



Carnforth Station

18 December 2014

Debate Initiated by David Morris MP

This pack provides general background material relating to the subject of the debate.

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Also included in this pack:

Correspondence from Network Rail/Virgin concerning Carnforth

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A Newspaper articles

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Lancaster Guardian

June 28, 2014 Saturday

Carnforth train campaign reaches the top

A campaign to restore mainline platforms at Carnforth station continues to gather steam.

Letters are being delivered to residents asking them to write to their MPs backing a drive to re-open Carnforth as a stop on the West Coast Mainline from London to Glasgow and also between Win-dermere and Manchester.

"It is important that our Government and rail authorities are made fully aware of how many local people support the reinstatement of those platforms," said Peter Yates of the Carnforth Railway Ac-tion Group.

Robert Swain, another campaigner, has written to Stephen Hammond MP, the minister responsible for major rail projects.

"We have found after much research work that the platforms were not officially closed in May 1970, only access to trains withdrawn," he wrote. "At the time of the removal of the mainline plat-forms and for many years afterwards, Carnforth station was steadily going downhill.

"Now, the number of passengers using the station has dramatically increased. The buildings have been restored with a Heritage Centre, Brief Encounter Refreshment Room, shops and a micropub. "

Financial Times (London,England)

September 1, 2001 Saturday

The tale of tender, unfulfilled longing captured in the film Brief Encounter has lost little of its power in the 56 years since it was made. Its setting, however, has not fared so well.

Carnforth Station in Lancashire is the place where the protagonists played by Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard meet, fall in love over tea and Bath buns, and, just weeks later, say their tearful farewells. But, today, there is not even a whiff of romance about the railway station. Instead, the impression is one of gloom, with paint peeling off the walls, dank subways scattered with puddles and hardly any people to be seen - all in complete contrast to the hub of activity portrayed in Brief Encounter, which was directed by David Lean. But in the past month, work has begun to regenerate the station.

"We're trying to recreate the mood of the Brief Encounter era but still have a 21st century station with closed-circuit television and information offices," says Peter Yates of the Carnforth Station Trust.

He grew up in the town and has spent the past 10 years trying to raise funding to restore the station. "I remember it as it was," he says, "and I found it upsetting to see it derelict, especially after it was so alive. It's been a battle just to save it from demolition. Yet we've got the original from a film that's world-acclaimed and people had let it fall apart. That's madness."

The planned work - funded by a variety of sources, including Railtrack, the North West Development Agency, Lancashire County Council and the David Lean Foundation - is in two phases.

The first, which should take about six months, will secure the now ramshackle buildings and create a number of shops. Phase two, due for completion by the middle of next year, intends to create a refreshment area, including a restaurant based on the tearoom in the film, as well as a visitor centre, with the aim of attracting 40,000 people a year.

"People from all over the world still come here," says Yates. "They travel from New Zealand, America, Europe and especially Japan, where *Brief Encounter* is a cult film. But for decades there's been nothing to see. Now we'll no longer have to be embarrassed when these tourists visit us."

Meanwhile, the station looks worse than ever. The famous clock has been taken away for repairs - it hadn't worked for years - and scaffolding surrounds most of the main platform. There is also no glass left in the windows; it was knocked out before work got under way. Still, the gently rising subways, which saved the actors from having to run up and down stairs between platforms, are still there. They are what attracted David Lean to Carnforth, renamed Milford Junction Station in the film.

"It's all very different from my day," says Elaine Maudsley, 75, who was an extra in the film. "When I was growing up you could get anywhere from here, all the way from Scotland to London. It was such a thrilling, busy place. I'm really pleased about what's happening now and hope it will change things for the whole town."

Maudsley is almost the first person you see in the film, pacing up and down the platform in the evening shade.

"It was exciting," she says. "I wore my best suit - the one I took on my honeymoon - and I had to walk up and down the platform three times. We filmed everything at night because that's when the trains stopped."

"It was lovely to be in the film and I got a meal and a few sweets, which was wonderful because rationing still existed. I also got 35 shillings a night when I normally earned around 10 shillings a week."

Maudsley worked in the real refreshment room at Carnforth and saw most of the station scenes being filmed. But the location also provided her with real-life romance. It was there, at the age of 20, she met her husband, John, a soldier 16 years her senior. They met soon after the war and were together until his death nine years ago.

The revitalisation of Carnforth is not only tied up with its cinematic heritage. Yates is keen to stress that environmental issues are also at the forefront of campaigners' minds.

