the effort. There is nobody in the whole world who is [solely] responsible for climate change – everybody is responsible.” – Cllr Laura Lennox, Chorley Council

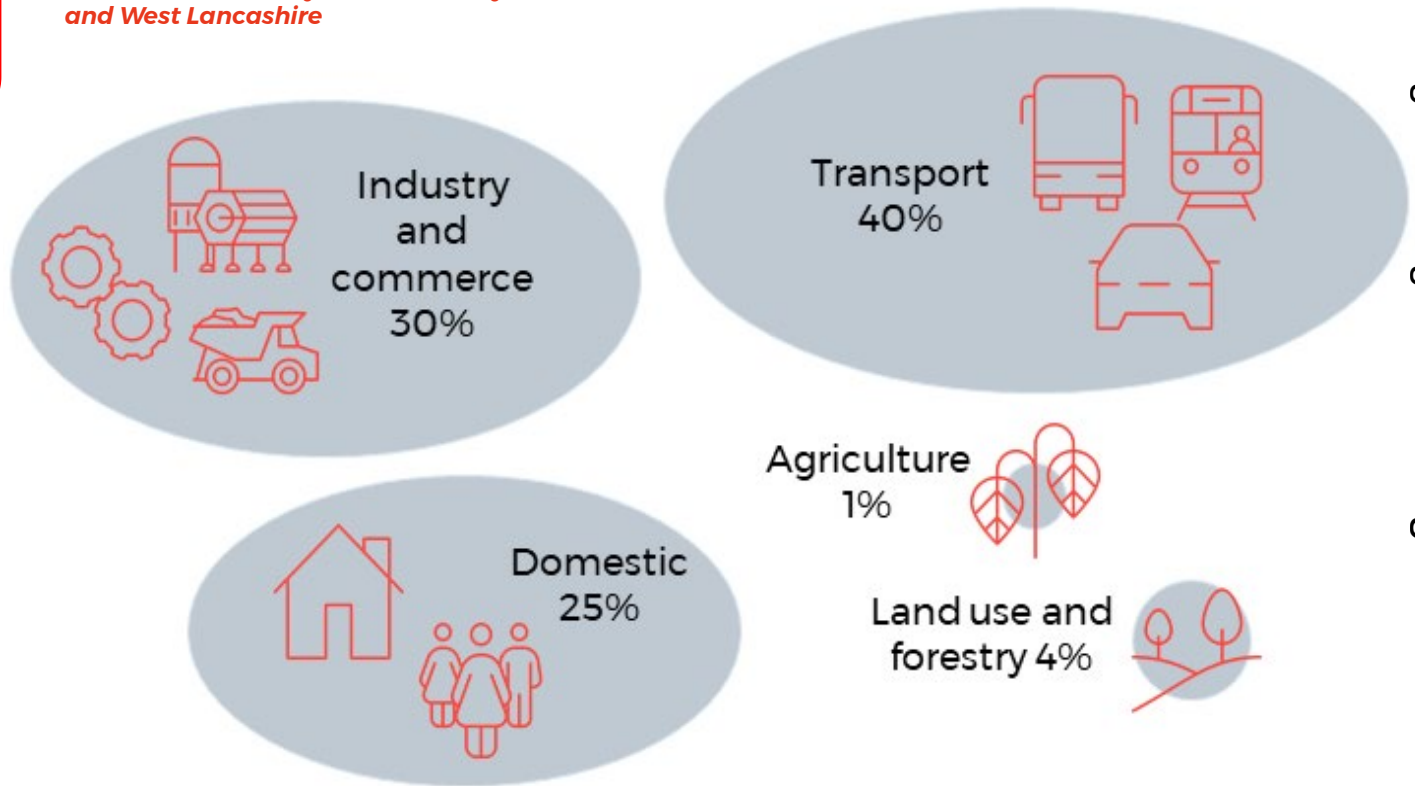
Transport is the largest contributor of carbon emissions in the three districts with 40% of the total, ahead of industry and commerce (30%), domestic (25%), land use and forestry (4%) and agriculture (1%). The split within the transport sector shows that railways are a small contributor. There is an opportunity to eliminate those carbon emissions – but also to reduce the road transport emissions by encouraging motorists to switch some of their trips to more attractive rail services operated by zero-carbon trains.

CO2 emissions by transport sub-sector (kT, 2017), Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire

Sub-sector	kT	%
Road Transport (A roads)	211	24%
Road Transport (Motorways)	442	51%
Road Transport (Minor roads)	200	23%
Transport Other	12	1%
Diesel Railways	8	1%
TOTAL	873	100%

Source: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

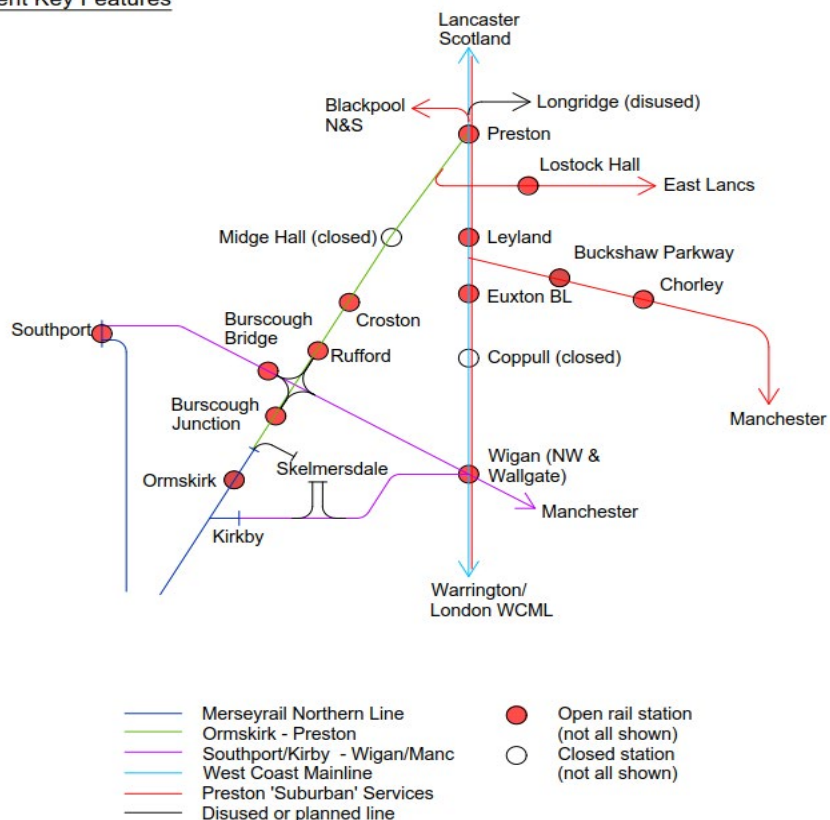
Carbon emissions by sector, Chorley, South Ribble and West Lancashire





CURRENT RAIL SERVICES

Rail Network
Current Key Features



	Ormskirk -Preston calling at Burscough Junction, Rufford, Croston	Southport - Wigan calling at Meols Cop, Bescar Lane, New Lane, Burscough Bridge, Hoscarr, Parbold, Appley Bridge and Gathurst	Preston - Wigan (local service) calling at Leyland, Euxton Balshaw Lane,
Operator	Northern	Northern	Northern
Days of operation	Mon-Sat	7 days a week	7 days a week
Frequency	hourly	half-hourly, most extending to/from Manchester (hourly evenings? Sundays)	hourly, extending beyond Preston to Blackpool North and beyond Wigan to Liverpool
First train	0625 ex Preston 0701 ex Ormskirk	0617 ex Southport 0637 ex Wigan	0629 ex Preston 0706 ex Wigan
Last train	2237 ex Preston 2310 ex Ormskirk	2310 ex Southport 2325 ex Wigan	2243 ex Preston 0004 ex Wigan
Journey time	30-34 minutes	31 minutes	25 minutes
Rolling stock	older diesel multiple units (class 150, 153)	mix of older and new diesel multiple unites (class 150, class 195)	mix of older and new electric multiple units (class 319, class 331)
Adult return fare	£8.60	£11.90	£7,30

