

**Appendix R**

**Letters of Support from Interested Parties**



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA  
THE RIGHT HON JACK STRAW MP

Edwin Booth  
Chairman  
Lancashire Enterprise Partnership  
County Hall  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 8XJ

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015

*Dear Edwin*

As you may be aware I have been campaigning for at least the last eight years in support of major improvements in the Clitheroe/Blackburn/Bolton/Manchester rail service, so as to secure a regular half-hourly service frequency throughout the timetable, and much greater reliability for passengers as well.

The case for this has always been good, but has been much strengthened by the astonishing increase in the number of East Lancashire residents using the service, despite its current and obvious downsides (of poor reliability, and ageing stock).

I was therefore delighted when the LEP agreed in principle to provide key funding for the investment to double part of the Blackburn/Bolton track. The cost is relatively modest compared with much investment elsewhere in the rail network, whilst the economic and social benefits will be substantial.

I am therefore now writing to you to express the hope that the LEP Board will give final approval to this investment early next month.

*Yours ever,*

*Jack*

**JACK STRAW**



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Edwin Booth  
Chairman  
Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Ltd  
County Hall  
Preston  
Lancashire  
PR1 8XJ

Our ref: PLF

4 March 2015

Dear Mr Booth

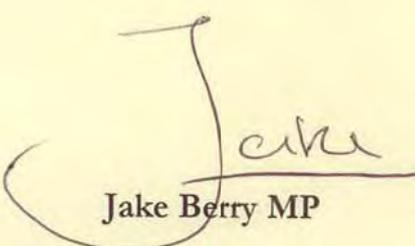
I am writing in support of the funding application for the rail service frequency enhancement on the Manchester/Clitheroe line.

This funding is a game changer for my constituency and I am very happy to give my support to the bid which will bring huge improvements for my constituents especially those who live in Darwen including Improved inter-peak service between Blackburn and Manchester; Reduction in number of vehicles on the local highway network; Improved road safety and improved reliability for the service

It will also increase the attractiveness of Pennine Lancashire as a place to do business and to live and work; reduce pollution, noise, accidents and road congestion and I cannot emphasise how important it is for this project to receive final sign off by the LEP.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

  
Jake Berry MP

NIGEL EVANS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Booth  
Chair of the Lancashire LEP

11 March 2015

*Dear Edwin,*

I am writing in support of necessary investment to enhance the Clitheroe rail line.

I am aware that the investment will improve the service frequency between Blackburn and Manchester, improve overall reliability for the whole of the line and enhance the waiting environment and information at stations in the Ribble Valley.

I fully support this scheme as it has a number of operational benefits, social benefits, Environmental Benefits and economic benefits. These include, an improved inter-peak service between Blackburn and Manchester, a reduction in the number of vehicles on the local highway network, improved road safety and improved reliability for the service.

This scheme will also provide employment and educational opportunities in the Ribble Valley and it will increase the attractiveness of Lancashire as a place to do business.

As Member of Parliament for Ribble Valley for 22 years, I welcome this scheme improve rail facilities in my constituency.

*Yours  
Nigel*



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A STRONG  
VOICE FOR  
THE RIBBLE  
VALLEY



## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

please ask for:

direct line: 01200 414400

e-mail:

my ref:

your ref:

date: 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015

To: Mr E Booth

Chair

Lancashire Economic Partnership

Council Offices

Church Walk

CLITHEROE

Lancashire BB7 2RA

Switchboard: 01200 425111

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[www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk](http://www.ribbonvalley.gov.uk)

### **Blackburn to Manchester Rail Scheme Outline Business Case Ribble Valley Borough Council Expression of Support**

Dear Mr Booth,

The Council is aware that shortly a business case will be presented to you regarding the funding of improvements to the Blackburn to Manchester railway by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. This is the culmination of several years of work, which RVBC has been regularly appraised of during its development. The Council has a significant history of supporting rail initiatives in the area and was heavily involved in bringing passenger rail services back to the Borough some years ago. The patronage of our local stations continues to grow at a healthy rate, up by 90% in the last ten years, and we would wish this to continue. We are also a partner in the Clitheroe Line Community Rail Partnership.

The investment proposed will help deliver improved reliability of our rail services to the Manchester area, a reduction in the number of vehicles on our local highways and therefore improved safety. It will also help enhance access to employment and educational opportunities and increase the area's attractiveness as a place in which to do business.

We also welcome the physical improvements to our local stations that the document sets out including improved shelters, modern customer information screens, improved signage and associated repairs.

Consequently the Council would wish, as it has at various other points in the process, to strongly express its support for investment in the local rail system and in particular the document and the projects it proposes as the Council considers that they will bring real benefits to the Borough's rail travellers and to visitors to the area. We would therefore urge you to support the funding of these improvements.