"We're in a fantastic geographical location here," he says. "We're only a couple of miles from the motorway and just 12 miles from the Lake District. The government is always talking about taking people off the roads and Carnforth is perfect for that. It could be an artery link, getting cars out of the Lake District."

The station has certainly suffered since the West Coast mainline platforms were taken out of service 30 years ago. Trains used to head north, south, east and west from Carnforth. Soon, 140mph electric trains are scheduled to hurtle through, affording little more than a fleeting, very blurred, glance.

Still, Yates - looking way beyond phases one and two of the project - is keen to prevent that from happening.

"It's a pipe dream, but my ultimate aim is to get the mainline platforms back," he says. "This town was built for the railways and I would love to see Carnforth station as it once was."

Perhaps the make-believe of Brief Encounter might one day make that pipe dream a reality.

B Press releases/Website information

David Morris MP website ¹

MP Calls on County Council to Fund a Feasibility Study 25 August, 2014

The Morecambe & Lunesdale MP David Morris has presented a petition to the House of Commons which calls on Lancashire County Council to fund a feasibility study into restoring the platforms at Carnforth station.

Over the last few months, David has met with the rail companies, Transport Ministers and Network Rail and it is agreed that the next step to making the restoration of the platforms a reality is for Lancashire County Council to fund a study.

The study is likely to look into the technical and financial implications of restoring the platforms as well as assessing the business case.

The petition reads:

The petitioners support Peter Yates MBE and the people of Carnforth in their campaign.

“The Petition of residents of the UK,

Declares that the Petitioners support David Morris MP's campaign to support the reinstatement of the platforms at Carnforth Station on the West Coast Mainline.

The Petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Government to put pressure on Lancashire County Council to approve funding for a feasibility study to allow the platforms to be re-instated.”

Speaking from Carnforth David Morris said:

“The Cabinet Member for Transport at Lancashire County Council under the previous Conservative administration Tim Ashton was very keen to help with a study, sadly, the current Labour administration has not yet funded a study.”

“Judging from the many thousands of people who signed this petition there is a real appetite to re-instate the platforms which would once again link Carnforth onto the West Coast Mainline encouraging tourists to visit Morecambe & Lunesdale and promoting green tourism to the Lake District.”

“I will continue to ask Lancashire County Council to undertake the work needed and I would encourage constituents to write to John Fillis who would need to commission the study.”

Carnforth Railway Action Group website ²

Carnforth railway station is the internationally renowned setting for David Lean's 1945 film Brief Encounter. Access to the mainline platforms was removed under Beeching in the 1970's and the station sadly fell into disrepair.

A dedicated group of volunteers established a trust company to rebuild the station in the mid 1990's and a £1.5m project began, culminating in a grand reopening in 2006.

¹ <http://www.davidmorris.org.uk/news/mp-calls-county-council-fund-feasibility-study>

² <http://carnforthplatforms.org/>

Although now functional, the station is far from operating at its full potential as a pivotal junction in the region. It can only do so following the reinstatement of the West Coast Mainline platforms.

Carnforth Railway Action Group has formed to achieve this.

Carnforth Platforms Factsheet.

1. Carnforth Railway Station lies on an interchange that used to connect north, south, east and west, it is in a perfect position to vastly improve rail travel in our region.
2. Access to trains on the main line was removed in May 1970.
3. To travel to Kendal from Carnforth should take approximately 20 mins. At present it takes over an hour and a half: You have to first travel south to Lancaster, change trains then travel north back through Carnforth!
4. Carnforth could be a hub of sustainable green transport – trains, buses, cycling and walking – to travel north, south, east and west.
5. Replacing the platforms would connect Carnforth to the Windermere - Manchester train enhancing business and tourism travel.
6. Access to and from the Lakes by short rail journey from Carnforth could open up more opportunity for commuting, tourism, employment and leisure activity.
7. Virgin Trains and Transpennine have both stated their support for the notion of replacing the north/south train connections.
8. Writing to your MP David Morris (Morecambe & Lunesdale) Tim Farron MP (South Westmorland), John Woodcock MP (Barrow) would demonstrate even more support for returning our platforms to their former glory

C PQs

Asked by David Morris To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effect on services to Carnforth Station when High Speed 2 is completed.

