The Case for Rail
In Mid-UIster

Into The West

The Rail Campaign for Derry, Donegal, Tyrone & Fermanagh

- Into The West - June 2022

Into The West

- <u>The Rail campaign for Counties</u> :

    - Derry-Londonderry, Tyrone, Fermanagh & Donegal.

- <u>Established 2004</u>.

- <u>Successes To-Date</u> :

    - Saved rail line west/north of Ballymena.

    - Track upgrade Derry-Coleraine.

    - North-West Transport Hub.

    - Feasibility Studies (New halts, greater frequency)

- <u>Ambition = restore rail to key towns across west of Ulster</u>.

The Problem

Ireland's Forgotten Region for Rail

- **Two disparities affect rail provision for Mid-Ulster :**

   a) <u>East-West</u> :   Within NI.

   b) <u>North-South</u> :   Between the NW & the rest of the island.
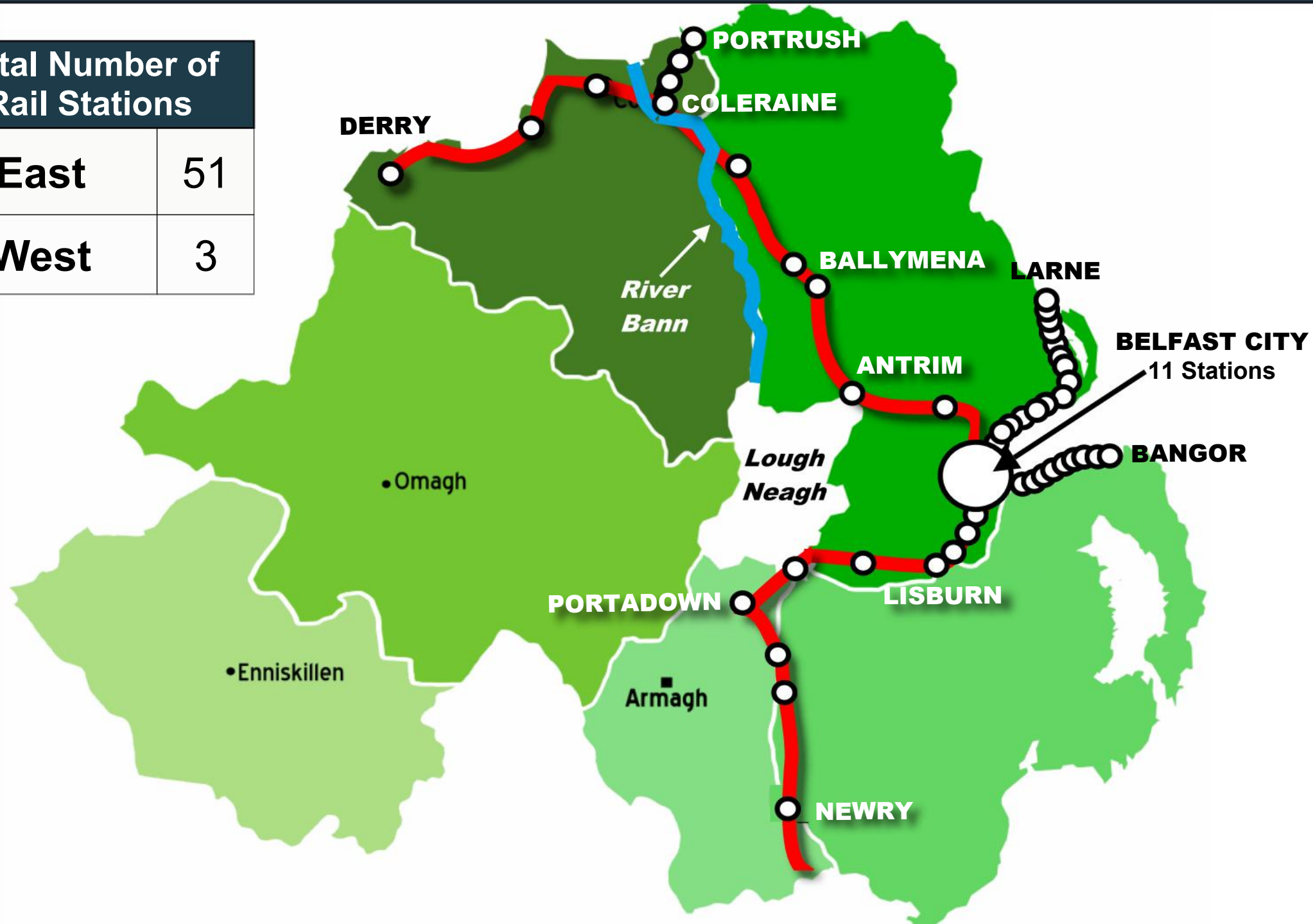
Location of NI's 54 Rail Stations