As a further point, we would also wish to bring to the LEP's attention the importance of necessary improvements to local rolling stock to reduce congestion and the introduction of electrification to enable future improved service frequency to the Borough.

Yours sincerely,

*Marshal Scott*

Marshal Scott, Chief Executive, Ribble Valley Borough Council.

26<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Edwin Booth  
Chair: Lancashire Enterprise Partnership

Dear Mr Booth

Support for Investment in the Blackburn-Darwen- Manchester Rail Line

East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce is pleased to express its support for the case for securing the investment necessary to enhance the rail service frequency and reliability to Manchester from Blackburn.

Poor connectivity has long been a constraint on East Lancashire's development, as well as consolidating an entrenched parochial mind-set.

The enhanced service, including twin-tracking around the bottleneck at Darwen, will unlock considerable economic, social, operational and environmental benefits.

At the macro-economic level, the line and improved service will add to the concept of East Lancashire as an attractive place to locate/relocate, as well as work and participate in the outdoor, leisure and recreational offer of the area. The modal shift to rail will help alleviate the pressure on the overloaded A666 through Darwen, which many local businesses (WEC, Kenleys...) are already complaining about and which are set to worsen with the growth of commuting and economic growth. Rail is already a preferred option for many business travellers and this affords our companies access to the improved national and regional networks.

It will improve access to education and job opportunities, and increase popularity as a base for commuters who will spend in the local shops and restaurants and add to the quality of local town centres like Darwen's.

The corresponding environmental gains include reductions in pollution, noise, accidents and road congestion and increased energy efficiency and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

We therefore offer our strongest support for investment and would be pleased to provide further information if required.

Yours truly



M. Damms  
CEO East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

Dear Mr E Booth,

**Improvements to the Ribble Valley Rail Line**

On behalf of Community Rail Lancashire I would like to take this opportunity to support Blackburn with Darwen Borough Councils bid for Local Growth Funding to support the necessary infrastructure required to create the passing loop extension at Darwen.

The Clitheroe line Community Rail Partnership was formed in 2006 and designation for the service covering all stations on the route apart from Man Vic was achieved in March 2007. Since this time working with industry partners we have fully supported the work of BwDBC and Lancashire County Council in securing the necessary funding to improve service pattern, service reliability and station facilities.

The extension of the passing loop at Darwen will enable the line to support a robust half hourly service pattern between Blackburn and Manchester throughout the day Monday – Saturday and improve the overall reliability of the entire service which has been underperforming for some time.

Rail often provides a service for communities in Lancashire that is not available through other modes of travel. The local rail service allows relatively rural communities to access nearby towns and villages and travel further to access economic opportunities in Manchester and beyond. The increased service level between Blackburn and Manchester will help to cater for an increasing demand for rail services and undoubtedly improve the economic relationship between East Lancashire and Greater Manchester.

We are also very keen to support the investment at local stations along the line which also features within the bid. The need to improve customer information, signage and waiting shelter provision is another feature of the CRPs action plan.

Yours Sincerely

Richard Watts

Partnership Secretary



Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Dear Mr. Booth

### **Blackburn to Manchester Rail Scheme.**

Ribble Valley Rail, the User Group for the Clitheroe Line, strongly support the planned scheme to provide a half – hourly service throughout the day from Blackburn to Manchester. The doubling of the passing loop at Darwen will improve reliability and performance ensuring better connectivity to trains for Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport.

The Blackburn to Clitheroe section of the line was reopened in 1994 and since that time passenger numbers have steadily increased. The passenger numbers on the line from Clitheroe to Manchester have risen from 1.56 million in 2006/07 to 1.96 million in 2013/14 a rise of 23.9%. During the period 2014/15 the figures will exceed 2 million. With increased capacity comes the need for increased services and the provision of a half hourly service throughout the day between Blackburn to Manchester will cater for the current demand.

With new housing developments both in Blackburn with Darwen and the Ribble Valley the attraction of a direct service into Manchester will bring new passengers travelling for work, education, training or leisure to we need to address that demand.

With the re-opening of the line in 1994 saw the introduction of the Friends of Stations groups along the line, initially north of Blackburn, but more recently including Darwen and Entwistle. These groups daily visit the stations to ensure that they are clean and attractive places for passengers to wait. The proposed improved waiting facilities and customer information screen will now meet the needs of the growing market.

With the recent publication of the Invitation to Tender it is evident that we should see improvements in rolling stock, capacity and greater investment in rail within our area from the new franchisee.

Yours sincerely,

Marjorie Birch

Chairman Ribble Valley Rail