

National headquarters competition for Great British Railways
Expression of interest: Barrow-in-Furness

March 2022



BARROW WAS BUILT BY THE RAILWAYS.
IT THEN GAVE RAIL TO THE WORLD.
NOW IT'S TIME TO BRING RAIL HOME.

#BACKBARROWSBID
#DESTINATIONGBR

Barrow's history is the history of the Furness Line.

In 1843, Barrow was a small farming community. But the discovery of iron ore opened Barrow to the world. Thanks to rail, Barrow's population went from 143 people to over 47,000 in less than 40 years with the new town described as 'the Chicago of England.'

Barrow-made steel was used in the world's railways and can be found Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, South America, and the United States. Barrow firmly sits at the centre of the world's railway history.

Barrow also has a part to play in popular culture, with Barrow Railway Station providing the link between the mainland and the fictional island of Sodor in The Railway Series (Thomas the Tank Engine) books by the Rev. Wilbert Awdry.

Over 500 residents, businesses and organisations have supported the campaign to #BackBarrowsBid to host GBR HQ. Our community is passionate about rail, its part in Barrow's history, and the role it can play in our future.

Barrow has a unique role in the world – delivering the national endeavour that is our submarine programme. The iron and steam of the Furness Line of 1846 has a direct link to Barrow's role in the world now - at the heart of protecting our country and our allies.

By choosing Barrow to host Great British Railways' HQ, the Government would be putting a vote of faith in a coastal community that is a Priority 1 levelling up area, that is proud of its rich railway heritage, and which sits at the heart of the Union.

I commend this bid to the Great British Rail team and very much hope that you seize the opportunity to site your headquarters in our town.



Simon Fell
Member of Parliament for Barrow & Furness

1. Describe the location of your application and your proposed headquarters site.

Barrow-in-Furness is no ordinary town. Located at the southern tip of the Furness Peninsula in South Cumbria we are rich in natural capital, and at the geographic centre of Great Britain – with a sea border to Northern Ireland, and close to the Scottish border. Furness is framed by the sea on three sides: the Irish Sea, Morecambe Bay and the Duddon Estuary, and the Lakeland fells on the other. We have a proud heritage of production and innovation, from our roots in iron ore and steel making, to the largest shipyard in the UK. The success of our town is testament to our talented people and world-leading businesses who have created Barrow's history, shaped the present and will define its future.

Based just a stone's throw from the beautiful Lake District, Barrow is the second largest town in Cumbria. A global centre of excellence for nuclear technologies, it is the home of the national enterprise that is the UK's Dreadnought nuclear submarine building programme. As the gateway to Britain's Energy Coast, Barrow's significant green energy assets include the UK's second largest wind farm and its multiple operating bases, and the Morecambe Bay gas fields. Further opportunities for growth include future rounds of offshore wind licensing, tidal generation potential, biomass and micro-hydro opportunities, hydrogen gas, and carbon capture and storage solutions. It has the most productive economy in Cumbria with the highest level of GVA per head. Barrow's Port is one of the most important on the North West Coast, being the only deep-water port between the Mersey and the Clyde, and is heavily involved with the transportation of natural gases and other forms of energy from local sites.

Advanced manufacturing is prominent in Barrow, not least because of the supply chain required for BAE (whose supplier spend in the area is over £48m a year), and for Sellafield in neighbouring Copeland.

Barrow delivers the nation's nuclear deterrent (National Endeavour), with high level, high wage jobs, both white collar but also blue collar, which has implications for the supply chain. With the Government's continued commitment to the Dreadnought programme, and continuing work on Astute-class submarines, the SSNR programme, and also the joint US-UK-Australian AUKUS nuclear submarine programme, there is guaranteed employment for this work for generations to come. This applies not only to those directly employed, but also cascades through the local economy such as local hotels, snack bars, cafes and restaurants, taxi drivers, buses, trains, hospitals, and much more. It also guarantees a continued emphasis on enabling high skills and good education in the local community, a need for resilient and improving rail infrastructure, and a robust and diverse range of supply chain businesses.