Total Number of Rail Stations	
East	51
West	3

PORTRUSH

COLERAINE

DERRY

River Bann

BALLYMENA

LARNE

BELFAST CITY
11 Stations

ANTRIM

BANGOR

Omagh
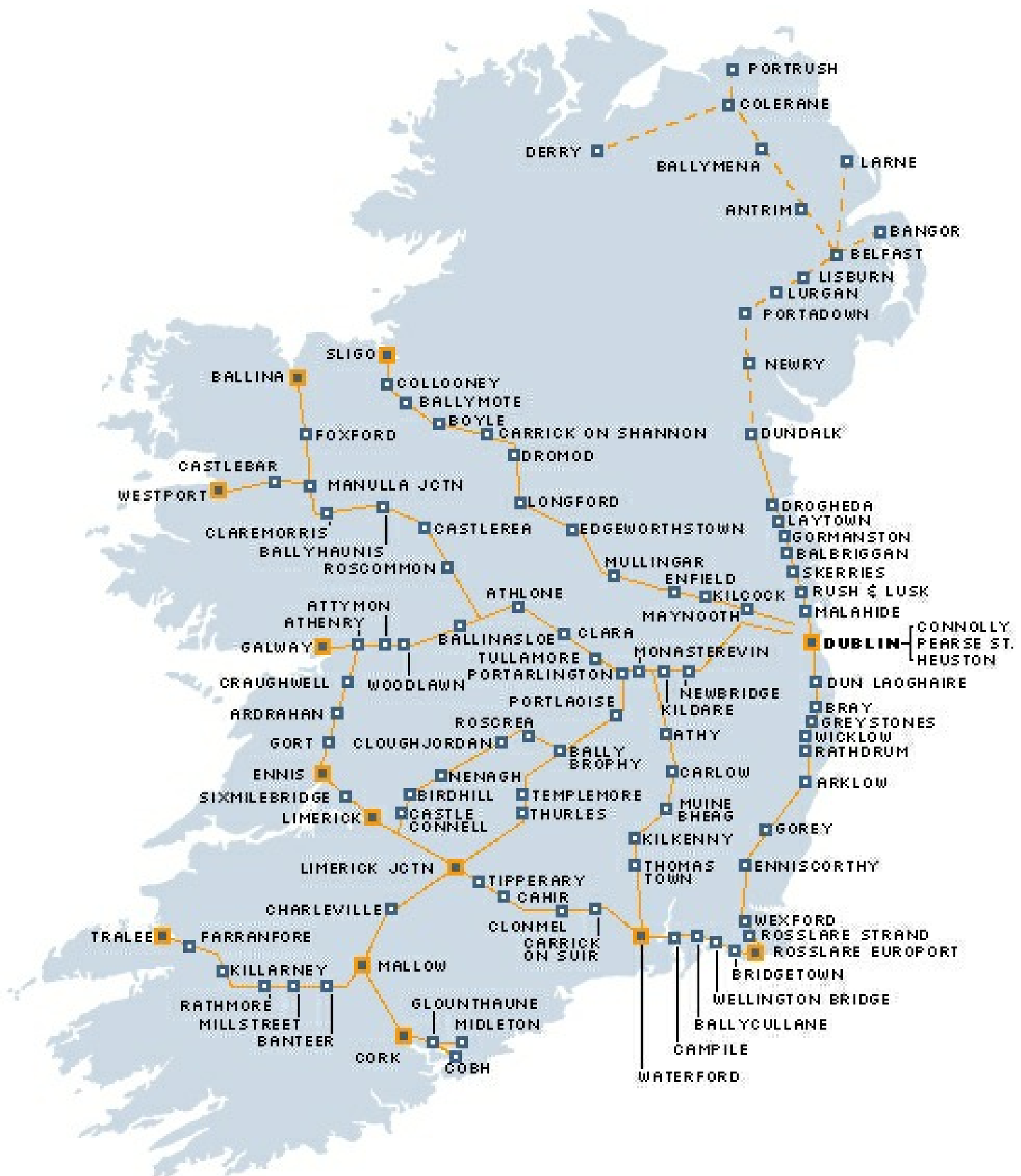
Lough Neagh

LISBURN

PORTADOWN

Enniskillen

Armagh

NEWRY

Rail Map of Ireland

A Quarter of NI's 20 Largest Towns Have No Rail Access
(All but one located in the West)

	20 LARGEST TOWNS (2011 census)	Population	County	East / West ?	Nearest Station (Distance In Miles / Name)	
1	BELFAST	483,418	Antrim / Down	East		
2	DERRY CITY	93,512	Derry	West		
3	NEWTONABBEY	65,646	Antrim	East		
4	BANGOR	61,011	Down	East		
5	LISBURN	45,370	Antrim / Down	East		
6	BALLYMENA	29,551	Antrim	East		
7	NEWTOWNARDS	28,050	Down	East	5	Bangor
8	CARRICKFERGUS	27,998	Antrim	East		
9	NEWRY	26,967	Down	East		
10	COLERAINE	24,634	Derry	West		
11	ANTRIM TOWN	23,375	Antrim	East		
12	LURGAN	23,000	Armagh	East		
13	PORTADOWN	22,100	Armagh	East		
* 14	OMAGH	19,659	Tyrone	West	33	Derry
15	LARNE	18,755	Antrim	East		
16	BANBRIDGE	16,637	Down	East	4	Scarva
* 17	ARMAGH CITY	14,777	Armagh	East	11	Portadown
* 18	DUNGANNON	14,340	Tyrone	West	17	Portadown
19	ENNISKILLEN	13,823	Fermanagh	West	42 or 53	Sligo (ROI) or Derry (NI)
20	STRABANE	13,172	Tyrone	West	14	Derry

