

Clitheroe to Hellifield Strategic Outline Business Case

Key Stakeholder and Public Engagement Themes

On behalf of **Ribble Valley Borough Council**



Ribble Valley
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 In March 2020, Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) was successful in obtaining funding from the Government's *Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund*. Subsequently, the Council has commissioned Stantec, (supported by Allan Rail Solutions Ltd and PRA Operations Planning Ltd) to prepare a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to determine the feasibility and relative benefits of reinstating a regular passenger rail service along the Ribble Valley Line between Blackburn/Clitheroe and Hellifield. The production of an SOBC is the next stage of the *Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund* process as part of the first stage of the business case development for the proposals.
- 1.1.2 The SOBC document provides a concise business case in respect of the proposals. However, several more detailed technical documents, of which this report is one have been prepared to provide additional detail if required.
- 1.1.3 Evidencing the existing transport problems and the potential opportunities associated with closing the public transport 'connectivity gap' between Clitheroe and Hellifield has been undertaken through a stakeholder and public engagement programme, supported by five key analysis tasks: review of existing studies; high level policy review; transport baselining; rail analysis (the role of the line and existing and future capacity); and socio-economic baselining. As well as helping to identify the transport problems in the area, these tasks have helped define and evidence the consequential socio-economic outcomes and impacts.
- 1.1.4 This report provides additional detail on the stakeholder and public engagement work undertaken to inform the study.

1.2 Stakeholder Engagement

- 1.2.1 The stakeholder engagement involved three key streams of engagement:
- A **workshop** with public sector stakeholders from Lancashire County Council; Ribble Valley Borough Council; North Yorkshire County Council; Craven District Council; and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, as well as the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Yorkshire Dales National Park planning authorities.
 - **One-to-one phone calls** with: the Department for Transport; Northern Trains, Transport for the North; Network Rail; the Rail Freight Group; and a number of relevant Community Rail Partnerships; Visit Lancashire, Welcome to Yorkshire, the Ribble Valley Tourism Association and the Forest of Bowland.
 - **Written communication** with: the 26 relevant Parish Councils; the Lancashire and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnerships, as well as the region's Chamber of Commerce. Furthermore, several additional Community Rail Partnerships were contacted this way.

1.3 Public Engagement

- 1.3.1 The public engagement exercise ran for three weeks from 17th February to 10th March 2021, during which time an online portal provided background on the study with embedded survey questions. This offered members of the public a chance to provide input to support the identification of transport problems caused by the connectivity gap, and thoughts on potential solutions. Over 650 responses were received.

1.4 This Report

- 1.4.1 This report presents a key summary of the findings of the engagement activity with respect to the key engagement themes which emerged. No specific comments are attributed to any individual or organisation.
- 1.4.2 In addition, this report does not summarise any technical discussions / information gained through the engagement exercise but concentrates on summarising the key transport problems and opportunities identified to inform the Strategic Case for intervention.

2 Public Engagement – Key Analysis

2.1 Respondents

2.1.1 As noted above, the public survey received 650 responses. Respondents were asked for the first four digits of their postcode. These have been used to understand the approximate area in which respondents reside and is shown in Figure 2:1 and shows a large response from those in Clitheroe (nearly 40% of all respondents).

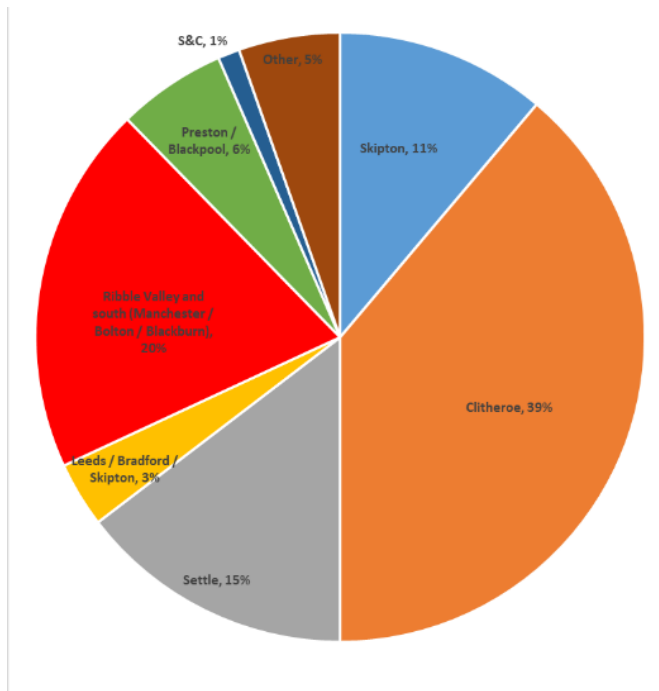


Figure 2:1: Respondent Location

2.1.2 Overall, it should be recognised that around 85% of respondents reside within the RVBC, Craven District, Skipton and Settle areas. **The survey does not therefore represent the views of visitors to the region.**

2.2 Where would a rail service originate – Manchester or Preston?

2.2.1 Respondents to the survey were asked, in terms of a new rail service serving Hellifield, if they would prefer a direct connection via Blackburn to / from Manchester Victoria or Preston.