Answered by Robert Goodwill| Department: Transport

No assessment has been made of the effect of HS2 on services to Carnforth Station. However, a significant amount of capacity will be released on existing lines as a result of HS2, which creates a huge opportunity for the reconfiguration and improvement of services. Network Rail has begun thinking about how to make use of the opportunities that High Speed Rail brings to the rail network as a whole, and you can read more about this in their Better Connections report. Network Rail estimate that over 100 towns and cities could benefit from quicker, more frequent journeys and better connections when HS2 phase two is complete.

An illustrative timetable has been developed in order to allow us to assess the likely costs and benefits of HS2, and this factors in some changes to train services as a result of released capacity on existing lines. However, this illustrative timetable was created for modelling purposes and more work needs to take place through open consultation to determine what actual services would look like.

16 Jul 2014 cc711-2W

Asked by: David Morris

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on upgrading Carnforth Railway Station for additional future services.

Answered by: Stephen Hammond| Department: Transport

The winning bidder of the TransPennine Express franchise will be expected to deliver improved service quality to customers at all TransPennine Express stations, including Carnforth. The provision of additional infrastructure at Carnforth is a matter for Network Rail.

14 Jul 2014 584 c562W

Asked by: David Morris

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent reports he has received on the removal of the Carnforth station platforms from the mainline; what steps he is taking towards their reinstatement; and if he will make a **statement**.

Answered by: Stephen Hammond| Department: Transport

The Government has no plans to reinstate platforms on the west coast main line and has not asked for or received any official reports on their reinstatement or removal in the 1960s. It would be for Lancashire county council to determine whether such a scheme is a local priority and this is not the case at the present time.

08 Apr 2014 579 c195W

D Other parliamentary material

Debate

Carnforth Station

11 July 2011

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(Mr Vara.)

Mr Speaker: In calling Mr David Morris, I appeal to Members leaving the Chamber to do so quickly and quietly, so that the hon. Gentleman can be courteously heard.

David Morris (Morecambe and Lunesdale) (Con): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is a privilege to speak this evening on a subject that is close not only to my heart, but to the hearts of my constituents. Many in the House would not know the relevance of Carnforth station other than knowing that it was the site for the filming of “Brief Encounter”. Since then, however, the station has unfortunately fallen into disrepair, and during the Beeching era all the trains were brought to Carnforth to be scrapped. Today, I am imploring the Minister to take on board my remarks because Carnforth station is the centre of the railway universe in this country. Everything passes through it from Edinburgh to London but nothing stops there.

I thank the Minister for being here to listen and respond to this important debate. I must stress that I speak for the whole community of Carnforth. That community has been built up from a railway town. Years ago the nearest major town was Warton, where the Washingtons were from, but then Carnforth developed because it was a railway town. Eleven years ago, a friend of mine, Peter Yates MBE, whom I am pleased to say is here today, brought the community together and raised £1.4 million to rebuild this historic station not just for the sake of the station, the community, the “Brief Encounter” café and the iconic clock—if anybody goes to Carnforth, they will see just what an amazing place the station is—but so that the station can be used as a railway station once again.

Although we would not have used the phrase at the time, this was a big society project—before the phrase was even coined. The community is united in asking for help for the next step in reopening the west coast main line and the trans-Pennine platforms. However, we are in a Catch-22 situation. The trans-Pennine and west coast main line trains cannot stop at Carnforth because there are no platforms there—it is a chicken and egg situation. Carnforth was not even included in the route utilisation strategies report to any great extent because the trains could not stop there, yet everything goes through it. We cannot put the platforms in, however, until the rail operators agree to stop there.

As a community, therefore, the people of Carnforth have suggested that we take the bull by the horns and request that we start negotiations with the Department for Transport and Network Rail to start rebuilding the platforms. We need to cut through this Catch-22 situation, which is nobody’s fault but is highly damaging to the whole community. We envisage a future in which trains from north, south, east and west will use Carnforth as a hub for north Lancashire and the south lakes. With all the will in the world, Oxenholme is, with respect, too small to be the hub. We have tried it for many years but it has not worked. The Lake district is full of cars because existing rail services cannot cope with the capacity.

I recently spoke to Chris Gibb from Virgin Trains about this subject, and happily he agreed that Carnforth is in a strong position to be a rail-ride hub. Not only do we have the space and direct and fast access to the Lake district via the M6; we have a comprehensive road network in the area. Virgin was clear that anything that pushed more lakeland tourism into the west coast main line would get its support, and now we have agreed an action plan under which

Virgin will agree to stop trains there if it is satisfied with Carnforth. We also have the solid support of Councillor Tim Ashton, the head of transport at Lancashire county council, who was good enough to accompany me to the last meeting we had with the Department.