KEY =

	Has Rail Station
	Station Within 5 miles
	No Rail Provision

Northern Ireland's 20 Biggest Towns
- Access to Rail : East vs West

KEY

✓ = Has Rail Station
✓ = Rail Station Within 5 miles
✗ = No Rail Station

COLERAINE ✓

Antrim

LIMAVADY ✗

DERRY CITY ✓

Derry

BALLYMENA ✓

LARNE ✓

CARRICKFERGUS ✓

STRABANE ✗

Tyrone

ANTRIM TOWN ✓

BANGOR ✓

BELFAST ✓

OMAGH ✗

DUNGANNON ✗

NEWTONARDS ✓

PORTADOWN ✓

LISBURN ✓

ENNISKILLEN ✗

Fermanagh

ARMAGH CITY ✗

BANBRIDGE ✓

Down

NEWRY ✓
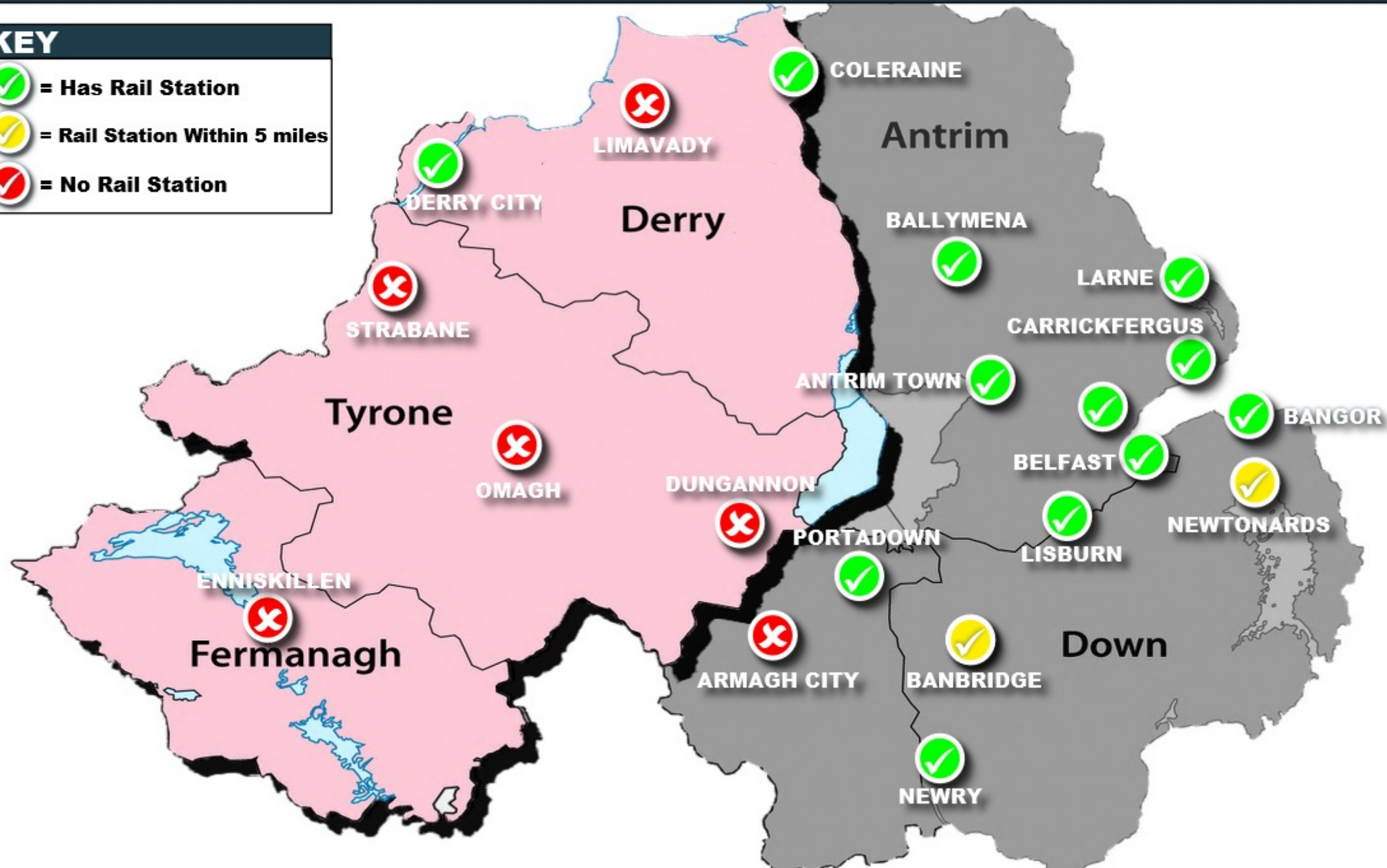
Mid-Ulster District

- <u>Fast-growing Population Centres</u> :

TOWN	POPULATION - 2011	POPULATION - 2001	CHANGE
Medium-Sized Towns (10-18,000)			
Dungannon	14,340	10,983	+31%
Cookstown	11,599	10,646	+9%
Small Towns (4,500-10,000)			
Magherafelt	8,805	8,372	+5%
Northern Ireland			+7.5%

- Biggest NI population increase 2011 v 2001 = Dungannon LGD (+21%)

- <u>11 Councils in NI - Only 2 Without Rail</u> :

  - Fermanagh & Omagh.