2.2.2 The responses from the public engagement exercise, presented in the figure below, show the preference for a connection to Manchester Victoria over Preston.

2.2.3 It is worth noting though that a fifth of respondents stated a preference for Preston, and the importance of ensuring effective public transport connections between Craven District, the RVBC area and Preston is recognised.

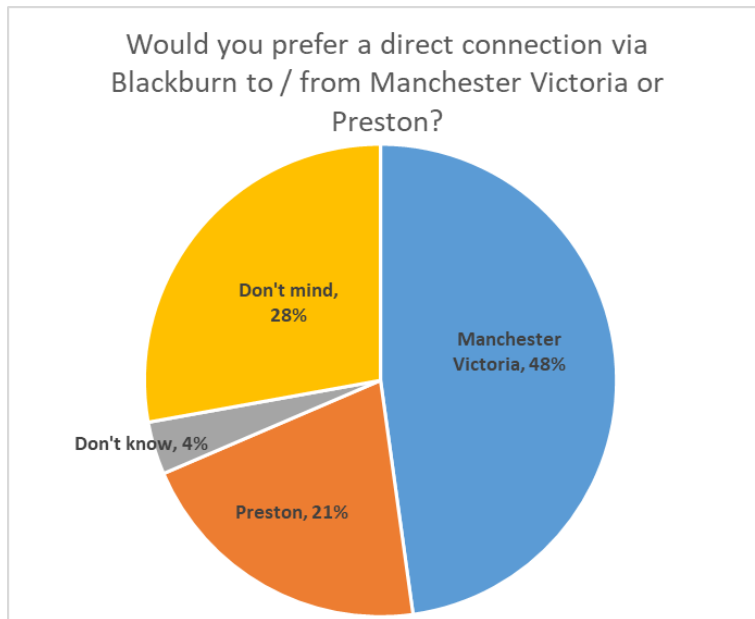


Figure 2.2: Rail service origin preference

2.2.4 Further analysis was undertaken to explore, by respondee location, the stated origin preference. The analysis is shown in Figure 2.3 and shows a preference for Manchester Victoria as a service origin (over Preston) for each respondee location area, other than for those resident in Preston.