It is not only tourists who would benefit from these platforms being rebuilt. At the moment, it is hard to travel between the Furness peninsula and Kendal. It would be an easy and short journey if passengers could change at Carnforth and it would enable ease of access to the lakes for those on the east coast. Enabling commuters to move around our area by public transport would bring huge economic and environmental benefits to north Lancashire and the south lakes. When the now Minister of State, Department for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mrs Villiers) visited Carnforth during the election, the train stopped in the station for 10 minutes. That was my cue to get her to Lancaster. If anybody has ever driven around Lancaster, they will know that it is the biggest car park in Europe. I had to park the car up, transport myself through the streets and put her on the train that had stopped at Carnforth half an hour before.

With an expanding population and given the space that it needs to grow, it seems logical to give Carnforth the chance to live up to its potential. This Government have already taken important steps to boost connectivity in our area. They have started the first serious negotiations on open access to the west coast with Alliance Rail. For those right hon. and hon. Members who are not familiar with the proposal, Alliance plans to run services in competition with Virgin using free space in the timetable. Those services would use brand-new hybrid trains, which are good for the environment and would enhance the whole network. Because the services would go to Barrow rather than Glasgow, they could stop at the existing platforms at Carnforth and provide a direct London service, but that welcome new service would be even better with our new platforms. The proposal is very welcome, and I think I speak for everyone in my constituency, and certainly for the community in Carnforth, when I say that I hope the negotiations will lead to Alliance Rail becoming a reality.

The Government, despite opposition, are pushing ahead with High Speed 2. Once HS2 is built, we will be able to stop west coast trains at many more stations. We want Carnforth to be one of the stations that benefits, and with the platforms already in place we would be a prime location. But we could also offer lots in return, enabling west coast passengers to enjoy all the benefits of rail ride that I talked about earlier. This would be a real integrated transport system whose benefits would far outstrip the cost of the platforms.

On the subject of cost, the £1.4 million previously raised by my friend Peter was not from Department for Transport rail budgets; it was raised through one-off grants and local fundraising. If we get permission to build the new platforms, I would like to stress that we will not come with a begging bowl to either the Department or Network Rail. We will raise our own funds for our project. That is unheard of, but we can do it. We have already rebuilt the station from a shell, and we can re-lay the platforms. In a time of difficulty, it is only fair that we pay our way, and we are doing that, as people in Carnforth have always done.

Today, I have tried to sketch out in the simplest detail why this complex proposal would have huge benefits for our region. Clearly, I have left out certain details because of time and complexity, and as this is the last speech of the day, I am sure that we would all like to go home. However, this is very important for the whole community in Carnforth, including the Railway Trust. Peter Yates has prepared an excellent report that I am happy to supply to anyone who requests it. We have everything in place to be a real transport hub—except the platforms. We are committed as a community to put them in; we just need Government support.

I know that this is a strange request, but let us look at the benefits. We are not going to ask for any Government money. We have a proven track in our community projects of rebuilding

and the whole community is behind the proposal. This is the big society in its highest form. We want to integrate with an infrastructure network that has been serving our country for more than 100 years, and I would like to ask for formal negotiations to begin, so that we can talk to everyone concerned about re-establishing the platforms for the benefit of the whole community of Carnforth.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Norman Baker): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale (David Morris) on securing this timely debate on the important subject of platforms at Carnforth station, and on enabling us to have this brief encounter tonight. He has set out with great clarity the arguments in favour of reinstating the fast-line platforms at the station, and his passion and commitment cannot be doubted. I also pay tribute to the work carried out by local people in restoring the station to its former glory.

In 1945, David Lean filmed his romantic classic “Brief Encounter”, starring Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard, at Carnforth station. Many will remember the key role that the station played in the film. The image of the station clock remains resonant for many filmgoers, as my hon. Friend mentioned. However, a long period of decline set in, following the Beeching era. By the early 1990s, the once splendid station had fallen into disrepair. The Carnforth Station and Railway Trust Company Ltd was formed as a local initiative in November 1996 to restore the derelict buildings. A £1.5 million project was commenced in late 2000 in co-operation with Railtrack. After three years’ work, the Brief Encounter refreshment room and visitor centre was opened on 17 October 2003. That represented a remarkable achievement by local people in the Carnforth area, which I commend.