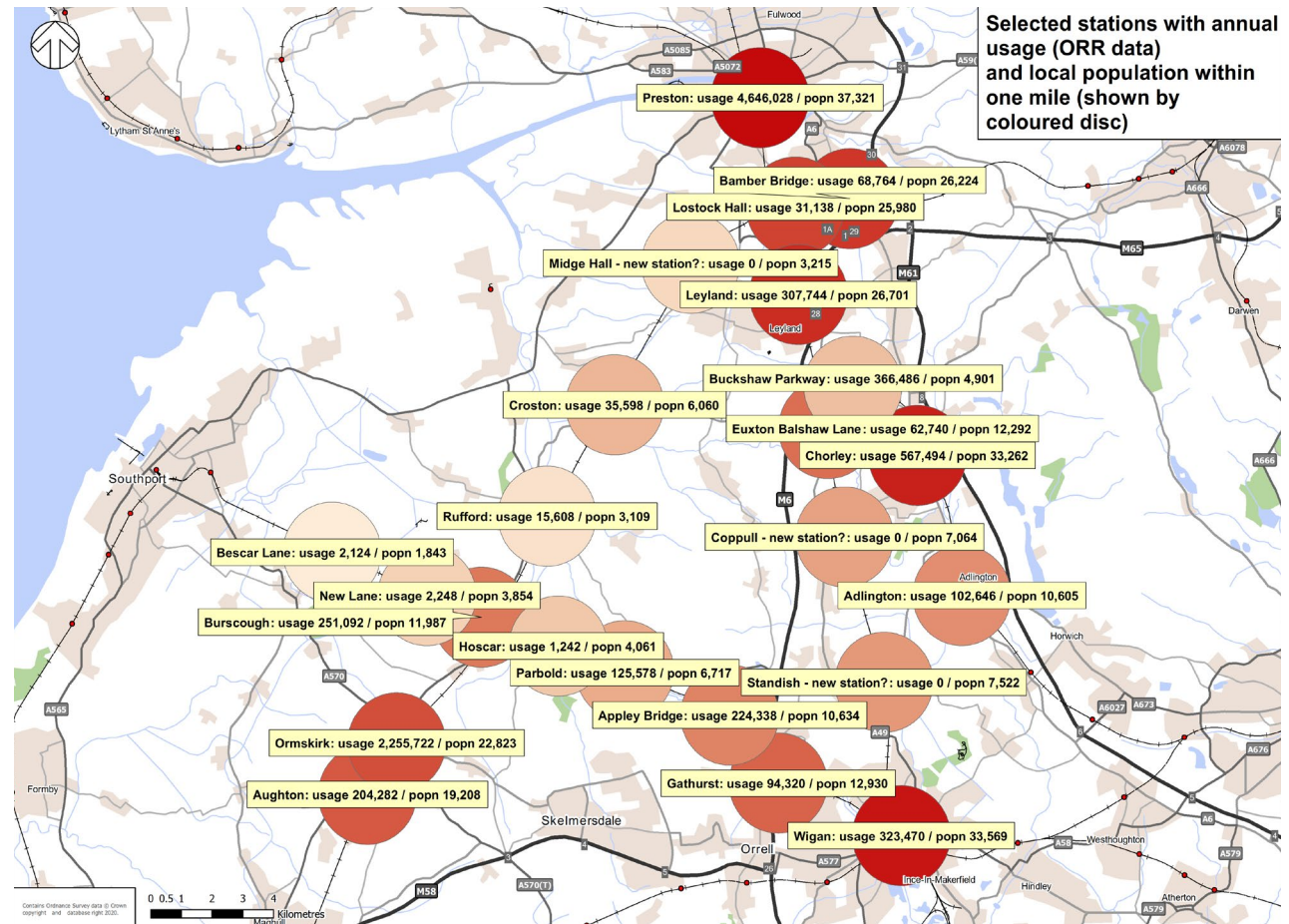
* Long-distance services operated by TransPennine Express and Avanti West Coast and serve Wigan North Western and Preston but do not call at Euxton Balshaw Lane or Leyland.



There is a relationship between the population within one mile of each station and the number of people using the station, as shown on the map. The rural village stations, particularly Bescar Lane, New Lane, Hoscar, Parbold, Rufford and Croston, serve small local populations and see low numbers of passengers. Stations serving larger towns see higher patronage. Park and ride facilities – as well as more frequent services – as at Buckshaw Parkway, for example, also lead to higher passenger numbers.

The circles around each station on the map represent the core catchment with a radius of one mile. The colour of the circle reflects the relative population, with darker circles showing larger populations, and paler circles showing smaller populations. Each station is labelled with its annual usage (2019 data from ORR statistics) and the estimate of the residential population within one mile. The busier stations see far higher passenger numbers than local population (for example Ormskirk station sees 225,000 passengers per year and the local population is 23,000). For the less busy stations, by contrast, the population exceeds station usage, meaning that each local resident uses the station less than once a year on average. For example, Hoscar station sees 1,200 passengers per year and a local population of 4,000.

We expect to see significant residential and employment growth in the area, which is likely to lead to increased demand for transport – and potentially rail in particular.



Population data: Census 2011; Station usage data: ORR 2019



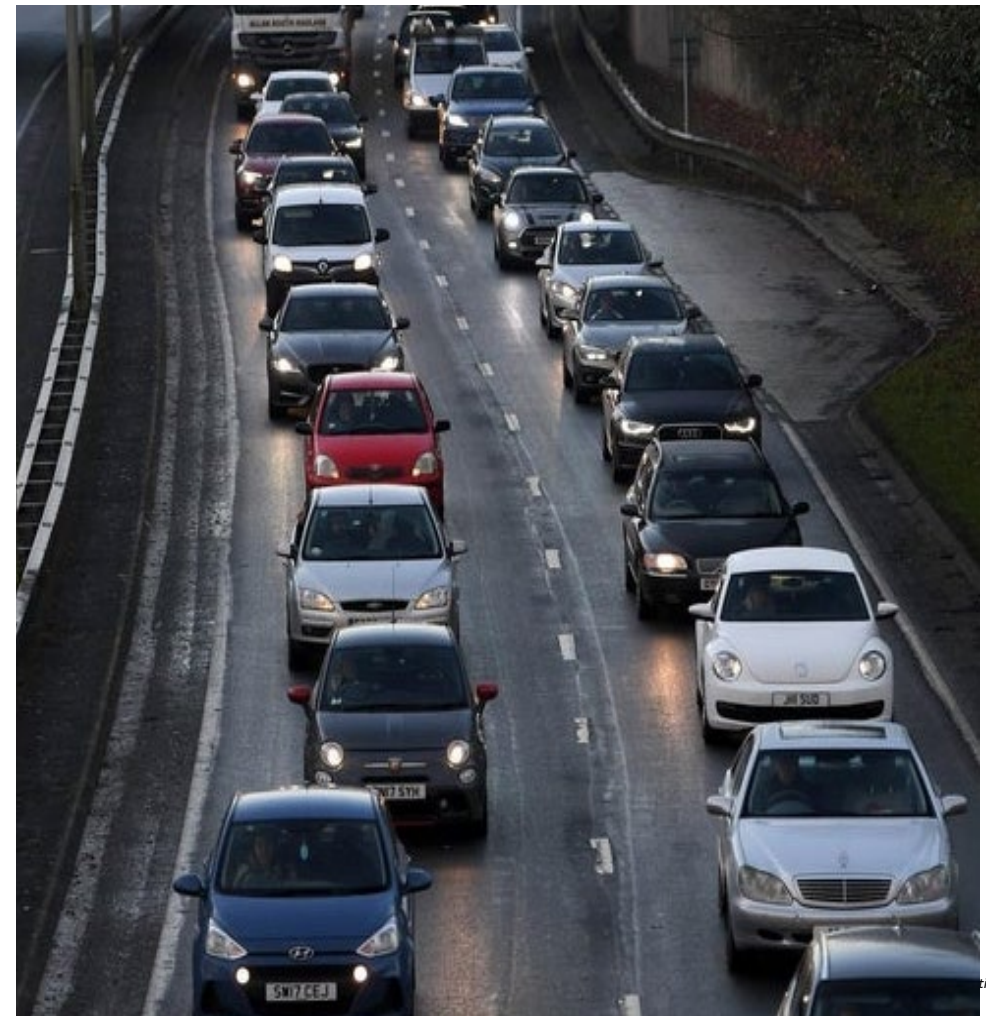
HIGHWAY NETWORK

Traffic levels on A roads in the area – in particular the A59 and A565 – are broadly static or slightly decreasing, when measured at DfT count points. This is also the case for key regional destinations, including Preston city centre, Southport, Ormskirk and Chorley town centres. This compares with an overall increase in road traffic across North West England – in particular on the region’s motorways.

