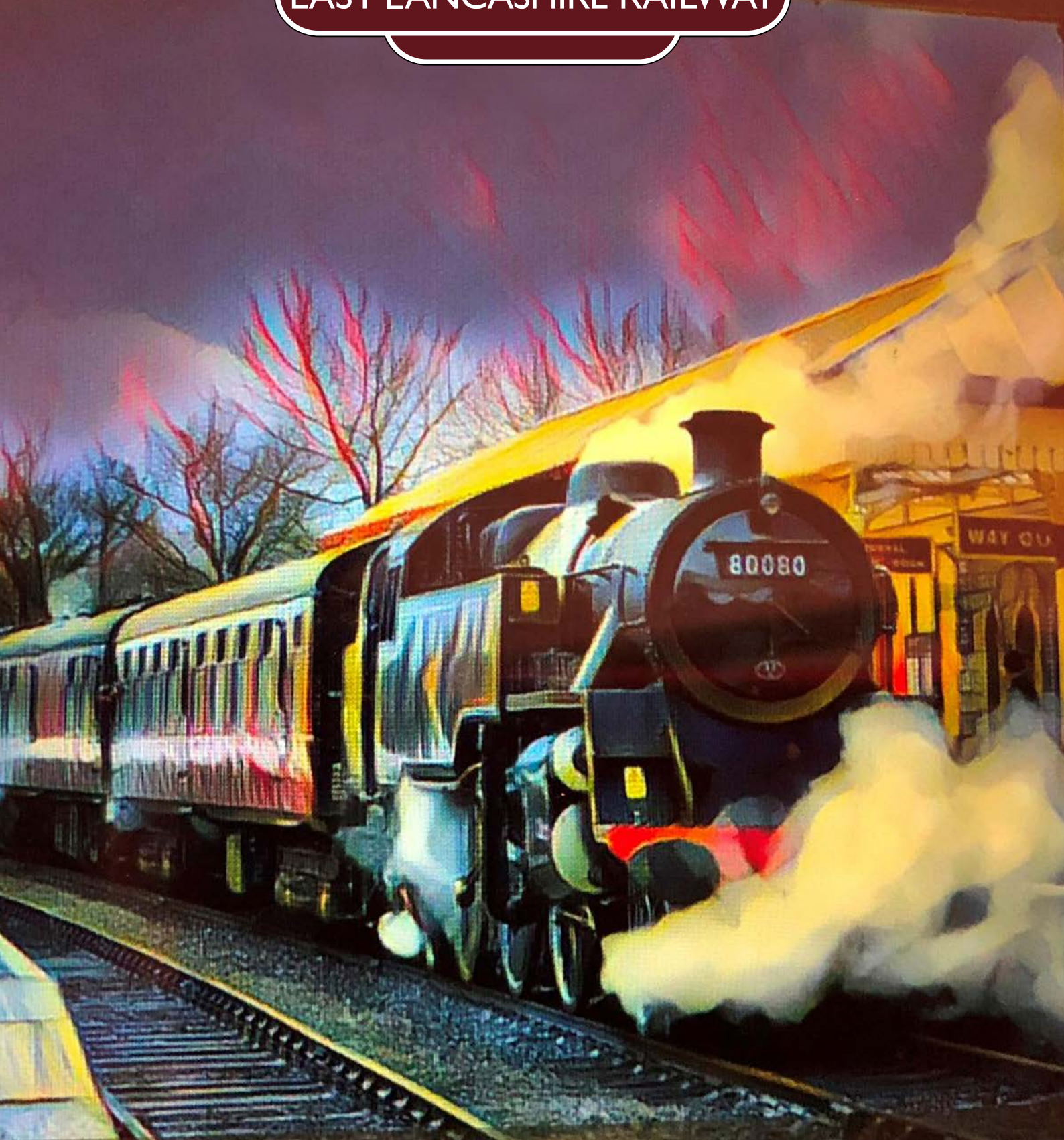


EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY



Status Report Summary
2008 – 2017





The East Lancashire Railway

The East Lancashire Railway (ELR) is a not for profit steam and diesel heritage railway which was successfully re-launched in 1987. Today the ELR attracts around 200,000 visitors annually to ride on the railway, visit the transport museum or attend an extensive programme of special events.

The East Lancashire Railway operates along a 12 mile stretch from the northern terminus at Rawtenstall in Lancashire through Ramsbottom and Bury to Heywood in Greater Manchester.