As my hon. Friend explained, local ambitions at Carnforth now focus on the reinstatement of the mainline platforms at Carnforth station, which closed in 1970. However, it would not be possible to discuss the reinstatement of the mainline platforms without referring to the planned developments for inter-city rail services on the west coast main line.

In January, the Government issued a consultation on the specification for the new inter-city west coast franchise, which is due to commence in 2012 and will replace the current Virgin Trains rail franchise. The current franchise operates more than 300 train services a day, delivering more than 26 million passenger journeys and 3.2 billion passenger miles a year, providing train services along the west coast main line from Euston to Glasgow in Scotland. It serves the key cities of Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and north Wales. Passenger growth has shown a continuous increase since 2003. The effects of the volcanic ash clouds in 2010 and earlier this year and the associated aviation disruption have contributed to a considerable modal shift from air to rail—something that the Government very much welcome for climate change reasons. The objectives for the new franchise set out in January therefore include exploiting the full potential of the route and maximising capacity.

The Government believe that the former system of franchising had become too prescriptive at the point of bidding and lacked flexibility once operational. A new franchising system has been devised to facilitate and encourage significant private investment, and is designed to deliver important benefits for passengers. The Government also believe that longer franchises are necessary to encourage such investment, build successful long-term working relationships with Network Rail, focus franchises more strongly on the quality of outcomes for passengers and deliver the best possible value for money for the taxpayer in a highly constrained public spending environment.

Where does all that fit in with the Carnforth station platform request? Let me turn to the local aspirations for the station once again to become a stop on long-distance services. It is important to emphasise that both the current Virgin Trains franchise and the new inter-city

west coast franchise have to accommodate many different markets. A key issue in any proper consideration of the matter is whether a proposal to stop London train services at reinstated platforms at Carnforth would work operationally and commercially. Initial analysis by the Department suggests that a call at Carnforth would require a stop at another station to be deleted. Therefore, a potential gain at Carnforth would result in a disbenefit to passengers from other stations on the route. Obviously that would require some hard and careful decision making.

David Morris: I should point out that Virgin trains stop in Carnforth for 20 minutes in the morning and evening, but they do not let passengers on. I spoke to Chris Gibb about this subject less than 12 months ago, and he said that if we had the platforms, those trains could take passengers on. The issue is something to do with the schedule for cleaning the trains.

Norman Baker: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that information, which I was not aware of. I will investigate that to see whether it represents a way forward. My point, however, is that there is a potential trade-off between extra stops on the service and the speed of the journey between two key points where the main market is. In an ideal world, we would obviously like to meet both requirements—the local aspirations that exist, as well as the need to get longer-distance traffic transferred from air to rail—and journey times are key to delivering that. However, I will certainly look at his point, which is valid.

It is fair to say that the west coast main line is heavily used in the Carnforth area, with up to three long-distance services an hour between London, Birmingham or Manchester and Glasgow or Edinburgh, plus regular freight services. Those trains are already popular and well loaded. Capacity problems already exist, and growth in demand continues. Indeed, it is interesting to note that, even in the recession, we have seen buoyant markets for rail that have continued to expand at a time when other forms of transport have not seen the same response. Despite the £8.8 billion upgrade, the west coast main line is already suffering some congestion when it comes to access for freight services and local services, so we have to ensure that the line is used to best capacity.

Network Rail's route utilisation strategy for the west coast main line was published on 1 July. It corroborates the heavy usage of the line and the resulting capacity issues, but as my hon. Friend said, it did not consider the reinstatement of the platforms at Carnforth. The Department's analysis is that journey times would be increased by around five minutes to accommodate calls at reinstated platforms at Carnforth. That has to be borne in mind and weighed against the significant journey savings and more frequent services that have resulted from the upgrade to the west coast main line. London to Glasgow is now 30 minutes quicker than it was before the changes, with a very competitive four hour and 50 minute journey time, while trains from Manchester airport and Birmingham to Glasgow and Edinburgh are now around 20 to 30 minutes faster.

These enhancements have delivered significant revenue growth since December 2008 and increased rail's share of the total travel market on the routes served by the west coast main line. These are markets rail serves well and there are strong calls for further journey time reductions, as my hon. Friend will recognise. All these and a number of other issues mean that stopping long-distance London services at Carnforth would probably involve a number of trade-offs that are less straightforward than might first seem to be the case. As I said, however, I will investigate the specific point that my hon. Friend raised with me and write to him about it subsequently.

