



Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
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Dear Sir/Madam

The Proposed Northumberland Line Order

I am writing to express support for the application by Northumberland County Council for the above-mentioned Order.

South East Northumberland is an area of increasing economic opportunity, particularly for the younger generation. Currently those opportunities are restricted to the local area and connectivity with the rest of the region is primarily dependent on use of the private car, increasing congestion on the main commuter corridors and adding to already excessive pollution levels.

The Northumberland Line runs right through New Hartley with stations proposed within 1km that will significantly reduce travel times into the main regional centres – and allow for increased access from there into South East Northumberland. It is not just the economic opportunities that this line will support but also the wider health and wellbeing of residents in the region. South East Northumberland has some of the best beaches and countryside in UK and improving accessibility to these areas will benefit those who so far have been unable to enjoy the variety of open spaces.

In particular, the scheme will:

- improve access from towns such as Ashington and Blyth and smaller communities of New Hartley, Seaton Delaval and Seghill to employment hubs like Newcastle, as well as opening up new opportunities for education and travel;
- provide a real incentive for potential employers to relocate to and invest in the area that has seen significant recent job losses – with the prospect of major new investment close;
- provide vital infrastructure to help deliver the region's aspirations for population and economic growth;
- help to attract visitors and improve local tourism;
- enhance public transport connectivity within and beyond the region;

- help to reduce congestion and improve air quality and road safety on key corridors by moving people away from car travel and onto public transport; and
- support the delivery of significant growth in sectors such as renewable energy, offshore oil and gas and engineering.

The proposed Northumberland Line Order is vital to secure the delivery of the scheme and we hope the Secretary of State will make the Order to enable the scheme to go ahead as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

John Barrell BSc CEng FCIHT FSoRSA AMRSGB