Enabling sectors such as professional services, logistics, culture and digital, and a thriving visitor economy, facilitate a supportive business environment in Barrow, whilst foundational sectors such as health and social care, education and retail are important in meeting the needs of our population and enhancing our quality of life.

Who else is involved in developing and supporting your application?

The Office of Simon Fell MP; The Furness Line Action Group; The Barrow Business Improvement District (Barrow BID); the Chair of the Furness Line Community Rail Partnership; and over 500 proud Barrovians.

Describe the proposed sites for the GBR national HQ?

We understand from the FAQs for this Expression of Interest that it has not been possible to specify the number of employees any building would have to accommodate, nor how many sq ft it should be, and that the only specifics are that it will house primarily corporate functions, a modest staff, a number of rail network-wide teams and meeting and collaboration spaces.

That being so, it would seem sensible to offer a variety of options for consideration in order to find the most appropriate site as more definite criteria crystallise. There is available land on site at the Railway Station. Additional land and opportunities are available at the Openreach building adjacent to Barrow Railway Station, Emlyn Hughes House opposite, and other publicly or privately owned buildings in the town such as Newspaper House on Abbey Road (a short walk from the station). Choosing the most appropriate for GBR's needs from this shortlist would enable you to achieve the best value for money.



Barrow's rise to fame in the 19th century had much to do with the entrepreneurial spirit of the Furness Railway (FR) so the location of GBR HQ at Barrow would certainly recognise the role that FR has had in developing the area.



TIM OWEN
CHAIR OF THE FURNESS LINE COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

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What benefits do you expect Barrow to gain from accommodating the HQ?

There would be many mutual benefits. So far as Barrow is concerned, accommodating the HQ would include: bringing a new major employer into the area, offering opportunities for employment, and particularly roles at a senior level; this in turn could attract other major companies, in particular those who saw supply chain potential. Rail infrastructure and links already being extremely important to Barrow, the presence of the HQ would ensure that this was a continuing focus. When a large organisation sets up in a town like Barrow, this is a spur to entrepreneurship. Local entrepreneurs see an opportunity to set up services to support it, even down to smaller offers like providing food outlets for staff. This in turn brings greater opportunity and

prosperity to the town while providing benefit to the organisation itself. This would also be a clear demonstration of the Government's ambition to level-up communities like Barrow.

What do you think makes Barrow best suited as the location for GBR HQ?

Geographically, Barrow is an accessible location with a current programme of considerable inward investment; GBR staff would benefit from our proximity to the outstanding beauty and leisure facilities of the Lake District, with housing stock from the modest to the more luxurious available at non-city prices, and the improved diversity in housing stock that will be provided from the soon-to-be-delivered Marina Village Development.



We are proud of our history of engineering excellence in shipbuilding and our college's role in providing the skilled workforce and I think it would be fitting now for Great British Railways to house its new headquarters in Barrow and by doing so also to recognise the historic role of the railways.

Choosing Barrow would show a commitment to an area of the North that relies so heavily on rail transport links. A move here could create a wealth of jobs for local people in well-paid civil service roles and a much-needed boost to the town centre economy, not to mention the opportunity for staff to upskill at the college's £47million Channelside campus.



PROFESSOR ANDREW WREN
PRINCIPAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF FURNESS COLLEGE

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Using part of the Town Deal funding, a new Barrow Learning Quarter will see the creation of a transformational new University of Cumbria campus in the centre of Barrow. This could benefit GBR in terms of supporting the continued education of its staff and providing courses in line with its needs. A partnership between the University of Cumbria, Furness College, the Borough Council, BAE Systems and local businesses, the Learning Quarter will enhance progression into (and participation in) Higher Education in Barrow and support local employment. This is forecast for completion in 2024 and will undoubtedly help to attract new talent to the area.

Attracting Great British Railways HQ to Barrow would also be in line with the Government's Places for Growth initiative. Its presence would help to redress the declining population by attracting bright and senior employees to the area and retaining them.

It would also seem appropriate, given Barrow's roots in the railways and our visible and enthusiastic continuing support for its heritage.