Heritage Trains run every weekend and bank holiday throughout the year. During school holidays and from April to September, the timetable is extended with services operating from Wednesday to Sunday. Trains call at seven stations or halts along the route: Heywood, Bury, Burrs Country Park, Summerseat, Ramsbottom, Irwell Vale and Rawtenstall.

The railway also operates two popular real ale pubs on two of its stations, Bury and Rawtenstall.

This summary report

Strategic direction for the Railway is provided by the East Lancashire Railway Trust (ELR Trust), a registered charity which comprises of the three local authorities which the railway runs through - Bury, Rochdale and Rossendale - and the East Lancashire Light Railway Company (ELLR Co) which operates the Railway.

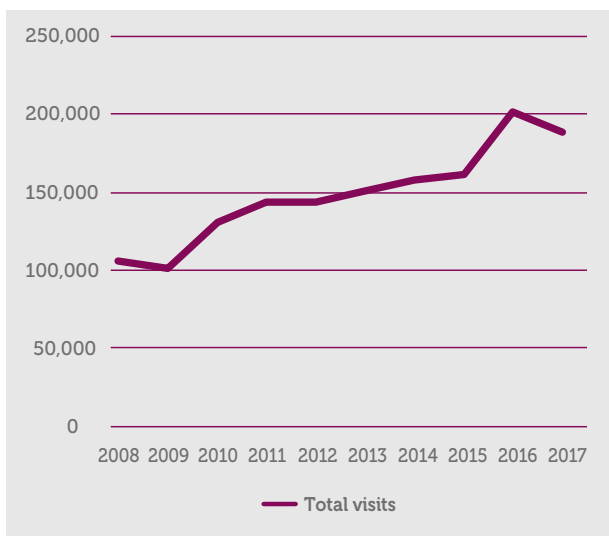
In 2008, the ELR Trust Board commissioned a 10 year development strategy for the Railway. Nearly ten years on, a report has been commissioned to review the progress that has been made, to assess the impact that the Railway is having today and to set out priorities for the next decade.

This is a summary of the Status Report which looks at the progress made since 2008 and calculates the Railway's current impact.



Visitor numbers

The number of visitors to the East Lancashire Railway has almost doubled in the last 10 years. In 2008, visitor numbers had stagnated at just over 100,000 per year. By 2016, visitor numbers reached the target which was set in 2008 of 200,000. (Numbers fell slightly to just under 190,000 in 2017 after a particularly busy year which included a visit from the famous Flying Scotsman).



As the following graph shows, the heritage railway sector as a whole has shown modest growth in turnover over the last five years. By comparison, the ELR's income has grown strongly over the same period.

Heritage Railway Income



Sample of UK's 23 largest heritage railways (by turnover)

In 2017 there were

20,000

more core **visitors** (that is people not attending events)



↑ 58%

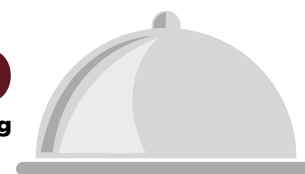
In 2017



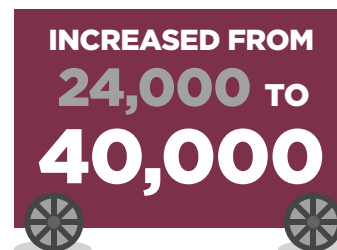
14,000

people used the **dining service**, compared to

3,500 10 years ago.

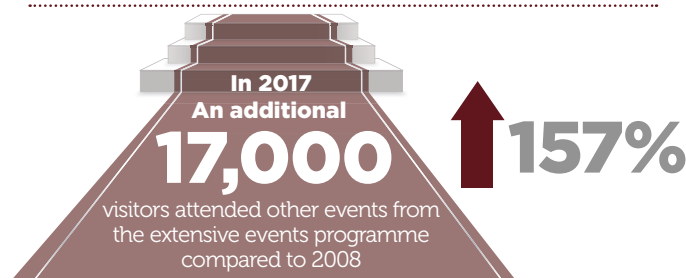


The number of people taking the **Santa Special trains in 2017**



↑ 69%

with an additional **5,000** passengers using the **Heywood shuttle service**.



In 2017

An additional

17,000

visitors attended other events from the extensive events programme compared to 2008

↑ 157%



In 2017

47,000

people visited the new **Transport Museum** at Bury which opened in 2010. Many of these also took a ride on the Railway



In 2017

5,400 **school visitors**

came to the Railway and Transport Museum, up by **2000** visits compared to 2008

Financial Performance

Income generated by the Railway increased from £1.4m in 2008 to £3.57m in 2017 (with operating costs increasing at a similar rate). Within the last four years alone, income has increased by £1m.