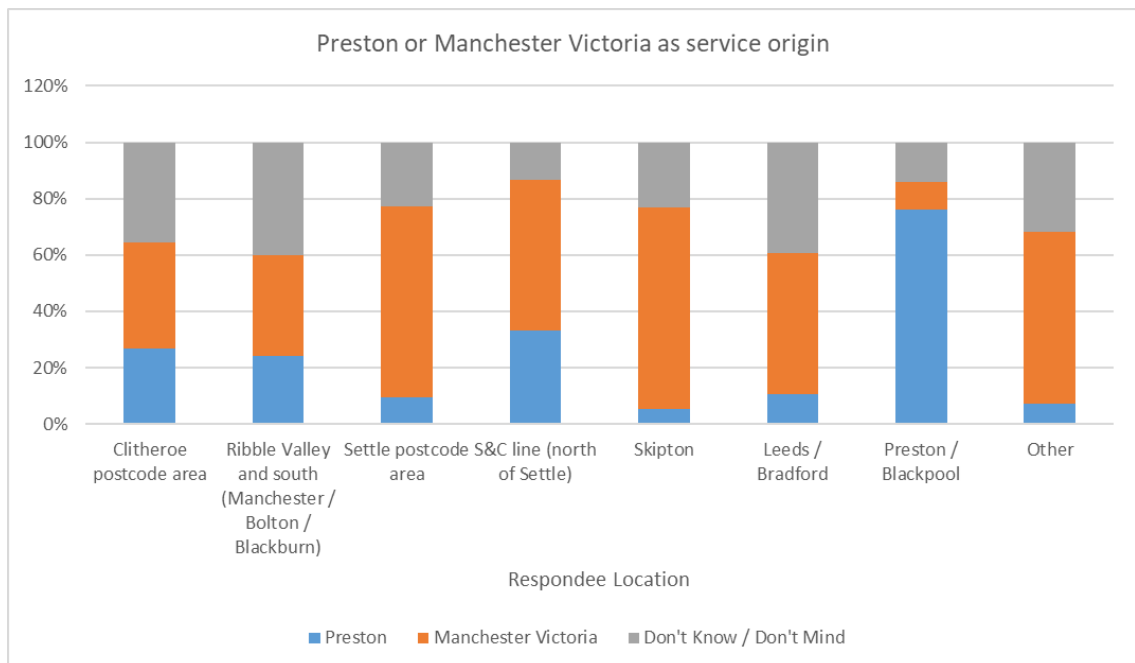


Figure 2.3: Rail service origin preference – by respondee location

2.3 Where would a rail service destinate – Dales, Hellifield or Skipton?

2.3.1 Respondents to the public survey were asked to choose between a greater rail service frequency between Hellifield to Clitheroe and southwards (i.e. terminating services at Hellifield), or a less frequent service connecting Hellifield and Clitheroe but extending onwards either to Skipton or to Settle / Garsdale.

2.3.2 The preference was for an onward connection over greater frequency at Hellifield, as presented in the figure below. However, in terms of the onward connection, the preference was split evenly between heading north on the Settle & Carlisle Line or heading east to Skipton.

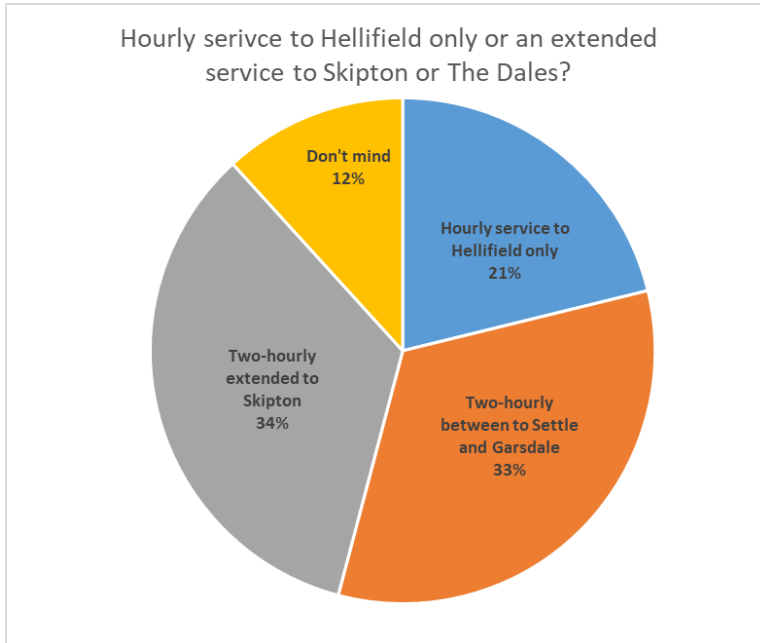


Figure 2:4: Rail service destination preference

2.3.3 Further analysis was undertaken to explore, by respondee location, the stated destination preference. The analysis is shown in Figure 2:5 and shows:

- Half of those residing in Clitheroe stating Skipton as a preferred service destination, with the other half stating the Dales, a terminating service at Hellifield or they did not know/ did not mind
- A large proportion of those in the Settle postcode area and the 'other' location category supporting a connection to the Dales. It is perhaps telling that those from further afield saw the connection to into the Dales as preferable given such respondents are more likely to be tourist to the area. Those in the 'other' location category covered responses from the Lancaster, York, Walsall, Darlington, Chelmsford, Hereford, Wakefield, Birmingham, Nottingham, Reading, Huddersfield and London areas.

