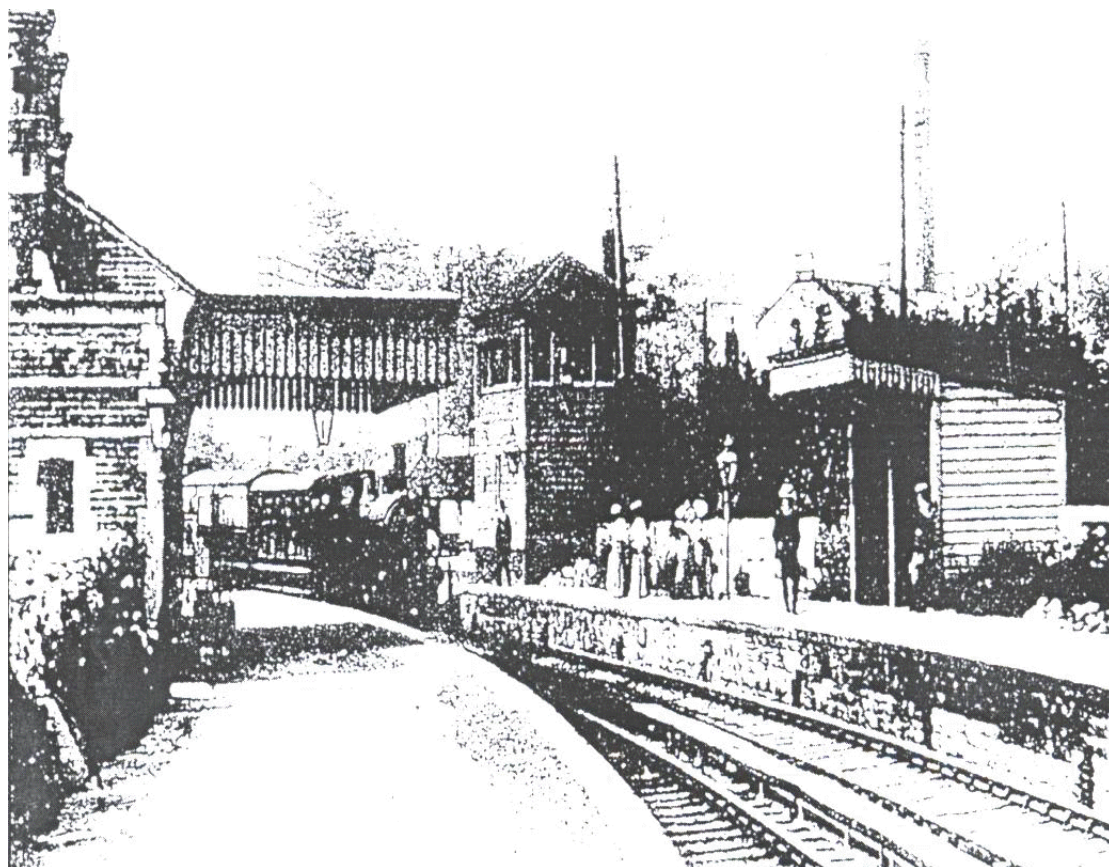


The North Somerset Railway Company Ltd.

Mission Statement and Outline Proposals - November 2007



Introduction:

This is a preliminary discussion document setting out a vision for a major community transport and tourism project for the Radstock and Frome areas, coupled to the conservation of their industrial heritage. Its intended audience is local authorities and other potential partners.

Mission Statement:

The railway project seeks to promote the economic and physical regeneration of both of the Frome and Radstock corridor through the regeneration of a community rail service as part of a sustainable transport network for the Mendip region, and the conservation and interpretation of the evidence of former industries, including coal-mining, iron, textiles and transport. Rather than fossilising the area simply as a museum, the project will work with other businesses to ensure that the impetus generated produces spin-off benefits for the communities in respect of shops, catering, accommodation, other services and industries, as well as enhancement of the built and natural environment.

Project Objectives:

In line with this vision, the project has identified the following specific objectives.

Community Rail Services:

- Railway privatisation has created opportunities for innovatory rail services. The project seeks:
- To secure the early re-introduction of passenger rail services over an 8-mile line between a new station at Radstock and the national network station at Frome.
- To institute conventional rail services through a specified Rail operator.
- The service would operate throughout the week rather than just Sundays or special days.
- To operate heritage trains between Frome and Radstock under the auspices of the North Somerset Railway Company Ltd.
- To encourage the use of the route by long-haul special excursion trains.
- To promote a passenger loyalty card offering discounts and linked to local businesses supporting the railway.

Rail Freight Services:

- To investigate the potential for railfreight services from Radstock, Frome and Mells, in association with English, Welsh & Scottish Railways and major freight generators.

Buildings of Character:

- To help the regeneration of Frome by supporting (i) the restoration of Frome Station (including Hannaford's splendid Brunel-style overall roof) in a form which allows trains from Radstock to run directly into it; (ii) the conservation of the nearby architectural heritage associated with local industries (iii) the enhancement of the town centre by providing a new central station as part of the market area development.
- To develop a station complex at Radstock which combines modern facilities with vernacular buildings and landscape of similar character to those associated with the former railways and industries [English Heritage and the Civic Trust have highlighted the uniquely intact nature of much of Radstock mining and social heritage.]

Facilities in Radstock station Complex:

- To provide space within the Radstock station complex for facilities such as booking office, tourist information, catering, public house, shop, cycle hire, toilets, offices, and storage; to create a concourse/access with bus interchange and short-stay parking; and to identify a long-stay commuter parking area in a convenient location but which does not detract from the environs of the station.

Radstock Town Centre Action Plan:

- To incorporate the proposed Radstock Station complex together with any selective and sympathetic development east of the town centre but not so far as to reduce its value to the town.
- Its situation must support the provision for an open space environment, traffic management measures, walking and cycling routes, visitor information, landscaping/planting and nature conservation.

Heritage:

- To contribute to the conservation of the industrial, commercial and transport heritage of Frome and support local museums in their interpretation work.
- To contribute to the development of a museum and educational/research facility for the standard gauge railways around Radstock (Radstock-Frome, Somerset & Dorset and Radstock-Bristol), the tramways and industrial heritage of the area, and to co-operate with associated museum projects.

Partnerships:

- To develop partnership working with organisations that share or support the project's objectives.

Benefits to the communities:

The projects offers the following potential benefits to the Radstock and Frome areas:

- Sustainable transport access to the National Rail Network at Frome, with links to London, Southampton, Swindon, Exeter, etc, and scope for freight links to reduce lorry trips.
- A foundation for sustainable tourism attraction at Radstock - potentially on a par with Blists Hill Victorian Village at Ironbridge, Shropshire and Morwellham Quay near Tavistock, Devon -and a focus for the conservation of this remarkable mining community.
- Upgrading of Frome Station to restore its character and enhance its value to the town.
- As a catalyst for economic regeneration for both towns - with local businesses, shops and services benefiting from visitors.
- Creation of local jobs and training opportunities, and a worthwhile projects for skilled and unskilled volunteer labour.
- Re-creation of community identity and history
- Educational and cultural roles - involving schools, colleges and wider community in the restoration and interpretation of industrial archaeology
- Enhancement and beneficial use of derelict land and structures, provision of public access opportunities for countryside enjoyment.