

## **Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership** ***"The Peaks and Dales Rail Link"* - Statement of Aims**

Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership (MEMRAP) wishes to add to the existing momentum behind the campaign for return of ***"The Peaks and Dales Rail Link"***, building on the considerable achievements of Peak Rail to date. MEMRAP aims to offer support for this initiative in whatever way it can. The eventual solution should include an appropriate balance between passenger, freight and heritage services, with a focus on needs of the Peak District community, for both residents and visitors. The needs of the Buxton/Peak Forest quarry companies in securing and expanding their businesses in an environmentally sustainable manner should also be respected.

MEMRAP's goal is to improve local public transport, accessibility and heritage rail services together with links between the East Midlands and the North West. Precedent for such arrangements already exist, for example, on the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, where heritage and public services share track between Grosmont and Whitby, partly within the local national park. All this will enable and encourage the continuing public shift from road to more sustainable rail and an accompanying reduction in emission levels.

Of particular importance to MEMRAP is the need to achieve a general, lasting enhancement to the environment. This is a key part of the acceptance criteria for any rail solution intending to pass through the Peak District National Park. It includes the creation of a sustainable and accessible future for the Monsal Trail, safeguarding the interests of users.

It is too early to say how all these goals might best be realised, but Transport for the North suggested that MEMRAP now progresses a Strategic Outline Business Case. This is aimed at examining all available options, the costs and benefits of each and then to propose the most suitable for further evaluation. An early stage in that process will be to work with Peak Rail and their consortium to develop a common, shared vision, together with stakeholders, potential partners and other interested parties.



10<sup>th</sup> May 2019

MEMRAP is shortly due to make its first major conference platform appearance at the Midlands Development Conference, to be staged at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Infrastructure is set to be a major focus of the event, with connectivity across the Midlands and beyond on the agenda. Here is what others are saying about the proposal for re-instating this local and inter-regional link:

- **Professor David Simon, Professor of Development Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London and Director of Mistra Urban Futures, Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg:** *"For regeneration of Metropolitan Manchester and the East Midlands Region, a catchment exceeding 5 million people, the Derby to Manchester rail route via Matlock represents a crucial missing link in this country's integrated national rail infrastructure "*
- **Chris Page, Chair of the National Board of Directors at Railfuture, added:** *"By delivering a new trans-Pennine rail route, a combination of private investment and heritage rail volunteers will create additional rail network capacity, increasing the potential for modal shift towards zero carbon transport and helping to slow climate change."*