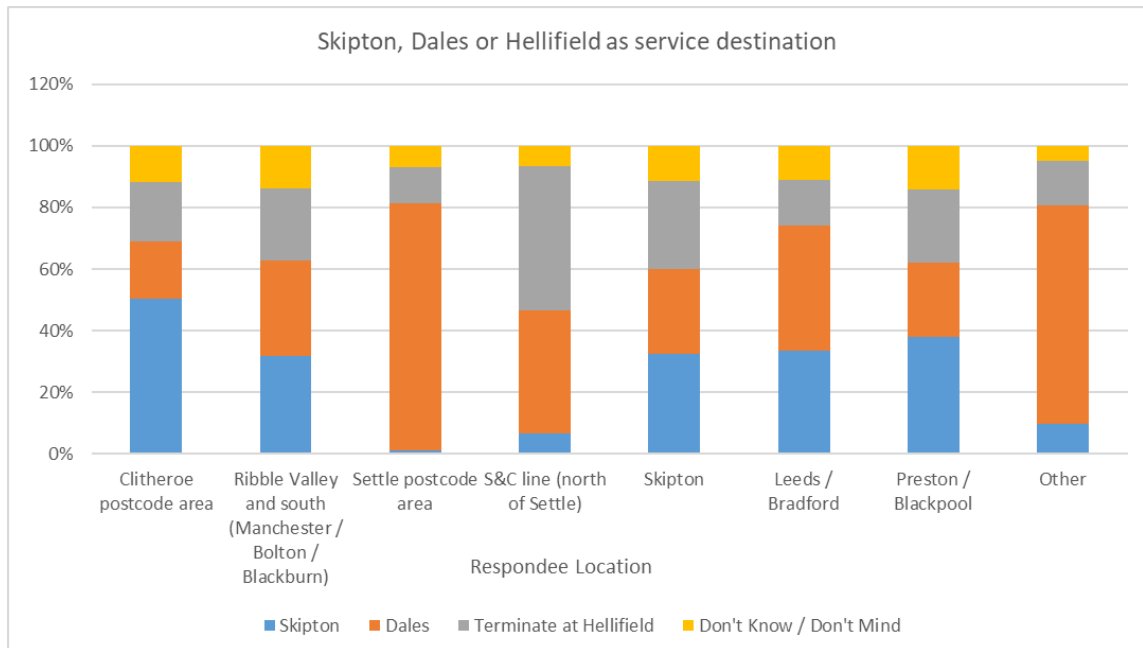


Figure 2:5: Rail service destination preference – by responder location

2.3.4 The preference for a connection to Skipton was dominated by residents of Clitheroe. In this regard it should be noted again that the survey does not represent the views of those outside of the region and this has been recognised when developing the rationale for the business case. The connection to Skipton is recognised as a ‘local issue’ and not a wider connectivity issue.

3 Transport Problems

- 3.1.1 The key emerging transport problem themes from the open responses to the public survey and the stakeholder engagement discussions have been summarised and are discussed below.

Limited direct public transport connections linking the Craven District and Ribble Valley Borough Council areas

- 3.1.2 Members of the public highlighted that there are **currently no public transport options which travel along the A682/A59, linking Craven to the RVBC area**. This means that the only travel option available is the private car. This road was also considered to be dangerous by some respondents and was avoided when travelling.
- 3.1.3 Many members of public commented on the **lack of reliable transport connections** in rural areas, and how this restricts people from accessing services. Additionally, in recent years there have been financial cuts which saw bus services shrink further. It was noted that without there being consistent investment into the bus services there would be no shift towards public transport.
- 3.1.4 It was mentioned that if someone were to travel to Keighley by train, from Ribble Valley, they would have to change at Blackburn to travel to Hebden Bridge. From there they would have to catch a bus to reach Keighley. **This is an indirect route**. Additionally, those who live near or on the Ribble Valley Line and travel to Leeds for work need to drive to Skipton before catching a train to Leeds. This is lengthy and the opening of the line between Clitheroe and Hellifield would allow those making this trip to go the whole distance by rail.
- 3.1.5 Many respondents to the public survey mentioned that there is **poor access to the Settle and Carlisle Line for those who live in the Ribble Valley and Preston**. To access this service by public transport they are required to get a bus from Clitheroe to Skipton where they can then board the train onto the Line.
- 3.1.6 It was noted that there are a **limited number of buses which operate between Gisburn and Skipton**, however, a rail link connecting Gisburn to Hellifield would allow for a connection through to Leeds.
- 3.1.7 Additionally, there were comments around the extension of the rail service to Preston which would be convenient for many when travelling to towns such as Hellifield and Settle from Preston.
- 3.1.8 There are various community bus services which are in operation, however, these are capacity restricted and only run a limited number of times a day. This created a constrained and infrequent service which does not benefit the wider community.
- 3.1.9 The **280-bus service between Preston and Skipton has been highlighted by many as being poor**. It does not connect with train arrivals and departures and is unreliable. This service has also been threatened with withdrawal as it is **not commercially viable** with low numbers of passengers.
- 3.1.10 It was highlighted that the train services in place now do not serve the population well. It was noted that it is **difficult to get a train to arrive at a specific location for a certain time**.