Similar considerations apply to the other train services that operate on the west coast main line and might also be candidates for additional stops at reinstated platforms, such as the services currently originating in Birmingham and Manchester. It is already possible to travel direct between Carnforth and other stations to the south. This seems to imply that the main

benefit of stopping non-London services at reinstated main line platforms at Carnforth would be to create new direct journey opportunities between Carnforth and stations to the north—including Oxenholme, Penrith, Carlisle and other northern destinations into Scotland.

As can be seen from what I have said today, nobody should underestimate the fact that reinstating the fast-line platforms at Carnforth station would involve more than some hard decision making. It is not simply a question of finding the money for the platforms, although I pay tribute to the tremendous spirit that my hon. Friend and his constituents are demonstrating in their willingness and determination to try to secure their reinstatement. Local funding is, of course, important for platform reinstatement, but it does not necessarily determine whether a future franchise would require trains to stop there. It is certainly a way forward and clear willingness has been shown to secure money for that particular end. Indeed, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, local people have already demonstrated what they can achieve with the improvements already made to Carnforth station.

Such local funding, if enough could be found to cover the potentially substantial costs, would reduce the initial financial burden. However, we would also have to ensure that the ongoing additional maintenance and renewal costs were covered. The next step for those in favour of reinstating the fast-line platforms at Carnforth would therefore be to identify how this reinstatement could be delivered and, indeed, funded in the longer term in respect of those additional maintenance and renewal costs. The Government believe that the local authority would also have an important role to play and we would wish to see whether it supported such a move as part of its transport strategy. Equally, it would be vital that there was clear support from a train operating company for such a move.

In conclusion, the Government welcome local initiatives to improve rail services as fitting their wider localism agenda. The Department is always very happy to provide advice and guidance, but we think that decisions such as this are best made locally. At the end of this debate, let me say to my hon. Friend that I recognise and sympathise with the case he has put. There are significant problems, which I have identified—stopping services and the penalty in journey times—but I will go back to my officials and raise with them one more time the points that he has raised tonight to see whether there is any way we can make any progress, without me making any commitments from the Dispatch Box tonight. I will write to him about both the general and specific points he has raised.

Question put and agreed to.

10.43 pm

House adjourned.

Early Day Motion

- **HIGH SPEED 2 AND CARNFORTH STATION**

That this House notes the Government's proposal to build a second High Speed Rail Line to both Birmingham and Manchester; believes that taking passengers off the West Coast Mainline will allow the rail operator to stop at many more stops and open the line to many more passengers; further believes that this will ensure that Carnforth has a regular service on the West Coast Mainline, cutting journey times and boosting tourism; calls on the Government to press ahead with High Speed 2 despite its detractors; and further calls on the Government to ensure that all the local stations along the West Coast Mainline benefit from trains stopping at them once the new High Speed 2 line has been completed.

12 Jul 2011 | Early day motions | Open | House of Commons | 2072 (session 2010-12)

Primary sponsor: Morris, David | **Party:** Conservative Party

Other sponsors: Corbyn, Jeremy

Number of signatures: 2

Topic: Railways

E Further reading

Carnforth Railway Action Group
<http://carnforthplatforms.org/>

WALKER, Andre

From: WALKER, Dominic
Sent: 07 January 2013 13:09
To: WALKER, Andre; MORRIS, David (2nd Mailbox)
Subject: FW: Carnforth - Direct Rail Service to London
Attachments: carnforth platform 2 south.JPG; Carnforth Platform 2.JPG

FYI.

From: Bliss Andrew [mailto:Andrew.Bliss@networkrail.co.uk]
Sent: 07 January 2013 13:02
To: WALKER, Dominic
Cc: Carbery Tom; Rudge Tony
Subject: Carnforth - Direct Rail Service to London

Dominic,

As agreed, I write here to give my formal response to the use of VT empty coaching stock to form a London bound service from Carnforth, ready for David's meeting with the Minister on the 10th.

David and yourself presented to me the idea of constructing some form of platform to allow customers to gain access to the empty coaching stock which runs empty through to Carnforth before running back to Lancaster to form the London bound service. This was not to add WCML platforms to allow through services to call, an idea which Network Rail and I stressed does not fit strategically.