The Railway now has a diverse range of commercial income streams whilst honouring its heritage origins. Aside from the sale of tickets to passengers, in 2017 the Railway generated revenue of £2.26m from pubs, a major Christmas event, dining services, footplate experiences, retail and catering – an increase of 40% in the last four years.

The additional contribution generated by trading activity has allowed the railway to invest in:

- Its rolling stock, plant and equipment;
- Its stations and buildings
- Additional staff to work across the growing operation. This includes engineering and maintenance staff, visitor-facing staff and three apprentices.



The company continues to benefit from a significant volunteer base.



It is estimated that there are currently

800

WORKING VOLUNTEERS

Without this very significant group of volunteers, the railway would not be able to operate in a financially sustainable manner.

Impact assessment

The East Lancashire Railway generates positive economic impact in a number of ways:

By creating jobs on-site



the East Lancashire Railway directly employs staff to manage, operate and maintain the railway

number of FTE jobs supported

50

By supporting jobs through visitor spend (off-site employment)

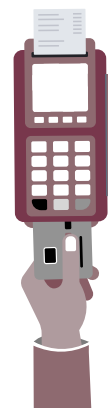


the ELR buys goods and services from businesses to operate and maintain the railway. This expenditure supports jobs in the economy indirectly. In addition, the tourism businesses benefitting from visitor expenditure also spend money in the supply chain to buy in goods and services

number of FTE jobs supported

41

By supporting jobs indirectly (supply chain employment)



By supporting jobs through visitor spend (off-site employment) - visitors to the East Lancashire Railway will spend money with other businesses in the area. This visitor expenditure directly supports jobs in the economy

number of FTE jobs supported

61

Through household expenditure (induced employment)



the employment created directly and indirectly above will lead to further rounds of household expenditure in the economy

number of FTE jobs supported

67



The impact of this employment can be converted into Gross Value Added (GVA), which is a measure of the value of goods and services.

The GVA generated by the 219 jobs which the ELR supported in 2017 was

£8.32m

When an allowance is made for activity that would have happened anyway, the net additional GVA for 2017

£5.7m

The following shows how these net additional impacts are spread across the three Local Authority areas

	Bury	Rochdale	Rossendale
Total net additional jobs	113	14	23
Total net additional GVA per annum	£4,294,000	£532,000	£874,000

Summary of progress over the last 10 years

	2008	2017
Number of visitors	107,950	188,947
No. of FTE staff employed by ELLR	20	50
Value of goods and services bought in	£1.3m	£2.6m
Gross FTE jobs supported in the economy	112	219
Gross GVA per annum	£4,256,000	£8,322,000
Total net additional jobs in Bury, Rochdale and Rossendale	74	150
Total net additional GVA in Bury, Rochdale and Rossendale	£2,812,000	£5,700,000
Number of education participants	1,952	5,400
Number of active volunteers	544	800
Value of volunteers contribution	£1.5m	£2.5m

Other impacts

The ELR has

800
working volunteers

equivalent of

85
full time workers

If the railway were to employ this level of staffing, it would cost

£2.5m



The railway has an extensive education programme for primary and secondary schools. In 2017 there were

5,400

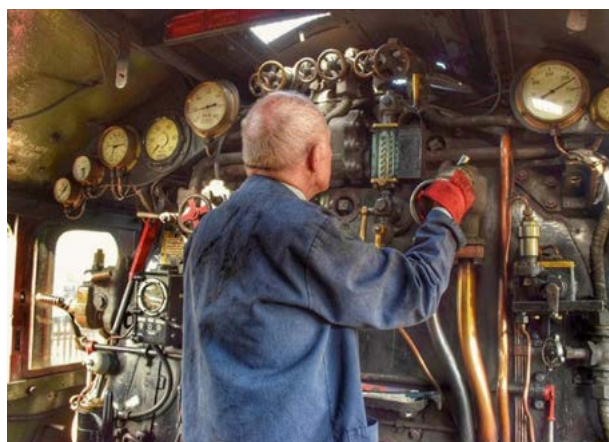
education participants at the museum and the railway, twice as many as 10 years ago.

Improving the Destinations Along the Route

The 2008 strategy recognised the importance of improving the stations along the route and providing visitors with reasons to extend their trip. Over the last decade the ELR has made a range of important investments in its stations and the destinations.