While local attractions will not be first on GBR's list of required attributes, Barrow nonetheless has some outstanding ones that are worthy of mention. Furness Abbey (founded in the twelfth century) – it is seriously undersold at

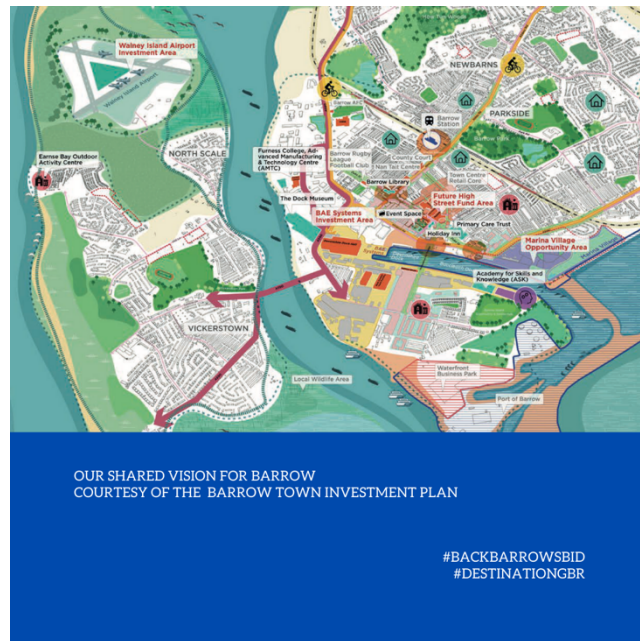
present and has huge further potential. The Dock Museum covers the history of Barrow, the shipbuilding and steelworks industries, the Furness Railway and World War II in the town. Barrow Park, which has Green Flag status, is a wonderful green space in the centre of the town with wide-ranging facilities for all ages. Some of the most spectacular coastline on the England Coast Path can be found on the 16.2 mile stretch round Walney Island. Cultural activities are vibrant locally with The Forum Theatre and Barra Culture being just two examples. £5m is being spent over the next five years to upgrade the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure of the area, including improving cycling links from Barrow Station itself. This is just a taste of what Barrow has to offer.

Finally, placing the HQ in Barrow would be a recognition of Cumbria's important historic – and future – role in rail given that the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands failed to mention Cumbria at all.

2. Describe how your application will align with and demonstrate Levelling Up

What is your vision for levelling up your local area?

Barrow has been successfully awarded from the Government: Town Deal funding of £25m, £16m from the Levelling Up Fund, £1.1m Historic High Streets funding, and additional monies for Active Travel. This is enabling us to work collaboratively across local business and other organisations to level up wherever we can.



Our vision for levelling up our local area is ambitious and wide ranging. It includes, among other things:

- Developing a supportive business environment to boost Barrow's enterprise overall, with a focus on helping the town become a centre of excellence and innovation for advanced manufacturing and clean growth.
- Creating a new University Campus in Barrow to support key sectors, including energy and advanced manufacturing, while also supporting diversification of the economy and opportunities to increase productivity, innovation and competitiveness for small as well as large businesses.

The Campus will incorporate a new Skills Hub, to help meet the area's need for higher-level advanced academic and technical skills. It will also support a longer-term plan to create an Institute of Technology with a digital specialism to bring the latest technology to growing sectors like advanced manufacturing, energy, health and business.

- A transformative programme of walking and cycling infrastructure improvements within Barrow, delivering a high-quality network

connecting key nodes to put Barrow at the forefront of active travel in the UK.

- Housing Renewal – a programme of renewal and renovation to improve residential properties alongside investment in the public realm and commercial shop fronts to deliver health, wellbeing and environmental improvements. Improvements like this are beneficial to all, including the staff of organisations moving to the area.
- A new outdoor hub at Earnse Bay on Walney Island, showcasing the incredible beauty of Walney and the Irish Sea, and providing education, sporting and nature hub for local residents, tourism, and schools.
- Marina Village – remediation of a major strategic housing site which will enable the private sector to come forward and deliver the Masterplan to widen the housing offer and improve perceptions of Barrow.

What is currently under way to deliver this?

The £25m Town Deal funding was agreed with no provisos. Of the levelling up plans described in the previous section, a number are already under way. These include:

- The purchase of a brownfield site to decontaminate the land prior to starting on the Marina Village development to rejuvenate and broaden the housing stock.
- The Barrow-in-Furness Emergency Active Travel Scheme is designed to get the people of Barrow to their places of work in a safe, healthy and green way, by creating a high-quality cycle route designed to the latest standards. The £1m emergency fund is being spent on the North Road Cycle and Walkway. This builds upon the strong active travel culture that already exists in the town.
- A £9.5m new roundabout is already under construction on the A590 to make it safer and easier for traffic to leave and join the region's main arterial road from local roads, as well as boost future plans for new homes and jobs in the area.
- Preliminary ground surveys are already in hand to deliver the bypass at the A595 bottleneck at Grizebeck. The Department for Transport is funding £12.7m of the £14.9m upgrade, with the remainder coming from the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. By 2024 it will deliver 1km of new road to replace the existing section with a new crossing for vehicles and cyclists.
- Funding has been approved for the Learning Quarter proposals. The next stage of the project is the planning application process. The main construction work will begin later this year, with completion forecast for late spring 2024.

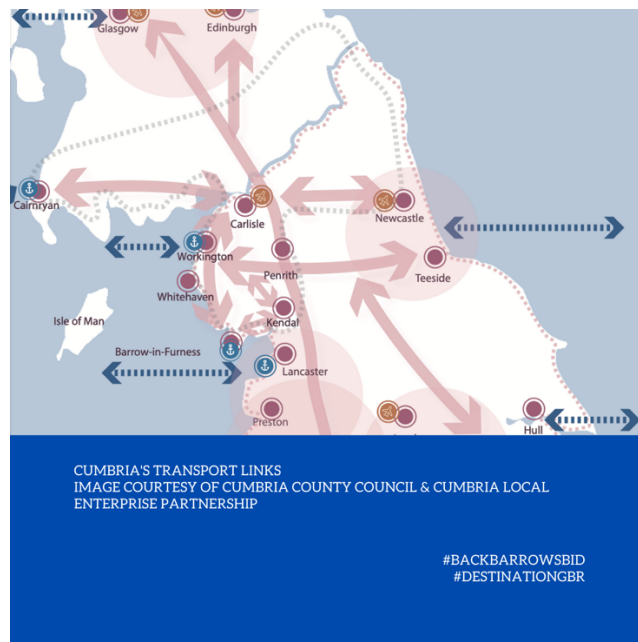
What levelling up opportunities do you believe could be created for Barrow that are linked to the HQ?

These would include an influx of highly skilled staff, the potential for a number of well-paid jobs in the area, inspiring local innovators to support the work of HQ. This in turn would fill housing stock, boosting the night-time, health and leisure economies. It is likely that the high-quality skills training to be provided by the new University would be in demand by those at HQ, and those skills would feed back into the local economy. Barrow already has 'Pride in Place' in abundance, but this would only increase with the advent of GBR to the area. Finally, placing the HQ in Barrow would allow an ongoing and public celebration of Barrow's role in the UK's railways, and also those of the Commonwealth. It would be a public recognition of Barrow's proud history in rail.

3. Describe how Barrow is well connected to the rest of GB and how people will access your site

Describe how your location is well connected to the rest of GB and how people will access your site. How would employees and visitors be able to access the National HQ, via rail routes and other sustainable modes?

Barrow as a town is readily accessible by train (West Coast Main Line and the Furness Line). Examples of rail travel times between large cities and Cumbria are: 3hr 30 to Glasgow; 3hr 15 to Edinburgh; 4hrs to Newcastle; 2hr 15 to Manchester; 3hr 20 to Birmingham; 4hr 03 to London. There is also a good bus service both within Barrow itself and from outside commuting areas like Ulverston, Windermere, Kendal, etc. Travel by road, though not the most sustainable alternative, is also straightforward. Our strategic road network includes the A590 linking Barrow to the M6 and Kendal, and the A595 linking Barrow to the west coast and Carlisle. Excellent cycling infrastructure is also in place and considerable further improvements are in delivery, including from Barrow Railway Station itself.



How connected is your location to and from other nations and regions of GB?

BAE Systems in Barrow owns Walney Airfield, connecting Barrow to locations across the UK (including Bristol, Farnborough, Glasgow, Northolt, Southampton, Wick and East Midlands) through private flights serving BAE Systems, MoD, and industry partners.

Manchester Airport (accessible from Barrow by rail links) also provides flights to Scotland, England and Ireland and beyond.

Road and rail links were covered in detail above.

How will your suggested sites be equally accessible to all members of society, in line with Public Sector Equality Duties?

Everyone associated with this bid takes very seriously their Public Sector Equality Duties and understands all the implications. We actively engage with Barrow and District Disability Association, Furness Multicultural Forum and Drop Zone youth organisation and would therefore seek their counsel and professional advice in these respects. With this in mind, we would be happy to work with you to ensure that our suggested site is equally accessible to all members of society and that there are no physical or other barriers to achieving this.

Demonstrate how your location has supported successful collaboration between local authorities, businesses and other organisations across the UK to further social, economic and transport objectives.

Barrow is a model of successful collaboration. Our successful bid for £25m Town Deal funding was put together by our Town Deal Board ('Brilliant Barrow'). This included, among others, representatives from our local authorities, DWP, education, commerce, industry, our Local Enterprise Partnership, our Clinical Commissioning Group, and the local MP. The Board remains in place to oversee the delivery of its ambitions. A similar bid resulted in a £15.9m grant from the Government's Levelling Up fund to transform Barrow Market, Duke Street, and the local transport infrastructure. Enhancements to the A590 and A595 roads, already in hand, have also been the result of collaboration between our local authorities, community groups, business organisations and the local MP.



I firmly believe our town to be a strong candidate for the honour of becoming the home of Great British Railways.

Only last year we celebrated 175 years of the Furness Line and it was interesting to learn more about the importance of the railway on the emergence and growth of Barrow.

The Furness Line opened up Barrow in Furness to the rest of the UK and helped change the town from a small hamlet into a bustling industrial town, built on iron ore and later shipbuilding. It is therefore fitting that Barrow is seeking to become the home of Great British Railways. Although the impact on our local economy won't be as intense as it was in 1846, it will still have a huge effect on the town and the local area.



COLIN GARNETT
BARROW BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT MANAGER

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4. Showcase the opportunities for Barrow Great British Railways

How will your location enable Great British Railways to engage with customers, the private sector and wider transport industry? What opportunities does your location offer for working with the rail supply chain, manufacturing hubs and institutes?

It is our understanding that assurance of capital works projects will remain centrally managed, so there should be no issue with location. Equally, the growth in remote working since Covid-19 means that much of what was traditionally accomplished by in person meetings can be accomplished by virtual means.

In terms of opportunities for GBR to engage beyond the rail industry with wider transport, one of Barrow's major strengths is its Port, run by Associated British Ports (ABP) which has its own direct rail link to Cavendish Dock. It is the closest port to the Walney offshore wind farm. This £1 billion, 650MW facility is the largest anywhere in the world, covering an area equivalent to 20,000 football pitches. Barrow provides a home to four Operations and Maintenance bases supporting significant renewable generation developments in the Irish Sea, as well as supporting a range of projects run by energy giants Ørsted, Siemens and Vattenfall. 110,000 tonnes of cargo are handled by the Port each year, including limestone, sand, aggregates, granite, wood pulp and gas condensate. There is a well-established supply chain already which serves BAE Systems, Sellafield, Kimberley Clark, GSK and other heavy industry. State-of-the-art Furness College offers everything from apprenticeships to degrees with the new University of Cumbria Barrow Campus (mentioned elsewhere) coming on stream in 2024.

What opportunities exist for collaboration with the retail, economic and environmental sectors? How could GBR benefit from these links?

There are many useful business forums locally, all of which welcome input from organisations based in the town. These include (to name just a few) the Brilliant Barrow Board, Barrow Business Improvement District, the Town and Parish Councils, Rotarians, the Inner Wheel, Barrow Chamber, Furness Economic Development Forum, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership. Participation in any of these groups would give GBR an insight into the local economy, and early sight of specific opportunities.