  - Mid-Ulster.

Mid-Ulster District

- <u>Strong Rail History</u> :

RAILWAY STATION	DATE CLOSED
- Dungannon	1965
- Cookstown	1956 *(passengers)*, 1959 *(freight)*
- Magherafelt	1950
- Maghera	1950
- Castledawson	1950

- <u>Dungannon part of key 'Derry Road' Rail Route</u> :
    - Linked Derry & Tyrone to Portadown, Belfast & Dublin.

- <u>No rail in Tyrone/South Derry for two generations</u>.

A Car-Dominated Region

- <u>High Car Dependency</u>
  - Increasingly hard-wired into design of west of NI.
  - Low-density urban sprawl; housing dislocated from services
  - Forced Car Ownership & 'Car-Related Economic Stress'
- <u>Low Car-ownership Levels</u> *(2015 figures)*
  - Dungannon = 26% Households no access car/van.
  - Cookstown = 24% Households no access car/van
- <u>Current Road Projects</u>
  - Pouring more cars in.
- <u>Current Public Transport</u>
  - Low bus Usage.
  - Rail not available as a viable alternative.

A Car-Dominated Region

CAR OWNERSHIP IN NI's MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS

Town	East or West ?	Percentage of Households Without Access to Car/Van
1. Strabane	West	30.5 %
* **2. Dungannon**	**West**	**26.3 %**
3. Limavady	West	26.2 %
4. Downpatrick	East	26.1 %
* **5. Armagh**	**East**	**25.5 %**
6. Enniskillen	West	24.2 %
* **7. Cookstown**	**West**	**23.6 %**
8. Ballymoney	East	23.0 %
9. Hollywood	East	20.3 %
10. Banbridge	East	19.4 %

KEY =

| | Has Rail Station | | Station Within 5 miles | | No Rail Provision |

The Opportunity

Change How We View Rail in N.I.

HOW RAIL CURRENTLY VIEWED HERE :

• Old-fashioned, slow, cumbersome.

• A neglected Victorian relic.

• Inferior to roads and cars.

• Largely for commuting to Dublin or Belfast.

HOW VIEWED IN BRITAIN & EUROPE :

• Transport of the future.

• Central part of infrastructure networks everywhere.

• Fastest way to connect people and places.

• Essential in large towns and cities, & as rural lifelines.

• Communities & councils *actively campaign* for better rail services.

7 Key Benefits of Rail

ECONOMIC : Jobs/People gravitate towards good infrastructure.

EMPLOYMENT: Easier to access job & training opportunities.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: No car households

TOURISM : Easier for visitors to access our area.

CIVIC STATUS : Certain things are expected within a city region.

CLIMATE CHANGE: A viable alternative to private vehicle usage.

QUALITY OF LIFE: Cleaner air, less congestion, easier journeys.