Major Restoration of Bury Transport Museum

The Bury Transport Museum reopened in the Grade II listed Castlecroft Goods Warehouse on Bolton Street in Bury in 2010 after a £3m restoration project. Support was provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Bury Council and other sources. The museum is free to access and is open from Wednesday to Sunday throughout the year. In 2017, 47,000 people visited the museum, many in conjunction with a railway visit. 93% of visitors rated the experience excellent or very good on Trip Advisor.



Development of Destination Ramsbottom

Ramsbottom has always been one of the most attractive destinations along the route and a natural stopping off point for visitors. In 2010, Bury Council worked with the Trust to produce a Tourism Development Plan. The Plan paved the way for the ongoing development of the Chocolate Festival, which now attracts around 30,000 visitors annually. Investment at Ramsbottom Station has ensured that it remains a well-preserved heritage station with a ticket office, gift shop and visitor facilities. The station is used for various events including the 1940's weekend.



Rawtenstall improvements

The 2008 Strategy recognised the importance of Rawtenstall as a key destination along the railway line, providing visitors with reasons to either start their visit at the station, or break their journey and extend their trip to the area. Substantial improvements to the station at Rawtenstall over the last decade have included: the opening of Buffer Stops Bar, a real ale pub at the station; a new café in a restored railway carriage; and new signage directing visitors to attractions in and around the town. The Buffer Stops Bar currently ranks top on TripAdvisor's nightspots in Rawtenstall and won the CAMRA Local Pub award in 2016.

There is also evidence of regeneration in the area immediately adjacent to the station which is having a positive impact on the visitor experience. In particular, Station House, a former mill building which sits on Station Court, has been restored and includes The Firepit restaurant and bar, as well as new offices.



In 2017, the ELR submitted a planning application for a £600,000 major redevelopment of the station, which will include the installation of a heritage canopy and a new permanent café. The Council also has plans to work with the railway to introduce additional marketing, including posters in some of the carriages, new signage at all stations, heritage billboards at Irwell Vale and Rawtenstall and information about walking routes.



A new halt at Burrs Country Park

In October 2016 with financial support from Bury Council and the Caravan Club, the ELR opened a new £240,000 halt at Burrs Country Park, the seventh stop along the route. The Flying Scotsman was the first train to stop at the halt at an event which generated significant interest from both media and visitors. The halt is particularly well used by visitors staying in the adjacent Caravan Club site (2,000 in 2017) which has also been upgraded recently.



Heywood Station improvements

In 2016, the ELR invested in a railway carriage café on Heywood Station. Later in 2016, funding was provided by Rochdale Council to introduce a railway themed playground at the station and to improve the visitor car park. Heywood, unlike Ramsbottom doesn't have sufficient visitor attractions to encourage passengers to leave the train. This will be addressed as part of the next 10 year strategy.



Improving the Railway Operation

As well as investing in the destinations, the ELR Trust has continued to improve its operation to ensure that it is able to provide a high quality, sustainable experience which is enjoyed by its visitors.

A family friendly attraction

The ELR has always had a strong appeal to families and the 2008 strategy made a series of recommendations about how the experience could be improved for visitors with children.

Family friendly developments that have been introduced over the last 10 years include:

- New children's activity packs available on board
- The introduction of picnic facilities at all stations
- A themed playground at Heywood Station
- Baby change facilities at Bury and Ramsbottom stations
- A range of engaging interactive exhibits at the Bury Transport Museum
- A kids club
- A family events programme including the ever popular Santa Specials trains.



Other improvements

Over the last decade, the ELR Trust has worked with the operating company to ensure that it remains a sustainable operation for the future. Improvements have included:

- Creation of a new Marketing Manager post and investment in marketing activity. This has played a key role in the growth in visitor numbers and income
- Investment in volunteer recruitment and training
- Recruitment of a Commercial Manager which has helped to deliver improvements in income from retail and catering
- Programme to introduce Full Access carriages.

Implications for the next decade

The operating company has clearly made significant progress over the last ten years and is making a substantial contribution to the East Lancashire and Greater Manchester areas.

The ELR Trust recognises that this would not be possible without the ongoing support the ELR Preservation Society volunteers, from the three Local Authority partners and from its visitors.

Like all successful organisations, the Railway is always looking to the future and the ELR Trust is currently developing its strategy for the next decade which will ensure that it continues to improve and offer an enjoyable experience for its visitors.

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www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk