

Lake District partners seek improvements for Windermere station

Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, the county's strategic economic body, is to work with key partners in the Lake District in 2018 on plans to transform Windermere railway station into a World Heritage site gateway.

In partnership with the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA) and others, the LEP is exploring a range of potential options for enhancing Windermere station to increase its current capacity, improve access and create a first class visitor experience.

With Windermere the only public transport rail head for the heart of the Lake District, and rises in visitor numbers predicted following its attainment of World Heritage Site status earlier this year, the aim is to support further growth in the Cumbrian economy and give people the chance to travel into the area efficiently by rail rather than by road.

Several organisations are coming together to work on the plans, including the Lakes Line Community Rail Partnership, Network Rail, LDNPA, the National Trust, Cumbria County Council, and local businesses.

Work is already in early stage development with feasibility studies to be commissioned on station development and funding opportunities. The proposals include measures to improve access to and from the station for all modes of transport, including the local bus network, helping to increase links to local attractions and businesses and improve onward travel to the lake and other destinations.

Jim Jackson, board member of Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, explains: "It is early days in development plans for the station but this is a great opportunity to improve the access and visitor experience to a key location in Cumbria and to drive economic growth. In the context of delivering the rural and visitor growth plan for the county, it's one of the key priorities for Cumbria LEP over the coming year.

"We want to create a truly world class visitor experience for people who come to Windermere. These proposals seek to maximise Windermere's improved links to Manchester airport during the course of the Northern franchise being delivered as part of the Great North Rail Project. They also dovetail with our infrastructure plan and our work with Transport for the North."

Chair of the Lake District National Park Authority, Mike McKinley, adds: "This is a really exciting opportunity to transform the visitor experience on arriving in Windermere and create a fantastic gateway to the World Heritage Site."

Keith Little, Cumbria County Council Cabinet Member for Transport, says: "Windermere station is the starting point for so many visitors to our county and it's right that it should make a statement. It will also mean we maximise the benefits of future improvements to rail connections to Manchester. I look forward to this project being delivered."

In 2017, Cumbria LEP asked the Secretary of State for Transport to look at further investment in services and in particular improvements to Windermere station in light of the Lake District's attainment of World Heritage Status. The LEP is also seeking improved frequency of services between Oxenholme and Windermere, as well as additional through trains to Manchester, including morning and evening services. These discussions are continuing.

For further details about Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, go to www.cumbrialep.co.uk

Ends

For media information please contact Karen Gardner at Osprey Communications on 015394 42436 or email karen@ospreycommunications.co.uk

Notes for editors

- Cumbria LEP provides a strategic lead for all activities contributing to the growth and vibrancy of the county's economy and where appropriate takes positive action, using the skills, capability and networks of LEP partners.
- The LEP is keen to work with all partners and stakeholders (private and public) to undertake actions, secure funding and implement initiatives to support sustainability and growth of Cumbria's economy.
- A copy of the Cumbria Strategic Economic Plan is available at: www.cumbrialep.co.uk/what-we-do/sep/