What opportunities does/do the site(s)/building(s) itself offer GBR to develop as an organisation?

As stated earlier, we understand from the FAQs for this Expression of Interest that it has not been possible to specify the number of employees any building would have to accommodate, etc. That being so, we put forward a variety of options for consideration (detailed elsewhere). This would seem to offer the best possible opportunity to select a premises with the potential for the further development that it envisages.

5. Demonstrate the location's railway heritage and current network links

Demonstrate your railway heritage and the benefits it offers to Great British Railways.

The history of Barrow is the history of the railways. 175 years ago there was little in Barrow but a small collection of sheep farms. The discovery of iron ore led to the birth of the Furness Railway. Iron prospector Henry Schneider arrived in Furness in 1839 and, with other investors, in 1846 opened the Furness Railway to transport iron ore and slate from local mines to the coast. The ironworks and the railway were instrumental in taking Barrow from a small fishing and farming village to a Victorian boom town and beyond.

In 1843, Barrow comprised some 143 people and 28 houses. By 1881, the town's population had reached 47,259 and Barrow was named in the popular press as "England's Chicago." Rail is central to that growth.

In the 1870s, Barrow is believed to have been the largest steel producer in the UK, building steel rails for railways in Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Zimbabwe, South Africa, South America, and the United States. Barrow firmly sits at the centre of the world's railway history.

There are three sculptures in Barrow commemorating the iron and steelworks, the largest of these, on Duke Street, resembles a large book describing the history of the works. Two sculptures of steelworkers can be found at the centre of Dalton Road and 'Red Man's Way' - a coastal path alongside the Walney Channel.

Barrow also has a proud history in producing locomotives. Indeed, Vickers at Barrow had much to do with the decline of steam on Britain's railways as it was a major producer of diesel locomotive engines.

That iron and steam has a direct link to Barrow's role in the world now - delivering our nation's nuclear deterrent, which places it at the heart of protecting our country and our allies.

We are proud of this incredible heritage, of being a town that grew from nothing to being a success story in a few short years due to the steam, iron and steel of rail. And we are optimistic and proud of our future – delivering a succession of complex world-class engineering endeavours in the boats built with such skill in our shipyard. In essence, the story of Barrow is the story of the Furness Line.



At the end of last year our local MP, Simon Fell, brought the then Rail Minister to Barrow to speak to local staff and hear their enthusiasm for this project first-hand. He was very impressed by what he saw, and to learn that Furness's Walney Island plays a key part in the Thomas the Tank Engine stories, linking the fictional Sodor to the British mainland. Through the Rev Awdry's railway stories, Barrow-in-Furness maintains a clear link to the railways through popular culture.

There are many other aspects to our railway heritage. The Furness Railway Trust has its roots here, and owns the oldest working standard gauge steam locomotive in Britain, Furness Railway Number 20. Bought in the 1980s as a pile of parts, it was restored over eight years by small team from the Trust in the engine shop at Barrow shipyard.

In addition, the heritage Lakeside and Haverthwaite Railway, originally a branch line from the Furness Railway, operates locally in high season. Its steam trains take passengers 3 miles via Newby Bridge to Lakeside at Windermere where they can continue their journeys by steamer to Bowness or Ambleside.

Institutions like the Great British Railways HQ should not just be in cities. If we really are to level up the UK, then our branch lines are just as important. And putting this in to practice would reflect well on Great British Railways, as a demonstration of its intention no longer to be so city-centric, but to focus just as much on those essential lifelines that exist right across the transport network.

What links are there with existing rail employment, innovation and sector bodies, such as regional and local offices?

We have close links with the rail companies that serve the area, with the local heritage rail organisations and wider rail community, and with the relevant section of the Department of Transport.

Our area is heavily dependent on the rail network for so many reasons; commuting, freight, tourism, sport, reaching other local towns and providing a

vital link between rural and urban communities and so much more. Because of this, rail representatives are already plugged in to many of our important business groups.

How could you use the HQ to preserve and enhance your railway heritage?