My colleague and I have had a chance to consider the implications, but stress without a study, for which we do not have funding, the comments I make here are preliminary and whilst are generally supportive in terms of enabling rolling stock to enter service at Carnforth, several assumptions are made relevant to timetable margins and platform clearance.

[My view is that there would be no need to construct an additional platform.] The current ECS workings using Car are used to reduce the capacity take by crossing to the relevant line at Lancaster and waiting for the next departure time. Instead the empty stock is routed to Carnforth and enters one of the two the UP and Down loops and waits recessed, until departure time back south. This is where you have seen the rolling stock and from where you were seeking access, or alternatively by reinstating the former platform three.

[Given the presence of over head 25 KV equipment in platform 2, the platform is also bi-directional and can be accessed directly from the Goods Lines or the main line, I would therefore contend sufficient infrastructure already exists, with sufficient margin in the barrow line timetable to accommodate the move.] Although this is very good and VT stock is not cleared for gauge in this platform, which is on quite a sharp curve and has some height issues as can be seen on the attached photograph. So confirmation would be necessary, but achieving such clearance would be of the same magnitude of cost associated as with building or reinstating former platforms.

I spoke with the Virgin Trains Communications Manager, who as I advised, confirmed VT's intention for the Lancaster terminating service to be extended through to Glasgow offering a through London to Glasgow hourly pattern. This effectively reduces your opportunities at Lancaster and [Carnforth to one train per day and only south bound with return.]

As I said at our meeting, Network Rail does not specify the timetable, but does validate operator's requests. If this is to be progressed, I recommend VT approaches Network Rail with a formal request, which we will then progress. Given there is only one service involved there would be very little room to justify any investment in infrastructure may even require some form of subsidy for VT to progress. [In terms of costs, I anticipate some minor station works in terms of signage and for the platforms. However, the station is run by Northern but the platforms are not managed by VT trains are despatched by platform staff.] There would need to be safe systems for train despatch generated a number of alterations to companies safety case and franchise agreement. Where there is a will there is a way, but this would not be popular with the current two operators given the regulated fare income is shared pro rata the planned provision of additional seating. So additional seating provided by another TOC is likely to erode the income of the existing fares structure.

I have purposely refrained from quoting prices for works necessary as I see the main barrier to overcome is that of franchise politics, but if I can be of any further help, please let me know.



Mr D Morris MP
Morecamble & Lunesdale
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

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Meridian
85 Smallbrook Queensway
Birmingham
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TELEPHONE

0121 654 7189

2 July 2010

Dear *David,*

Thank you for your time on 15 June and your subsequent letter of 23 June.

I agree with the points raised and the outcome from our meeting.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Gibb".

Chris Gibb
Chief Operating Officer





HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

RECEIVED

Chris Gibb,
Virgin Trains,
Meridian,
85 Smallbrook,
Queensway,
Birmingham,
B54 HA

CG137E

23rd June 2010

Dear Chris,

Thank you for seeing myself and Peter Yates, I was very impressed by your enthusiasm for the task in hand and your willingness to consider new options. This is to confirm what was agreed during the discussion:

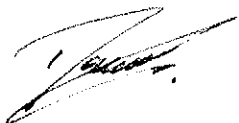
1. That Virgin Trains would offer no objection to replacing the North and South platforms on the West Coast Mainline making them suitable for local and other services.
2. That the new franchise is unlikely to include the occasions that trains reverse through Carnforth, but if it does Virgin would consider using those occasions to pick up passengers.
3. That Virgin are amenable to either stopping West Coast Trains at Carnforth and/or supporting local services linking up with Lancaster as long as a robust business case is put forward.
4. That the business case would be similar to that presented by Visit Chester; in that it would show that extra services would displace passengers from road to rail and Virgin would be offered significant marketing support from key stakeholders such as local authorities and the Lake District Tourist Board.

5. That Virgin believe that the only way a viable service could be run is if the station is used by both local commuters and critically tourists visiting the Lake District.

Please let me know if you agree with the above. Clearly developing a business case will involve a great deal of work on our part but I do think that the will exists within the community to do it. It might also be useful if you could supply any information on the sorts of documents sent from Chester (obviously without breaching confidentiality).

On a person note I am committed to a demand based tender process on the railways. I do not accept that anonymous bids and rigid targets by the Department for Transport are beneficial to the travelling public and I will be making these points to the relevant ministers in the fullness of time.

Yours sincerely,



David Morris MP

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