High reliance on the private car for journeys between Craven District and RVBC area, and further afield

- 3.1.11 It was noted that the restricted public transport connections to Greater Manchester from Ribble Valley and Craven **force people to become reliant on their car to travel**, and that the lack of public transport connections to higher education facilities outside of the Ribble Valley district forces people to **rely on private car use** as their main mode of travel.
- 3.1.12 It was mentioned that in some villages in the Ribble Valley there are no public transport links to other villages, with **resultant heavy reliance on car use**.
- 3.1.13 It was also noted that current rail links between Lancashire and Yorkshire are poor, which means that people **have to use their car** or travel by bus instead. It was noted that the connections to Leeds are unreliable, so people choose to avoid this rail service.
- 3.1.14 Due to the high number of people relying on their car, it was noted in the public survey that there has been a dramatic increase in congestion on the roads. This was noted as being a particular issue in small, **rural villages which experience a high level of through traffic**.
- 3.1.15 It was considered by many that the **reintroduction of this rail service would reduce the number of cars on the road** and generate a modal shift towards rail use.
- 3.1.16 Many have noted that they would **leave their car at home and travel by public transport if they could** and the improvement in connection with the opening of the Clitheroe to Hellifield line would aid this.
- 3.1.17 In some cases, the older generation are not confident in driving longer distances and would rather travel by public transport to visit their family. This can lead to **isolation due to the limited public transport options available to them and the and the time it takes to travel being far longer**.
- 3.1.18 Additionally, **a number of individuals noted that they are unable to drive or plan to give up driving**. In doing this they accept that under the current circumstances, with a lack of public transport, their current trips will be curtailed unless there is an improvement in services on offer.
- 3.1.19 Many commented on the **high cost of having to rely on their cars for travel**. There can be high fuel and parking costs associated with using a car rather than public transport. Many people have no alternative. The cost of parking is a problem for many and parking spaces are limited in some towns and villages.

Public transport journey times between Craven District and RVBC area which are not competitive with the private car

- 3.1.20 Many noted that **the length of time it takes to travel by public transport is far greater than the journey time by private car**. This was a common response by many as to why they opt to travel by car and avoid public transport.
- 3.1.21 However, it was noted that travelling by car can take a long time which limits the amount of time which can be spent doing activities or visiting family. It was noted that **a rail link between Clitheroe and Hellifield would allow for the time it takes to travel to Manchester to be less than by road**.
- 3.1.22 It was noted that **existing rail services take far longer to travel between the RVBC area and Craven** and that the current train services do not provide a competitive or viable option when compared to the car.

- 3.1.23 It was stated that **many of those living in Lancashire have to travel by car to reach Manchester or Preston** this is due to the length of time it takes to travel there by alternative modes.
- 3.1.24 It was highlighted that **if there were to be a rail connection from Clitheroe to Skipton it would become a competitive alternative** to the current bus service in operation.
- 3.1.25 It was noted that currently there are many people in Ribble Valley who work in Shipley and Leeds and travel by car due to the convoluted and time-consuming journey by bus or train. **Travelling by car tends to be the quicker** and more direct option when travelling between Craven and Ribble Valley.

High cost of public transport between Craven District and the Ribble Valley Borough Council area

- 3.1.26 It was noted that public transport links to the wider North-West of England and Wales are poor and, in many cases, the best way to reach these areas is by travelling to Leeds to get a train. This can not only be time consuming but can **become expensive due to the number of train / bus interchanges required** to complete the trip.
- 3.1.27 It has been noted that the rail network access in these areas is poor and the options available are indirect when travelling onto the Settle and Carlisle line or to Scotland. This makes these **trips very expensive**, meaning people choose to travel by car.
- 3.1.28 It was highlighted that due to the circuitous route people must take to travel between the two districts, there is a **higher cost involved due to the longer distances**. This cost would be reduced if the line between Clitheroe and Hellifield reopened as the route would become more direct.
- 3.1.29 It was also highlighted that the rail options to Manchester, via Lancaster or Leeds are **unnecessarily expensive**.
- 3.1.30 Comments were raised regarding the public transport options available and that they were thought to be **too expensive**. **They were also thought to be** difficult to use due to the number of bus and rail changes required. This results in people choosing to travel by other modes or **not travel at all**.

4 Economic and Societal Consequential Impacts

4.1.1 The key impacts of the transport problems as noted by the public and stakeholders and are summarised below.

Constrained sustainable tourism travel connections and tourism economy

- 4.1.2 It was noted that the current lack of public transport between the two counties makes it **very difficult for those in Lancashire to access the Yorkshire Dales and Yorkshire by public transport**, and vice versa.
- 4.1.3 It was noted that West Yorkshire is a key tourism market which currently uses the Settle and Carlisle Line. Although the majority of users at the moment are locals, there is **significant potential for the tourism aspect of this line to grow**. The line provides an opportunity to travel along a scenic route and access various outdoor activities. However, the lack of connections onto the Settle and Carlisle line **limits the tourist draw to the area**.
- 4.1.4 It was noted **that those who wish to travel to Ribble Valley or Craven for recreational purposes are unable to do so sustainably due to the lack of public transport options available**. As a result, those making this trip have to use their car which burns fossil fuels and produces a high level of air pollution.
- 4.1.5 It was noted that, as DalesRail only operates on Summer Sundays, **there is a limit to when people can access the various leisure activities in the Dales** if they are only able to or wish to travel by public transport.
- 4.1.6 It was noted that there is scope to expand cycle and electric bike hire for tourist visits. This would have to be coupled with long distance sustainable transport access such as buses and trains.
- 4.1.7 Many noted that **high car use by tourist has a significant negative impact on local communities**. Car parking spaces become quickly filled. When they become full visitors resort to parking their cars on the roadside. It was highlighted that any increase in trains connecting to Manchester and Lancashire would see a reduction in private car use in the area.
- 4.1.8 It was noted that the key international tourist markets for Manchester are those from America and India and that there is an opportunity to tap into this by opening up the potential for day trips from Manchester into the Dales, as well as connecting the Manchester ‘arrival gateway’ sustainably to allow onward travel. Currently **access to undertake day-trip visits into the Yorkshire Dales is constrained** due to the lack of public transport connections.
- 4.1.9 Many people have highlighted the effect that COVID-19 will have on tourism visits in the UK. With people unable to travel abroad, it is expected that there will be more holidays taken locally or in the UK. Therefore, any **reinstatement of rail links would enable tourists to travel more effectively and sustainably**.
- 4.1.10 Many stakeholders and members of the public noted that much of the tourism demand is from walkers and cyclists. The **lack of public transport to key towns such as Hellifield and Settle impacts people’s ability to access the wider Yorkshire Dales for walking and cycling**.
- 4.1.11 It was noted that opening the link between Clitheroe and Hellifield would make it easier for residents of Manchester and its large conurbations to access the countryside for recreational activities. This could provide **health benefits for individuals and increase the number of people visiting Settle and the Yorkshire Dales at weekends**.

- 4.1.12 In recent years, the tourist attractions in **Ribble Valley and Craven have diversified to entice a wider age range of visitors**. One of the new arrivals to Clitheroe is Holmes Mill which is a craft beer and restaurant complex. This is thought to bring the **younger, more cosmopolitan generation to the area**.
- 4.1.13 The option to extend the rail connections on from Hellifield to connect with the Settle and Carlisle line is considered by many to be beneficial for a range of reasons. In terms of tourists, this would allow them to **easily access the Forest of Bowland area** to access the various walking and cycling routes on offer without the need for a car.
- 4.1.14 The attractions in West Yorkshire and Leeds can be **opened to a wider group of visitors** if the line was reinstated enabling a direct link by train from Ribble Valley. This could also benefit the towns in Ribble Valley as places like Clitheroe and Blackburn would become directly connected with Yorkshire, creating a **wider pool of visitors**.
- 4.1.15 The extension of the Clitheroe to Hellifield service onto the Settle and Carlisle line would open a range of tourism opportunities for those who live in the Greater Manchester area. This would allow them to easily access the variety of walking routes on offer and **create a new market for 'trip on the line' tourism**.
- 4.1.16 It was emphasised that if there were to be changes made to the timetable due to the introduction of new services, the **protection of the regular steam charters on the Settle and Carlisle line is essential**
- 4.1.17 DalesRail currently runs a Sunday service for visitors but there is scope to expand their operating week. This would **enable tourists to stay overnight in Carlisle, Ribble Valley or the Yorkshire Dales**. Additionally, there are many guided walks which begin from the train station which are very popular with visitors.
- 4.1.18 It was noted that the **frequency of trains is key to the service being successful**. In terms of tourism, it was stated that having frequent services from Rochdale and Clitheroe, especially at weekends and in the evening, would allow for more people to access the Ribble Valley and Craven areas.
- 4.1.19 For tourists visiting the more urban areas in the Ribble Valley and Craven districts it was highlighted that there would need to be sufficient services to allow tourists to return to their accommodation if they are on a day trip to the area.
- 4.1.20 It was highlighted that Morcombe has been selected to be the site of the new **Eden North Project** which would prove to be a **massive attraction for tourists**. This site is within walking distance from the train station

Constrained local business labour market / access to employment

- 4.1.21 It was noted that **the lack of transport links reduces job opportunities for people in the RVBC and Craven areas**. There is a lack of accessibility to jobs in Manchester which would widen the market for many individuals who live in North Yorkshire. These opportunities are currently limited to Bradford and Leeds - served directly by rail.
- 4.1.22 It was noted that for **younger people are severely limited when trying to access jobs**. **This is** due to the restricted travel options available to them when living in a village without regular public transport services.
- 4.1.23 It was noted by many that the reinstatement of the rail link would **open up the employment market for many**, enabling the option for employment in areas such as Leeds and Manchester.

- 4.1.24 Some people noted that their main business contacts were in London and other large cities. The lack of transport connections makes it difficult to access these areas. The transport options available to reach these areas are very expensive which is a deterrent for most.
- 4.1.25 It was commented that there is a **limited employee pool in Ribble Valley**. The lack of transport links to the wider area prevents people from outside the district from applying for jobs. This reduces the recruitment catchment area. As a result, jobs are not filled.
- 4.1.26 The opening of the North Eden Project in Morcombe is expected to provide many employment opportunities. Due to its proximity to the train station this will allow people from a wider catchment area to work here. It was noted that the reinstatement of the link between Clitheroe and Hellifield would **expand the labour market for the North Eden Project further**.
- 4.1.27 It was noted that those who commute to work in Manchester have to do so by car due to the lack of public transport connections to areas in the Ribble Valley and Craven. In some cases this requires the **extra costs of running a second car or having to pay for overnight accommodation in Manchester**.
- 4.1.28 In addition, it was highlighted that **travelling to Manchester for work means having to try to avoid rush hour traffic**. This leaves people with the option of leaving very early in the morning or returning home late at night to avoid these periods.

Constrained access to higher education

- 4.1.29 It was noted that the poor public transport connections to Leeds, Skipton and Preston **limits the higher education facilities** which are available to students in the Ribble Valley area.
- 4.1.30 Many noted that if there were more connected public transport services this would **widen the higher education opportunities** available to young adults in the Ribble Valley and Craven areas.
- 4.1.31 It was highlighted that there are students in Ribble Valley who want to study at Craven College in Skipton. Currently, the bus service in place which connects to Skipton takes over an hour. This is very **time consuming for those who are making the trip to Craven College**, and a more direct and faster train link was considered to be beneficial for those making this daily trip. In addition, the lack of transport options available makes it difficult for them to attend. It was noted that there is one bus out to Skipton in the morning and one which returns in the evening, so if either are missed then their **parents need to take them or collect them by car**.
- 4.1.32 It was also noted that the **poor transport connections to main cities, such as Leeds, Bradford and York, restrict higher education opportunities** and choices for those of sixth form, college or university age. Therefore, any form of connectivity improvements from Hellifield and Ribble Valley to the wider region would allow for easier commuting to these education facilities.
- 4.1.33 It was noted that connecting Hellifield and Clitheroe by rail would **improve access to higher education opportunities in the Greater Manchester area for those who live in the western Dales**.
- 4.1.34 Additionally, it was also noted that the Cardinal Newman sixth form College in Preston offers a wider range of qualification awards and subjects and a **direct link to Preston would provide new education opportunities**.
- 4.1.35 Furness College in Barrow was also mentioned. It was noted that the introduction of a rail connection had the potential to remove school buses from the road if students were able to commute to school by rail. This would have a positive impact on reducing congestion and carbon emissions.

- 4.1.36 It was noted that at Leeds University there is limited parking available on campus so the only option is to drive to Skipton and then travel to Leeds by train.
- 4.1.37 A **growing younger generation** in areas such as Newsholme was mentioned and it was noted that access to public transport links to the cities of Manchester and Leeds would be beneficial for them in terms of access to leisure activities and opening up education choices.

Limited cultural and events connections to Greater Manchester

- 4.1.38 Many people highlighted that **traveling to Manchester for leisure activities cannot be done by public transport**. If someone were to travel to Manchester, they would have to drive to Clitheroe to access the rail connections.
- 4.1.39 Additionally, it was noted that the **last train leaving Manchester to return to Clitheroe is too early to allow people to attend the theatre or go out for a meal**.
- 4.1.40 It was also noted that **if you do not drive or have access to a car then there is limited access to Greater Manchester** for football matches or concerts. This prevents individuals in the Ribble Valley or Craven area from reaching these events.
- 4.1.41 Currently, there are **no public transport connections to the International Airport in Manchester**. Many people highlighted that it is difficult to reach the airport unless travelling by car, whether it be for work or leisure. **Travelling by car would result in parking costs** at the airport which can be very expensive if for a long period of time.

Limited opportunity to make greener travel choices supporting the climate change agenda

- 4.1.42 It was noted that there is limited opportunity to access Craven or the Ribble Valley without the use of a car which is **not an environmentally friendly choice**. Cars create more congestion on the roads and air quality issues.
- 4.1.43 Many people have said that if the choice were available to travel by public transport they would as they see it as a **more environmentally friendly** option when compared to the car.
- 4.1.44 Due to the poor public transport links between Lancashire and Yorkshire people are having to travel by car. It was highlights that this increases road congestion as well as **air pollution, both of which are having detrimental impacts on climate change and global warming**.
- 4.1.45 It was commented **that connecting the rail network with the cycle network would allow cyclists to access places further afield** without increasing the number of vehicles on the roads.

5 Constraints and Issues

5.1.1 A range of operational constraints were raised by stakeholders and are noted below.

Terminating a train at Hellifield

5.1.2 Many stakeholder groups highlighted that it is **difficult and time consuming to turn an engine at Hellifield**. It was noted that the solution to this is to take the engine further up the line to Settle Junction where it can turn at the crossover in place due to the signalling layout.

5.1.3 Adding **intermediate signals between the Horrocksford Junction and Hellifield** was highlighted as being beneficial for the reintroduction of services between Clitheroe and Hellifield. The additional intermediate blocks would reduce headway on the line which increases capacity.

5.1.4 It was noted that if the trains were to be routed to Skipton from the Ribble Valley Line, the **signalling would need to be upgraded at Hellifield** to allow this to happen. This would have to be coupled with trackwork investment to enable such services to be viable.

5.1.5 It was noted that there was investigative work done into the improvement of rail infrastructure north of Blackburn. However, the £15 million cost was considered excessive for the benefits that these upgrades would provide.

Freight

5.1.6 There was concern about the addition of extra passenger trains on the Ribble Valley and Settle & Carlisle lines potentially **restricting freight operations**.

5.1.7 There are several quarries in the region and from environmental, road maintenance and safety perspectives, it was noted that it is **important to move as much stone out of the Yorkshire Dales National Park by rail as possible**.

5.1.8 Arcow Quarry currently generates around 3 trains a day. This number is due to increase in the coming years. This puts significant constraints on the line as all trains must travel northbound to Blea Moor to be able to turn and travel south. These stone aggregate trains travel over the single track Ribblehead viaduct which restricts other trains from travelling northbound.

5.1.9 There is also additional stone traffic on the line expected from Horton Quarry which could restrict line development in the future. It was noted that the passing loops on the Settle and Carlisle line would need to be always kept available as a refuge for freight trains.

5.1.10 In general, it was noted that **passing loops on the Settle & Carlisle Line and points south would need to be kept available for freight trains**.

Rolling Stock

5.1.11 There were a range of comments on the issues regarding rolling stock and the suitability of this depending on the type of user on the service. It was noted that the service from Clitheroe to Manchester serves many highly urbanised areas best served with a Class 150 unit. These are designed to allow passengers to board and exit effectively. It was noted that **Class 150 rolling stock would not be appropriate for the longer journeys on the Settle and Carlisle line** as the seating is not designed for long journeys.

5.1.12 It was also noted that **the only changes which would induce a change in rolling stock would be the electrification of rail lines in the Greater Manchester area**. Until then, the Class 150 and 156 units would remain in circulation. However, it was highlighted that Class

156s could be procured to use on the line as they go 'off-hire' from the East Midlands and ScotRail train services.

Line Capacity

- 5.1.13 At present, the line speed between Clitheroe and Hellifield is 35 mph, which could be raised to 50 mph. This would allow for Class 185 units to save time when travelling both northbound and southbound. Similar time savings would also be expected for Class 150 units.
- 5.1.14 West Coast Rail currently use the Ribble Valley line North of Clitheroe as a test run circuit. **This restricts the use of the line at these times.**
- 5.1.15 It was noted that there are a small number of through freight trains, which utilise the Ribble Valley and Settle & Carlisle Lines to avoid the West Coast Main Line (WCML), where the frequent and fast passenger services impede the progress of slow heavy freight trains limited to 60mph, and *vice versa*.
- 5.1.16 It is also noted that the Ribble Valley Line may be required as a freight diversion for the WCML post HS2. **Caution is needed to ensure that any future passenger services do not unduly diminish the line's role as a diversionary route.**
- 5.1.17 It was noted that **increased services on the Settle & Carlisle Line may impact on the future aspirations for services on the line**, including a potential Leeds to Glasgow Central service.

Hellifield Station

- 5.1.18 It was noted that at present there are limited parking and waiting facilities at Hellifield station, resulting in station parking fanning out onto residential streets.
- 5.1.19 It has also been highlighted that there would need to be significant investment into the train station facilities themselves. At Hellifield there is currently a café but there is a lack of indoor waiting facilities which would have to be rectified if passenger trains were to serve this station.