As a result of our rich railway heritage, there are many enthusiastic groups who would be keen to engage with GBR. They could provide pop-up exhibitions, or use any space available to exhibit Furness' heritage and history, not to mention something for children on local links to Thomas the Tank Engine. With suitable premises, it could also be possible to tender for local suppliers to provide a café, to encourage customer engagement.

6. Describe how your location will offer Great British Railways good value for money

How will Barrow offer financial efficiency to Great British Railways?

The cost of living in Barrow is far lower than that in large cities like Manchester/Birmingham/York etc, thereby providing far better value for money. There will be synergies with local companies, and in relation to the supply chain, especially with our advanced manufacturing specialism locally. The various business support groups will be keen to work with GBR to see what can be done to help. In short, Barrow provides a supportive environment in an area that is doing much to achieve levelling up, will welcome GBR into its midst and will work hard to make the move an economic one.

How does the proposed site allow GBR to make good use of public money and keep costs down?

The choice of sites put forward for consideration include a number that are already railway-owned estate, or already publicly owned. This would seem to us to make good use of public money and reduce costs. Equally, if a different site were chosen, this would presumably be because it best met GBR's current and future needs, which would also be cost-effective in the longer term.

How does Barrow generate public value including economic, social and environmental impacts?

Barrow has a strong record of generating public value. Barrow's community, local businesses, NHS providers, local government and MP have worked closely – and successfully – together to bid for, and win, both a £25million Town Deal, and also a £15.9million Levelling Up Fund. Achieving this has meant meeting rigorous BCR assessments from central government and demonstrating clear public value in the works proposed.

7. Public support

Demonstrate the importance of the railways to the local community and your region.

The rail infrastructure is essential to bring commuters to and from Barrow from Lancashire and the West Coast of Cumbria to work on the national endeavour and its supply chain. Links to larger towns are just as vital for business, leisure and retail journeys. Equally, rail is vital as a means to bring visitors to the area. 40% of journeys on the Furness Line are understood to be commuters, and 60% visitors. There are drivers for this in addition to Lake District-related tourism. Barrow AFC is currently in League 2, for example, and Barrow Raiders play in the RFL Championship, so the line carries hundreds of away fans every fortnight.

Rail freight is also extremely important to our region, in that the railways carry, among other things, military components, nuclear flasks to Sellafield and low-level waste repository at Drigg, and takes more traditional freight to and from Barrow Port. Connections to the West Coast Main Line enable freight to be carried to and from West Cumbria to all regions.

The local community has been vociferous in its support for Barrow's bid to become the home of GBR HQ, with hundreds of messages of support.

How do your intentions for the National HQ tie in with the needs of your local communities, your identities and values?

Locating GBR's HQ in Barrow would help to begin to change the narrative around how Barrow is perceived both nationally and internationally. Instead of being 'the longest cul de sac in history' we could begin to be seen more accurately for what we are: a town full of achievers and strivers, with unrivalled views and coastlines, and a rail heritage second to none.

We will be working towards real levelling up, and GBR's presence will help to redress what is an inaccurate and unfair perception.

We are far more than our back streets. We are a forward-looking base of advanced manufacturing, with state-of-the-art companies innovating all the time. Environmentally, we have the most amazing nature reserves, scenery, Lakeland fells; the largest colony of great seals and flora and fauna of national importance including the Walney Geranium which grows nowhere else in the world, and some marine birds found only here. There are nearly 300 listed buildings (8 listed Grade I) in the Borough (the Heritage Index places it seventh highest of 325 English districts with an especially high score relating to industrial heritage assets). The oldest building locally is the beautiful Furness Abbey built in 1125. In addition, Piel Island, situated at the tip of the Furness Peninsula is a rarity, as despite extending to just 50 acres, it has a King and a castle. There is just so much more to our area than is generally acknowledged.

The presence of GBR's HQ would help us to shine a light on our many assets and ambitions and begin to bring the latter to fruition.

A black and white photograph of a brick building, likely a railway station, with a large, three-dimensional 'Barrow' sign mounted on its facade. The sign is partially obscured by the text overlay. The building's roofline and a window are visible in the upper left.

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