It is likely that congestion at bottlenecks is causing drivers to choose alternative routes along minor roads, which are not picked up by the DfT counts - and anecdotal evidence suggests traffic levels are increasing across the region.

Many factors affect traffic levels, including economic conditions and the availability of good public transport, and although national trends show a decrease in the annual average distance travelled by car per person, increases in population tend to generate new car trips.

Should significant new development be brought forward, the area’s highway network is likely to see an increase in traffic and slower journey times – unless other modes, including public transport, walking and cycling are developed to provide attractive alternative options for many journeys.





STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Previous studies have focused on specific rail schemes without considering wider land-use and strategic transport developments, and are now in some cases out of date.

A Steer Davies Gleave study for Merseytravel in 2009 concluded that there would be some benefit from reinstating the northern Burscough curve and running a new Southport-Preston service, but only limited benefits from reinstating the southern Burscough curve and running a new Ormskirk-Southport service. Other options, including extending Liverpool services north of Ormskirk were assessed as likely to deliver poor value for money.

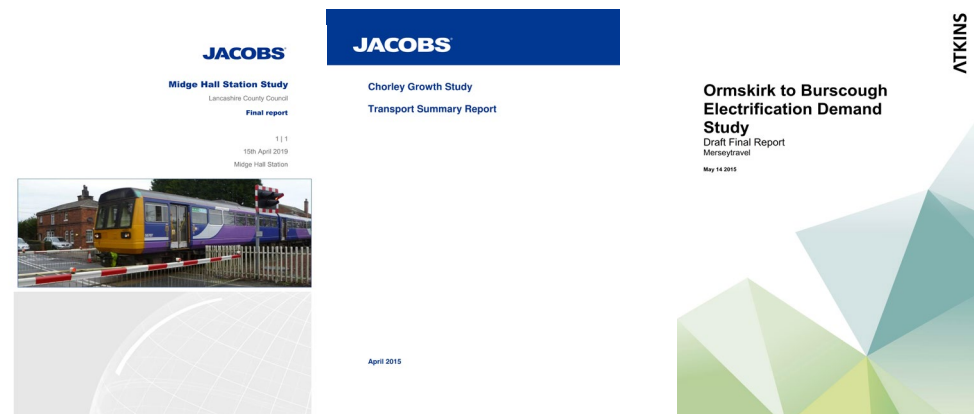
In 2015 Merseytravel commissioned Atkins to assess options for electrifying the line between Ormskirk and Burscough Junction and extending some or all Liverpool-Ormskirk services. (May 2015). All options were assessed as likely to deliver poor value for money.

Both of these studies were highly focused and are now out-of-date. The 2009 study was carried out before improvements on the Ormskirk-Preston line were completed which now allow a clockface hourly service to run, and before the recent increase in Northern timetables on the Southport-Wigan line. The 2015 study was completed before the new Merseyrail rolling stock with potential for battery powered operation were specified and ordered, which now provide greater flexibility.

A study by Jacobs for Lancashire County Council in 2019 found a marginal business case for a new station at Midge Hall, very sensitive to how many houses are built at Moss Side and how quickly, and the capital costs involved in improving rail service performance, including improved rolling stock (upgrading from one 1980s diesel – Pacers to another – Sprinters) and the removal of temporary speed restrictions. Patronage is estimated at up to 80,000 passengers per year – around double of that seen at Croston or Burscough Junction and four times higher than Rufford. This study was limited to adding a new station within current services and infrastructure and did not consider wider improvements such as new Merseyrail trains running north of Ormskirk.

As part of a wider study for Lancashire County Council in 2015 – the Chorley Growth Study – Jacobs considered the case for a new station at Coppull, and concluded that the changes needed on the West Coast Mainline (WCML) would be too expensive and complex to generate a positive business case. They recommended that any new examination of this should be in the context of new investment for HS2. Five years on, the prospects for HS2 are now clearer, and HS2 Ltd’s preparatory work identifies this section of the WCML as a key capacity constraint, and therefore in need of investment.

South Ribble and Chorley are working with Preston City Council to produce a single Central Lancashire Local Plan to cover all three areas, including the identification of potential sites to be allocated for development. It is hoped that it will be adopted in late 2023 and will cover the period to 2036. A new West Lancashire Local Plan, to cover 2023-2038, is currently in preparation, also to be adopted in 2023. This means that it is now the right time to bring propose rail improvements which can inform and support new developments – with those new developments generating new travel demand which in turns makes rail improvements more viable.





CURRENT AND FUTURE RAIL NETWORK

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct transport corridors connected into wider rail network at Preston, Ormskirk, Southport and Wigan • Area is well located, close to residential and employment in all directions (large towns and cities – Liverpool, Preston, Manchester, as well as Southport, Chorley, Wigan). This is also a challenge – travel flows are not concentrated in one or two directions, so demand is dispersed) • Local Plan public engagement activities show many people want to live in places with rail stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor rail services (slow, infrequent, not enough stations) contribute to road traffic and lead to low rail patronage • Low residential density leads to low rail patronage • Key land uses underserved eg links between hospital sites in NAME NHS Hospital Trust: Southport Hospital, Ormskirk Hospital) • Older diesel trains generate carbon emissions and other air pollution • Key infrastructure is at approaching capacity, especially WCML – and WCML is seen as higher priority for investment than local lines with low patronage • Car is more convenient for many journeys, even along existing rail corridors (eg Burscough-Liverpool: drive to Ormskirk or Maghull North, Southport-Preston)
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-utilised infrastructure – potential for improvement • Land development bolsters case for rail – and rail bolsters case for land development • HS2 will reshape rail network – more capacity on WCML, Preston station rebuild • Potential increased demand for cross-Preston public transport • Electric, hydrogen or battery-powered trains would contribute to decarbonisation and improved air quality • Incremental infrastructure and service changes can deliver journey time and convenience improvements – and over time add up to transformational change • Create measures that address multiple problems (transport schemes that link people and places, allow interchange – thereby connecting more people with more places, service land – thereby attracting [housing/employing] more people who are then potential passengers • Encourage growth around existing and new stations to stimulate rail patronage as well as providing new homes etc • Link the case to congestion and environmental issues – particularly in context of carbon net zero pledges • Rethink service patterns, rather than being wedded to existing routes or historical routes • After the Covid-19 pandemic more flexible working patterns may lead to some people moving out of urban areas - central and west Lancashire offer pleasant living environments with good connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy rail investment is expensive • Low patronage makes it difficult to justify investment • Housing and employment development without improved public transport likely to lead to increased road traffic, longer journeys, increased carbon emissions and increased air pollution • The lines here are cross-boundary, and not necessarily top priority for any single local authority • Lack of joined up thinking for land use and transport – especially poor public transport and siting of new large sites for residential development • Changed travel patterns, reduced demand for travel and reluctance to use public transport due to Covid-19 pandemic • Perception that rail travel is expensive and complexity of fares can suppress demand



BENCHMARKS

Recent rail schemes in the North West and across the country show the benefits of improving access to the network with new stations and delivering improved services.

New stations at Buckshaw Parkway and Horwich Parkway have seen strong patronage since opening within the study area, bolstered by links to Manchester, Bolton and Preston, with somewhat lower passenger numbers at Euxton Balshaw Lane likely to be connected to the more limited range of destinations available and smaller residential catchment and nearby destinations. Maghull North, on the Liverpool-Ormskirk line, saw over 330,000 users in its first full year of operation.

In Devon a new station at Cranbrook was built as part of the first phase of the building of a new town of up to 5,000 homes. The station – and the town – are proving so successful that a second new station is already being planned for the next stage of the town's expansion.

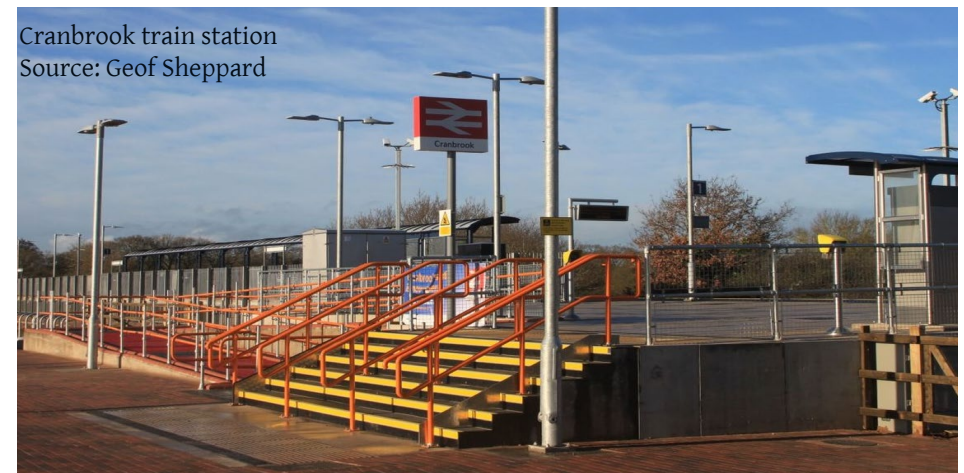
Incremental improvements to suburban services in the West Midlands, including electrification to Lichfield, Bromsgrove and Rugeley, along with the introduction of more frequent, regular and faster services has underpinned faster passenger growth here than in the rest of the country, with further heavy rail and light rail improvements planned.

The reopening and improvement of rural routes anchored at one or both ends by city destinations has repeatedly proved to be a successful formula, including the Borders Railway from Edinburgh to Tweedbank, the Robin Hood Line (Nottingham-Mansfield-Worksop) and the Airdrie-Bathgate line.

Where a detailed business case is positive, investment in rail can be transformational for local communities.



Buckshaw Parkway train station
Source: David Mottershead

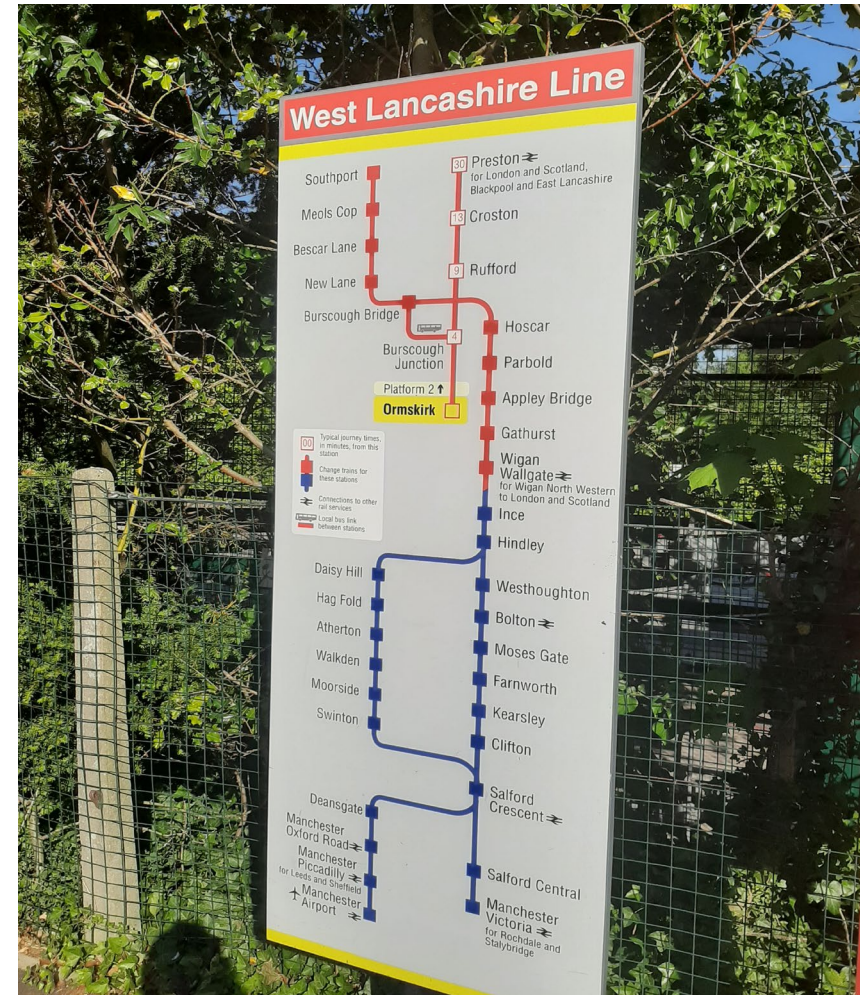
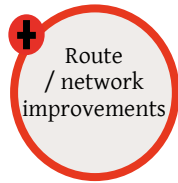


Cranbrook train station
Source: Geof Sheppard







OPTIONS

We set out options for improvements in the following categories:






ROLLING STOCK OPTIONS

As a general rule, electric operation means lower running costs, better acceleration and faster journey times, much reduced local air pollution, potential for zero carbon (when power generation into grid is zero carbon)

Type		Description	Positives	Negatives
Retained Northern trains (class 150, 156 etc)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current diesel fleet or similar from elsewhere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No need for electrification Ongoing electrification and fleet renewal projects elsewhere in Britain likely to mean units will be available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NOx and carbon emissions continue Older units may be life-expired within 10-15 years
New Northern diesel trains (class 195)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New diesel trains recently introduced by Northern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality passenger experience No need for electrification More efficient than older trains Compatibility with rest of Northern fleet – flexible for operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would need to purchase additional units or cascade from other services NOx and carbon emissions continue
New Northern electric trains (class 331)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New electric trains recently introduced by Northern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High quality passenger experience Compatibility with rest of Northern fleet – flexible for operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would need to purchase additional units or cascade from other services Lines would need to be electrified with overhead wires – and these trains could not run south of Ormskirk towards Liverpool
New Merseyrail class 777		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3rd rail electric with battery capability Passive provision for retrofitting equipment to use overhead electric wiring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New trains specifically designed for Merseyrail High quality passenger experience Level platform-train access designed for Liverpool-Ormskirk Can operate over non-electrified lines Could operate with overhead electric wires (if retro-fitted) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase costs (provision in place for follow-on order by Merseytravel to complement original fleet of 52 trains) Depending on outcome of battery power trials use may require electrification



Type		Description	Positives	Negatives
Vivarail class 230		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be configured for 3rd rail or overhead electric, battery, hydrogen or diesel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible power arrangements - no electrification costs Flexible interiors - could be configured to suit local needs Coming in to use nearby on Bidston-Wrexham line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversion and reconfiguration costs (Vivarail holds fleet - ex-London Underground District Line stock)
Flex (class 769) and Hydroflex (class 799)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class 319 dual-voltage electric trains (to run on 3rd rail and overhead electric lines), reconfigured to add hydrogen or diesel power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match Northern class 319 trains No 3rd rail or overhead electrification required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conversion and upgrade costs Older units - may be life-expired within 10-15 years
Tram-train		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles which can operate as trains and as trams Trial of first UK example (Sheffield-Rotherham) is ongoing; established model in Germany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility of running on standard railways and on tram lines (including on street) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would need to be bought new - and designed specifically for this rail network and a specific tram network (e.g. Preston or Manchester Metrolink) Complexity of running over varied operating systems



INFRASTRUCTURE AND STATION IMPROVEMENTS

Infrastructure improvements to allow for more trains running at higher frequency (ideally every 30 minutes) and higher speeds could include:

- additional passing loops
- doubling the line
- resignalling

Station improvements could include improved waiting facilities and the provision of community facilities, ranging from click and collect parcel lockers to small retail or shared workspace units, bike or e-scooter hire points. Such improvements would help to strengthen the sense of the station being a central part of its local community and make rail travel a more attractive option.

One of many level crossings between Ormskirk and Preston



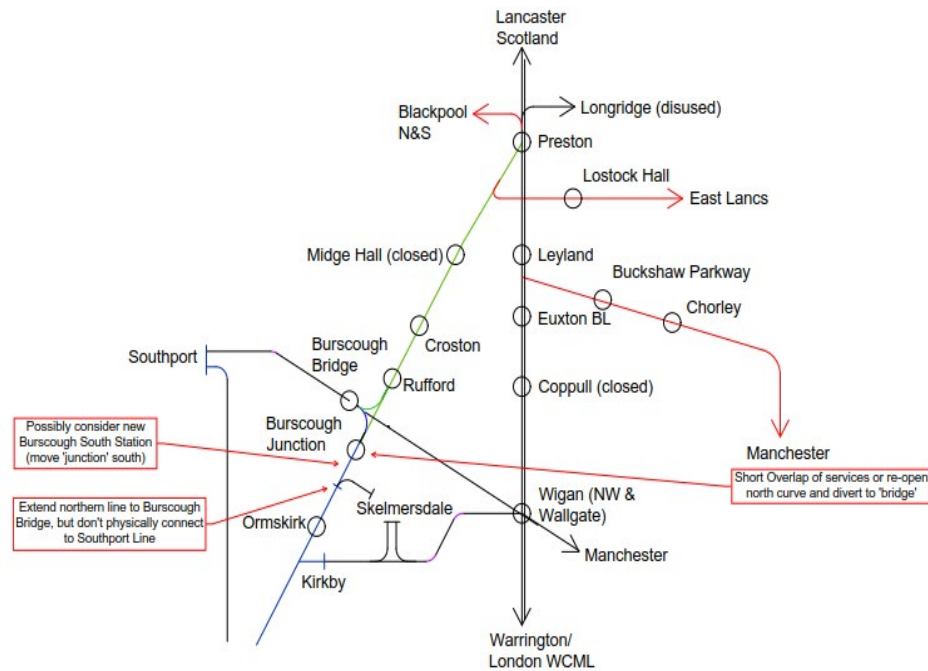
Former Midge Hall station, previously the site of a passing loop



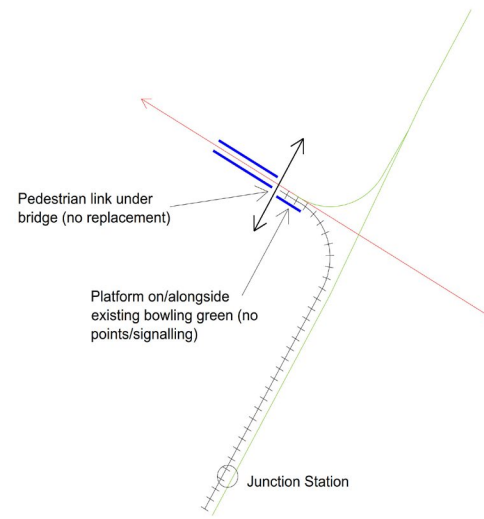
Interchange Burscough Bridge

SERVICE OPTIONS

01. UNCONNECTED MERSEYRAIL EXTENSION FROM ORMSKIRK TO BURSCOUGH BRIDGE



Diagrammatic and map-based representation of unconnected extension to Burscough Bridge



- Platform
- Merseyrail Extension
- Southport - Wigan Line
- Either overlap existing service from junction to Ormskirk, or add north chord to bridge only station



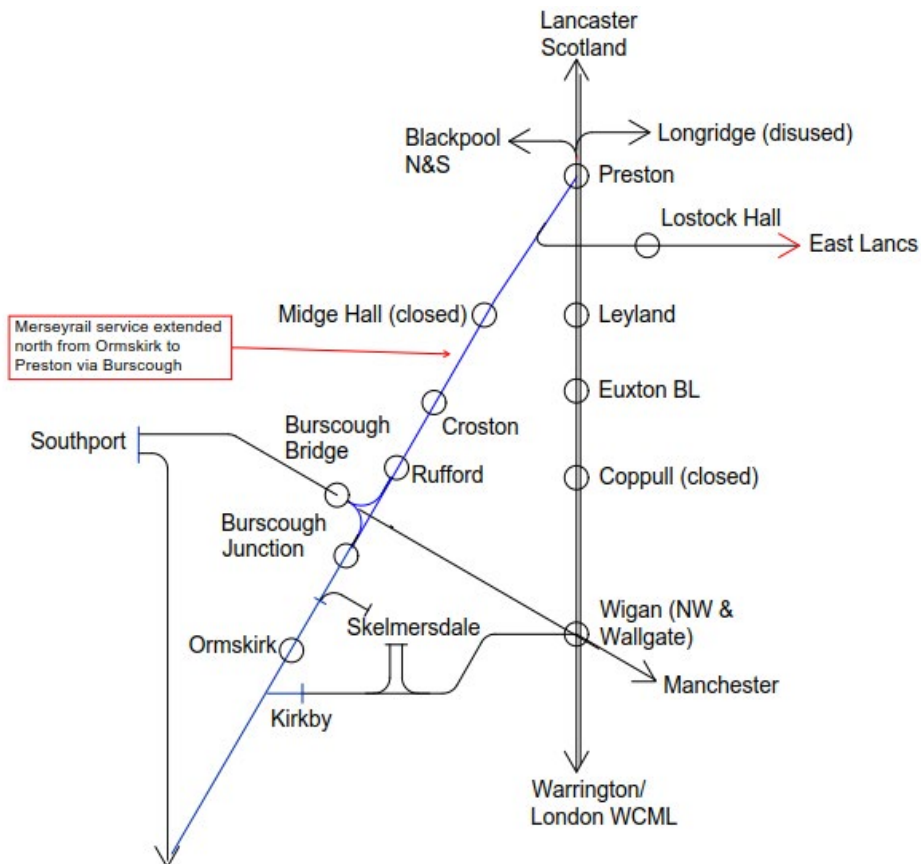
Burscough Junction



Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Moves northern terminus north from Ormskirk to Burscough. Improved Burscough-Ormskirk/Liverpool service. Liverpool-Preston journeys still required one change – so no detriment</p>	
<p>Similar to incremental Merseyrail service extensions from Rock Ferry to Hooton, then Chester</p>	<p>In LCR Long Term Rail Strategy, but not currently highest priority scheme for LCR CA/Merseytravel – political pressure and higher likely patronage are key</p>
<p>Electrification is an option – but not essential: new class 777 rolling stock with battery power could run north of Ormskirk on existing infrastructure</p>	<p>NB: trials of battery range have not yet started, so as yet unknown if 50km round trip (Ormskirk-Preston-Ormskirk) is achievable on battery power alone</p>
<p>No new track junctions or signalling required at Burscough</p>	<p>New faster Merseyrail trains will mean shorter journeys – but it is not clear if improvements will be sufficient to mean extension to Burscough could be covered by fleet, or whether additional trains would be needed (with additional running costs)</p>
<p>Reuse old trackbed, and no need to alter bridge. Bowling green and tyre company likely to be relatively easy to relocate or alter</p>	
<p>Low-cost first stage, bringing benefits and serving as building block for further incremental improvements</p>	



02. EXTEND MERSEYRAIL FROM ORMSKIRK TO PRESTON



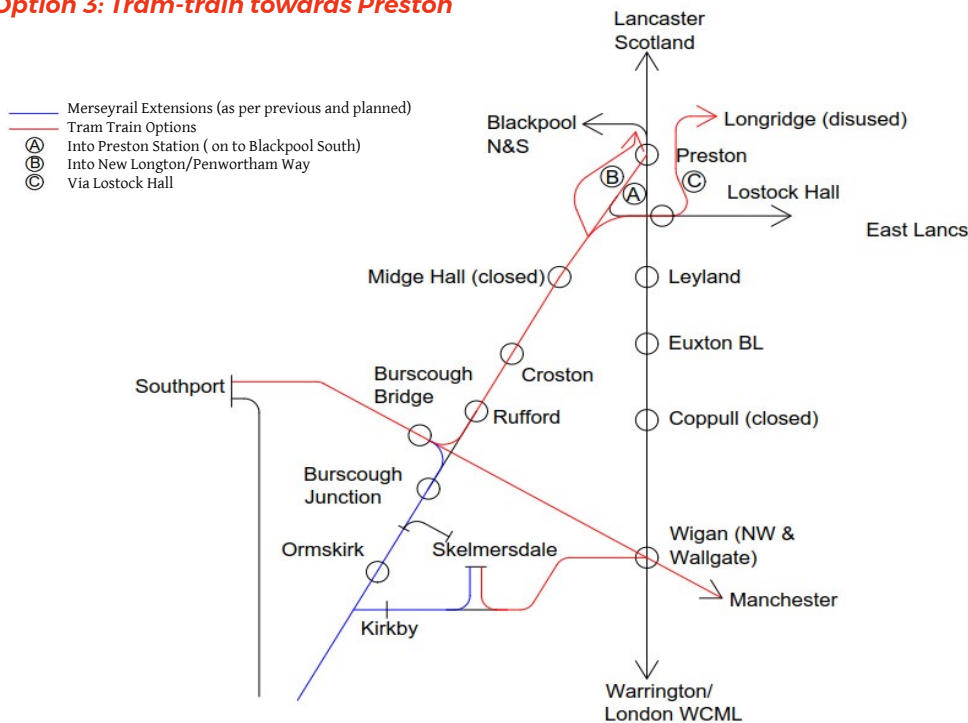
Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Extend services from Ormskirk to Preston. Could be incremental follow-on from option 1</p> <p>Similar to incremental Merseyrail service extensions from Rock Ferry to Hooton, then Chester</p>	<p>In LCR Long Term Rail Strategy, but not currently highest priority scheme for LCR CA/Merseytravel – political pressure and higher likely patronage are key</p>
<p>Faster journeys along whole route</p>	<p>New rolling stock would be needed</p>
<p>Electrification is an option – but not essential: new class 777 rolling stock with battery power could run north of Ormskirk on existing infrastructure</p>	<p>NB: trials of battery range have not yet started, so as yet unknown if 50km round trip (Ormskirk-Preston-Ormskirk) is achievable on battery power alone</p>
<p>Improves existing infrastructure</p>	<p>Line may need to be doubled in places to allow for half-hourly service</p> <p>Congested junctions south of Preston are a constraint</p>
<p>Similar schemes in West Midlands and Strathclyde show benefits of incremental improvements</p>	<p>Like-for-like improvement to existing service does not change poor interchange at Burscough – implement this option as well as Option 1 (unconnected Burscough southern curve)</p>



03. TRAM-TRAIN OPTIONS: TOWARDS PRESTON

Converting the Burscough-Preston and Southport-Wigan and Kirkby/Upholland/Skelmersdale-Wigan lines to tram-train operation – so they could be used by trains or specially designed trams – opens up a number of options for creating a much-improved west Lancashire network, where tram-trains could leave the railway alignment and run on-street in city and town centres. Modern vehicles would make for a high-quality passenger experience, and their rapid acceleration mean that stations/stops can be located close together in urban areas, improving catchments and access to the network.

Option 3: Tram-train towards Preston



Merseytravel are considering extensions of the Merseyrail Northern Line east from Kirkby to Headbolt Lane and a new line to Skelmersdale.

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) have identified Wigan-Atherton-Manchester as a potential tram-train route.

There are three options for routeing a tram-train service in to Preston.

3a: Existing rail alignment

- No new infrastructure or on-street running
- Options for services to run through Preston to Blackpool, Fleetwood or Garstang
- Capacity restricted by existing rail layout south of Preston and limited capacity at Preston station – potentially limiting frequency to hourly
- Option to build new station/stop to serve Lower Penwortham and Penwortham Lane

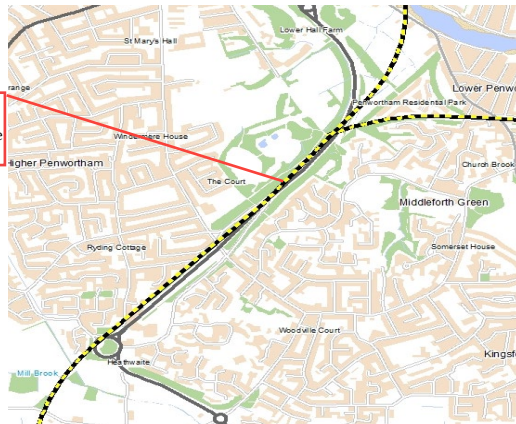
Existing rail line from Burscough (right) joining West Coast Mainline (left) south of Preston





3b: New Longton and Penwortham Way

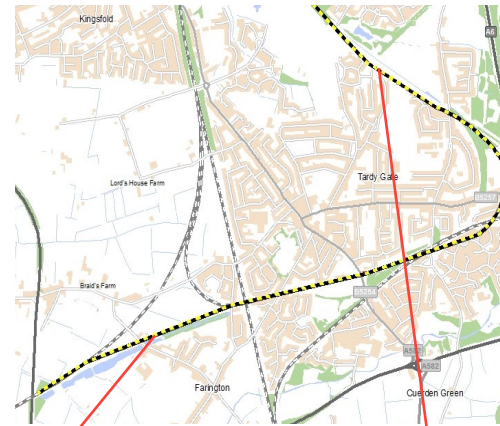
- New line to serve New Longton and run alongside Penwortham Way
- Option to cross WCML and approach Preston city centre via Avenham (possibly reusing bridge)
- Option to serve Penwortham and approach city centre from west (e.g. Liverpool Road)
- Interface with existing highways, cycleways and footpaths would need careful assessment



New tram-train line approaching Preston from south-west alongside Golden Way

3c: Lostock Hall and Avenham

- Rebuild old chord near Coote Lane and Farington and old line from east of Lostock Hall north to Avenham
- Would serve significant developments planned for Lostock Hall
- Possibility of reusing old bridge
- Interface with existing highways, cycleways and footpaths would need careful assessment



Reinstated chord near Coote Lane



New tram-train line approaching Preston from south via Avenham

Within Preston city centre tram-train vehicles could be routed from Avenham alongside the railway station, crossing Fishergate and then continuing north to serve the area around New Square, the new UCLan Student Centre and Friargate. Tram-train services which call at new facilities at or close to Preston station, rather than using the current platforms, would ease pressure on the station.

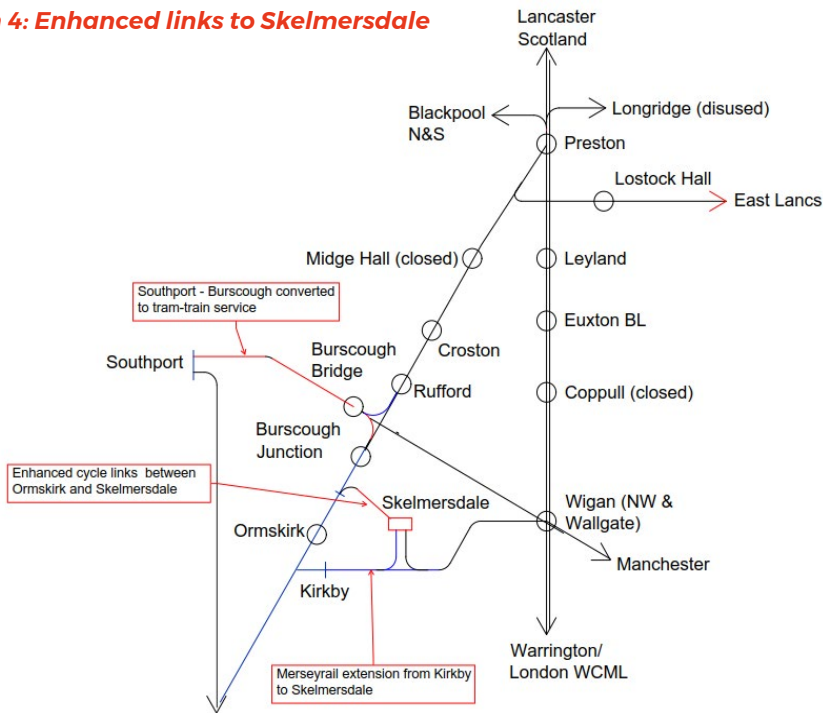




04. SKELMERSDALE LINKS

Improved links between Southport, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale could be achieved through a combination of rail, tram-train and cycle routes. Work is progressing on developing a new station in Skelmersdale, with Lancashire County Council having bought the former Skelmersdale College site (June 2020). Assuming that the Merseyrail Kirkby branch is extended to here, then a tram-train service from Southport to Burscough and Ormskirk could be complemented by a cycle link between Ormskirk and Skelmersdale to provide a direct sustainable travel corridor. Further expansion of the Merseyrail network east from Skelmersdale, or other improvements to services there, would enhance links with Wigan.

Option 4: Enhanced links to Skelmersdale



Street-running tram in Birmingham

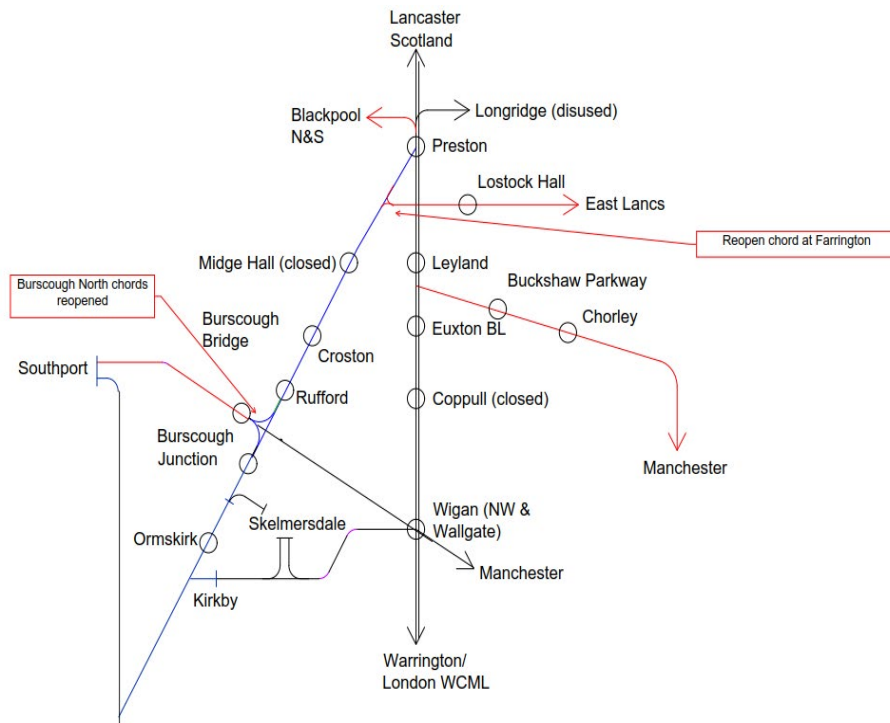




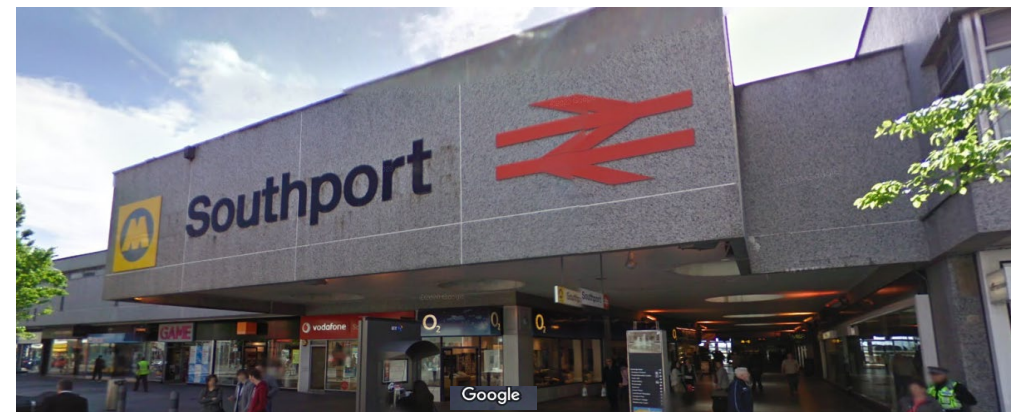
05. SOUTHPORT TO EAST LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE

In the longer term there are options to reintroduce direct services through the area to connect Southport and Burscough with east Lancashire and Yorkshire via Blackburn and Burnley. The options would require greater capital investment and incur higher operating costs.

Option 5: Southport-Burscough-Lostock Hall-East Lancashire



- Heavy rail option including reopening Burscough Curves and Farington chord to allow direct services connecting Southport, Burscough, Lostock Hall and Blackburn, with the possibility of extending to Bradford and Leeds.
- Longer-term scheme, building incrementally on other improvements
- Local markets (e.g. orbital trips around South Ribble and West Lancashire) likely to be more important than longer inter-regional trips
- Could be combined with Merseyrail extension to Burscough Bridge – making Burscough a key regional interchange hub
- Alternative option extends Merseyrail Northern Line from Kirkby/Headbolt Lane to Wigan, with Ormskirk branch diverted to access Skelmersdale from the west.
- Combines with reinstated services from Southport to Preston and Lostock Hall/Blackburn via Burscough Curves and Farington chord

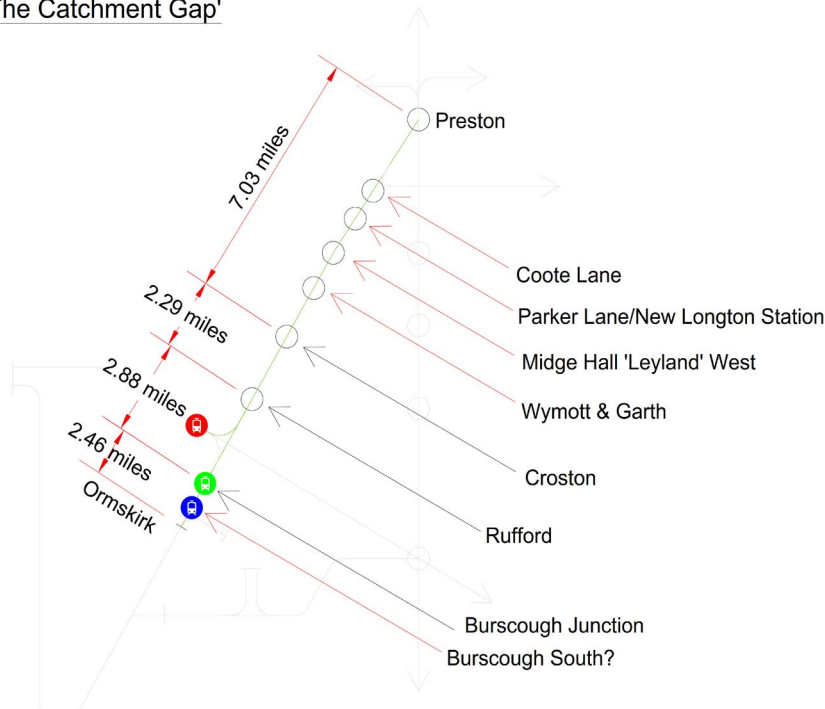




NEW STATION OPTIONS

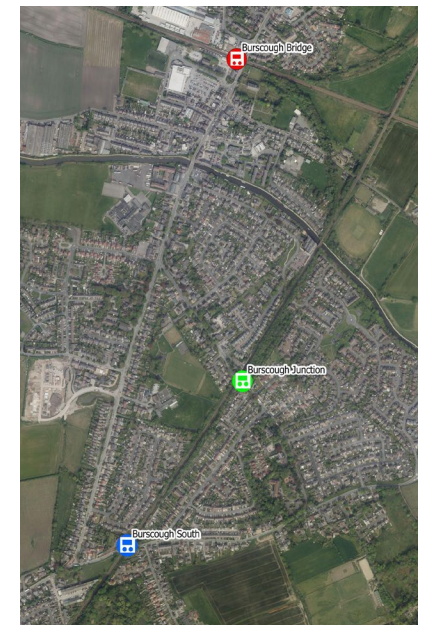
There are long gaps between stations on the Ormskirk-Preston line, especially the 7-mile gap between Croston and Preston. New stations to fill some of these gaps would help to open up land for redevelopment, as well as capturing more of the existing travel market, by putting stations closer to more people and jobs. Most of these sites could support Park and Ride facilities, either with free parking (as at most Merseyrail park and ride stations and Buckshaw Parkway) or with paid-for parking (as at Chorley and Leyland stations).

Stations (Potential)
Addressing 'The Catchment Gap'



01. BURSCOUGH JUNCTION

The current Burscough Junction station is only 900m from Burscough Bridge. As the town expands to the south, especially on the Yew Tree Farm development site, there is an opportunity to close Junction station and replace it with a new Burscough South station close to Square Lane. This would better serve the south of the town and may divert some park and ride car trips away from Ormskirk town centre.



02. WYMOTT & GARTH

HMP Wymott and HMP Garth are within 250m of the railway, although their entrances face eastwards. Staff and visitors could provide a market for a new station, although there would be significant political, security and social considerations.





03. MIDGE HALL / LEYLAND WEST

The historic fabric of the old station is still broadly intact. Since it closed in 1961 Leyland has expanded significantly west of Schleswig Way. Moss Side, as well as settlements west of the railway (Walmer Bridge, Much Hoole) may now provide sufficient catchment to justify reopening the station – perhaps as Leyland West, to give it a more recognisable name. There is strong public and political support for this.

04. PARKER LANE / NEW LONGTON

The Tank Roundabout on the A582 is a key point in the road network east of the railway, linking Penwortham, Lostock Hall and west Leyland. It is less than 500m from the track. West of the line is New Longton – presently poorly served by rail. At less than 5km from Preston city centre, there is potential to create a park & ride station here, while also improving transport connections for residents in New Longton and Midge Hall.

05. COOTE LANE

Coote Lane is 3.5km from Preston city centre and close to the strategic road network, next to major housing allocations and within walking distance of established residential populations (Kingsfold, Penwortham Lane, Tardy Gate). It could be useful as a suburban station in south Preston, given rail services at a reasonable frequency. A station here could also serve the East Lancashire Line, as an additional stop between Preston and Lostock Hall.

Moss Lane immediately west of Tank Roundabout for Parker Lane / New Longton



Aerial view of Parker Lane / New Longton area



Aerial view of Coote Lane area



Site of former Midge Hall station





COPPULL NORTH

- Close to Coppull village centre, also close to Charnock Richard, increasing the catchment
- Access would be via Mill Lane, although this is narrow
- There are footpaths linking this site north to Charnock Richard and east to Clancutt Lane
- A station here could contribute to the revitalisation of the grade II listed Mill
- As the most northerly of the three sites, this would need the least additional track to be laid to make it viable in operational terms



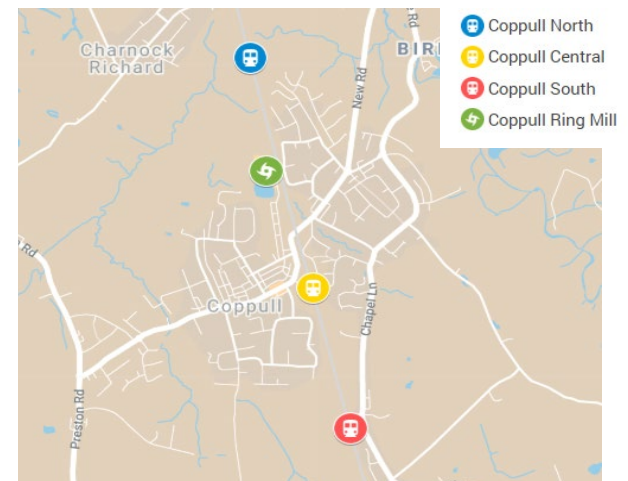
COPPULL SOUTH

- Walkable from much of Coppull, but not central
- Less intrusive for existing residents and businesses
- Access options are not as strategically well connected as at other two sites
- Undeveloped land close by is Green Belt. If land was released for station, some potential to develop land for housing and/or park & ride



COPPULL CENTRAL

- This would rebuild the station on its historic site
- Some parts of the original site are now in private ownership and built on – but with relatively low-grade uses
- Opportunity to create a new central place for the village
- Limited space to provide parking





SIFTING

A qualitative assessment generates a RAG rating for each package against each of the following five criteria:

- Connectivity – the relative extent to which the package improves connections between current and future residential areas and key destinations (cities and major towns, major employment areas, key leisure destinations) (green = greatest improvement to connectivity).
- Catchment – the current and likely future residential and workplace population within travelling distance of new stations and services (green = highest catchment).
- Operational impact – an indication of the likely impact of the package on other rail services (passenger and freight), including potential pathing and line capacity constraints, congestion at stations and impacts on reliability and punctuality (green = relatively low operational impacts on other services). Coppull options assume four-tracking on the West Coast Main Line.
- Deliverability – an early assessment of the relative ease or difficulty of putting the package into place, including some consideration of the relative capital cost of the package, land ownership, engineering constraints, potential local opposition (green = most easily deliverable).

Ormskirk-Preston station options	Connectivity	Catchment	Operational impact	Deliverability
Burscough	G	G	A	A
Wymott & Garth	A	A	G	A
Midge Hall / Leyland West	A	G	G	G
Parker Lane / New Longton	A	A	G	A
Coote Lane	G	G	G	G

Service packages	Connectivity	Catchment	Operational impact	Deliverability
1. Burscough Bridge Unconnected Extension	A	A	G	G
2. Extend Merseyrail from Ormskirk to Preston	A	G	R	A
3a. Tram-train towards Preston: existing rail alignment	A	G	R	R
3b. Tram-train towards Preston: New Longton and Penwortham	G	G	G	R
3c. Tram-train towards Preston: Lostock Hall and Avenham	G	G	G	R
4. Skelmersdale cycle links	R	R	G	G
5a. Heavy rail Southport-East Lancashire	R	A	A	A
5b. Merseyrail to Burscough Bridge and Southport-E Lancs	A	G	A	A
5c. Merseyrail to Skelmersdale and Ormskirk extension	A	A	G	R

Coppull station options	Connectivity	Catchment	Operational impact	Deliverability
North	A	A	A	R
Central	A	A	A	R
South	A	A	A	A



OPTIONS SHORTLIST

Options which show particular promise at this stage include:

- Burscough Bridge unconnected extension – a short extension of Merseyrail services from Ormskirk to a new platform east of the A59 at Burscough Bridge with access through the arches of the road bridge. This relies on either electrification or use of the new rolling stock on hybrid (electric-battery) power. This would be a relatively low-cost scheme and relatively easy to deliver. It would improve connectivity and form the first phase of a large programme of improvements.
- New station at Midge Hall / Leyland West to serve existing and planned development, provided sufficient new housing is brought forward within its catchment area to provide new demand for rail services.
- New station in the Parker Lane / New Longton / Coote Lane area, depending on the quantity and type of new housing that might be built close by.

Other options which may be feasible in the medium term include:

- Improved rail service between Burscough and Preston – either heavy rail or light rail, with advantages and disadvantages on both. This would improve journey times and connectivity for residents and workers in the area.
- New station at Coppull (to be brought forward once capacity on the West Coast Mainline is enhanced), working with Wigan Council and TfGM to explore capacity and investment options.

We recommend that the following options are currently low priority but should be revisited in the future:

- New connections and services connecting Southport and East Lancashire.
- New tram-train services between Southport, Burscough, Ormskirk and Skelmersdale.
- New station at Wymott & Garth – a low priority at present, in particular due to security issues and the limited catchment at this location.

The improvements identified here can form the first stage of a transformation in connectivity and travel opportunities for people in the area, contributing to a reduction in carbon emissions and supporting the development of new residential and employment sites.





WSP Global Inc.
1st floor, Station House,
Exchange Station
Tithebarn Street,
Liverpool
L2 2QP



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