Case Study - CBR, Scotland
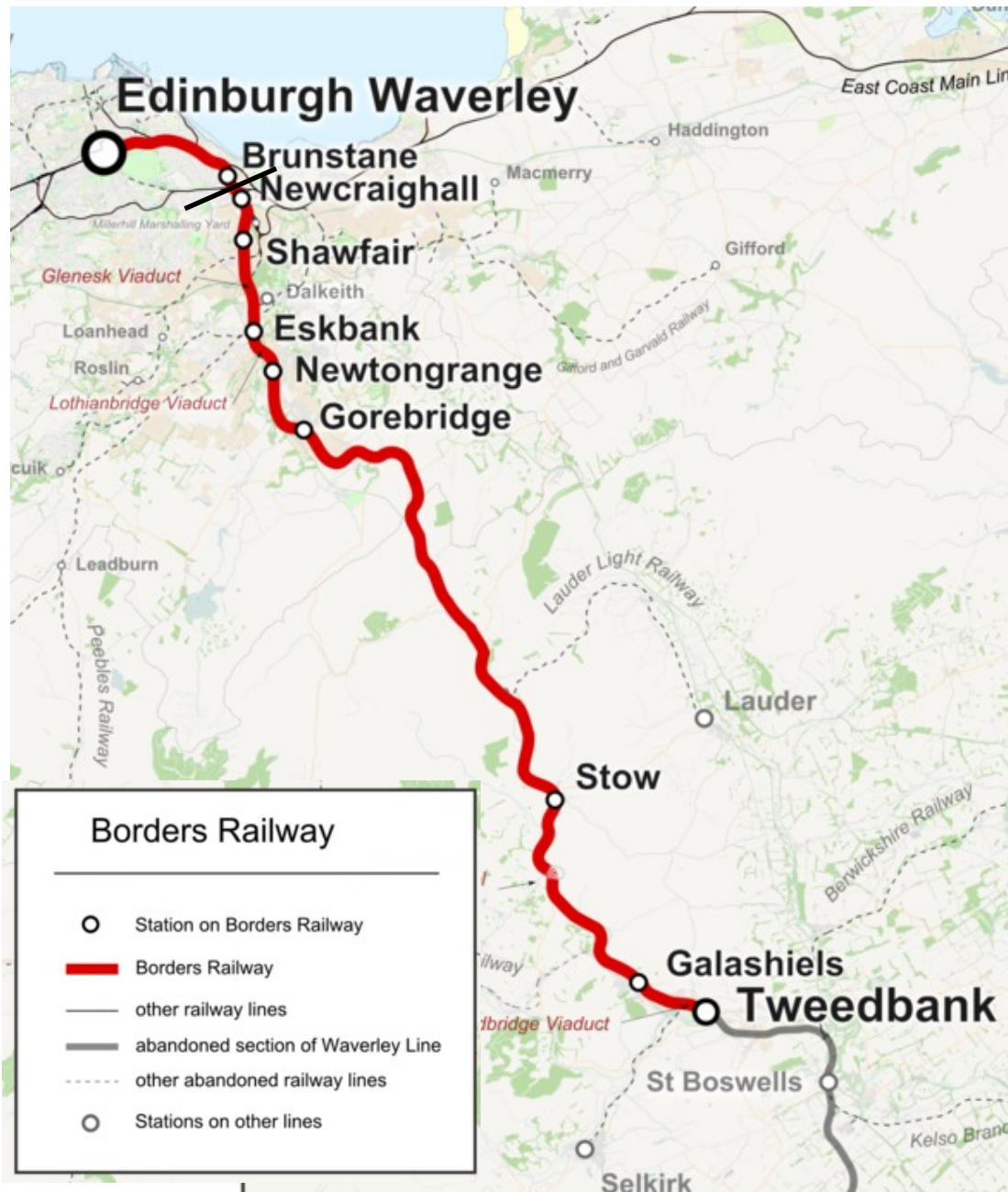
CAMPAIGN FOR BORDERS RAIL

- 98 mile Waverley route closed in 1969.

- Scottish Borders became only region in Britain without rail.

- <u>1999</u> : CBR established.

- <u>2006</u> : Scottish Parliament passed act to restore first stage of the route (Newcraighall to Tweedbank - 30 miles).

- <u>2015</u> : Route re-opened.

A RAIL SUCCESS STORY

- Political decision to re-open the line (not an economic one).

- Passenger demand has exceeded official projections.

- Route comprises of small rural towns.

- Increase in trade & tourism along the line.

- Extension now planned south to Carlisle.

The Potential For Rail in Mid-Ulster

- <u>View re-opened rail routes as 'Opportunity Corridors'</u> :

  - Mass Transit routes. ✓

  - Focus for Higher Density Housing. ✓

  - Economic Activity Zones. ✓

  - Public & commercial services. ✓

- <u>Physically bind the District & Neighbouring Region together</u>.

- <u>Without a role for rail, councils won't achieve key ambitions re</u> :

  - Regeneration.

  - Climate Change.

  - Modal Shift (Transportation).

  - Economic Development / Jobs.

What Into The West is Campaigning For

'Into The West' is Campaigning to Restore & Improve Rail Across the West of Ulster
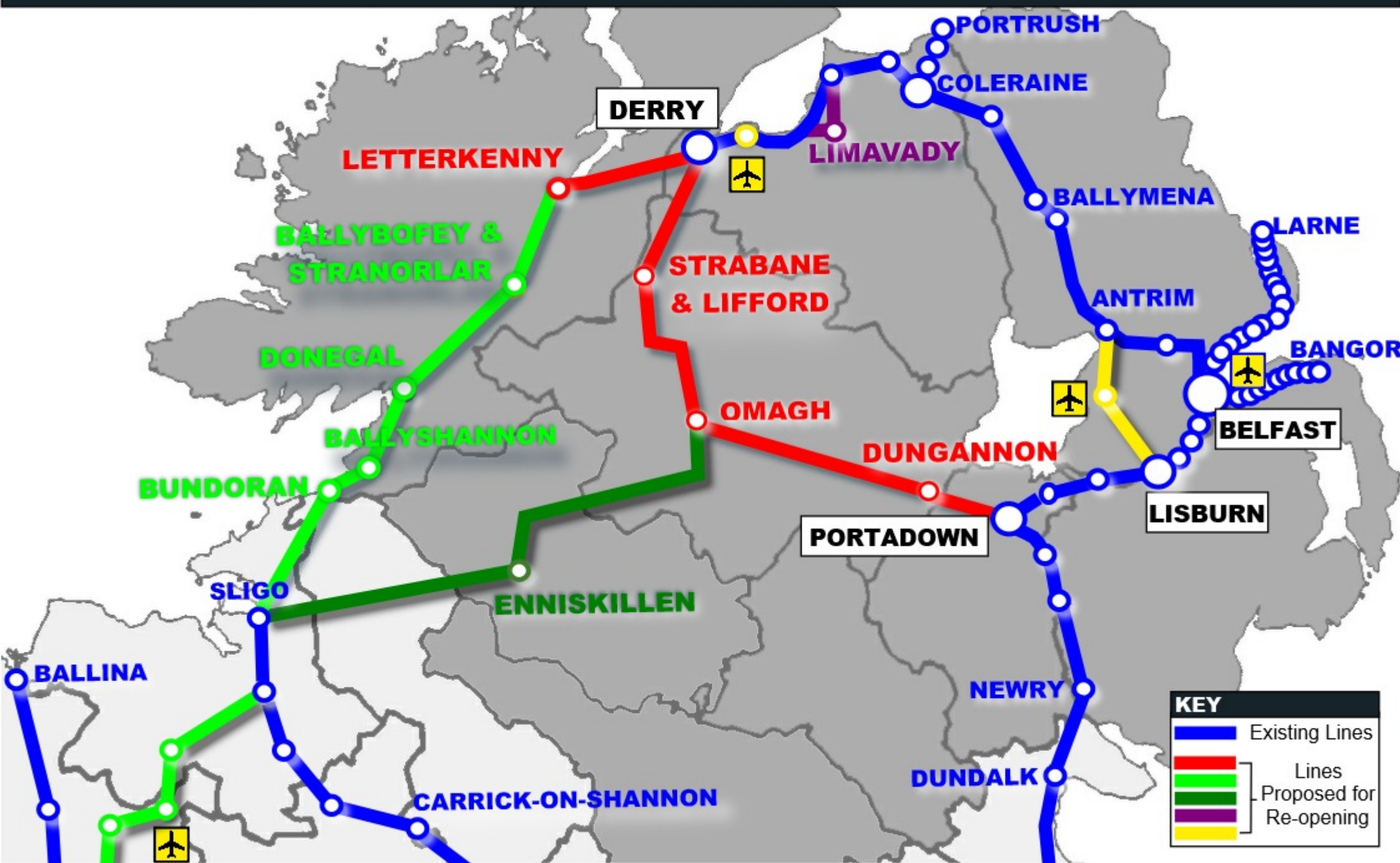
• 75 miles of track, controversially closed in 1965.

• Spine of rail through Co.Tyrone, connecting 3 largest towns.

• Linked together NI's second city, NW of the island and County Tyrone directly with Portadown, Belfast and Dublin.

• **No other rail reopening on the island would connect so many people across so many key population centres & counties**.

  - Almost 200,000 people in Derry, Strabane, Omagh, Dungannon, Portadown

  - One-fifth of NI's largest towns.

  - Once hinterlands & stops en-route included = 250,000+.

• Would connect West of Ulster & North-West of island to Dublin = island's main economic & tourism hub. Via the most populated and least expensive route.
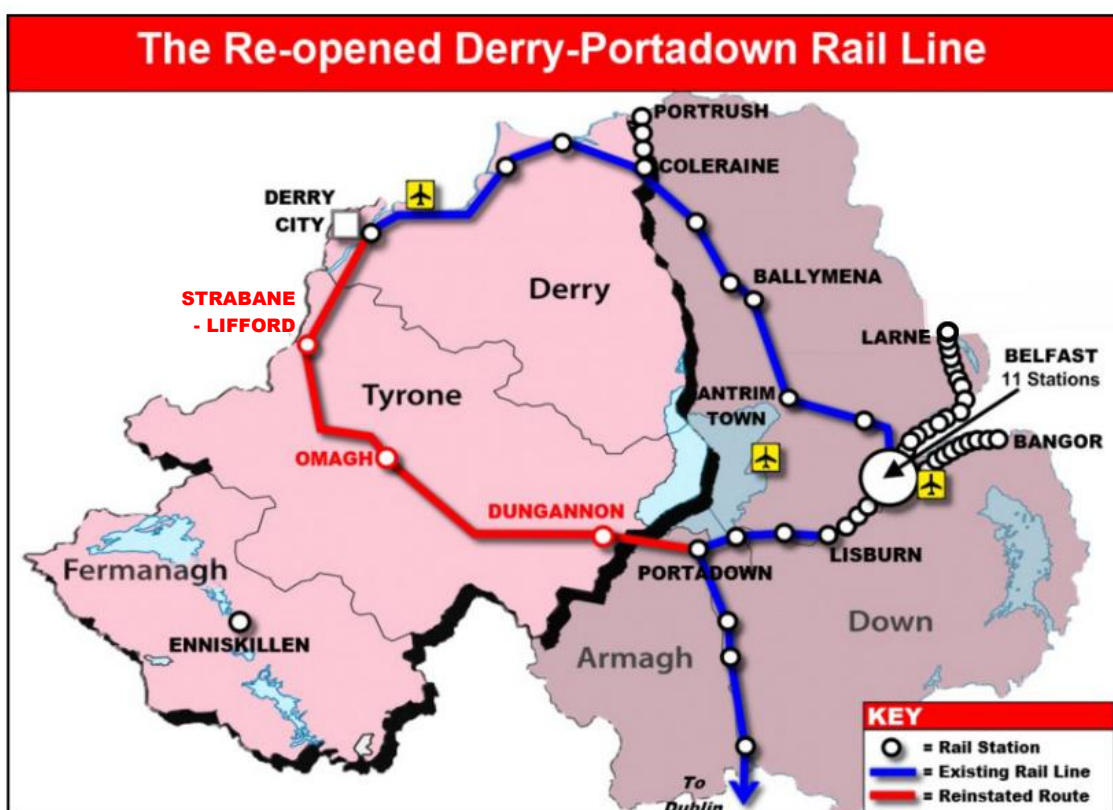
The Re-opened Derry-Portadown Rail Line

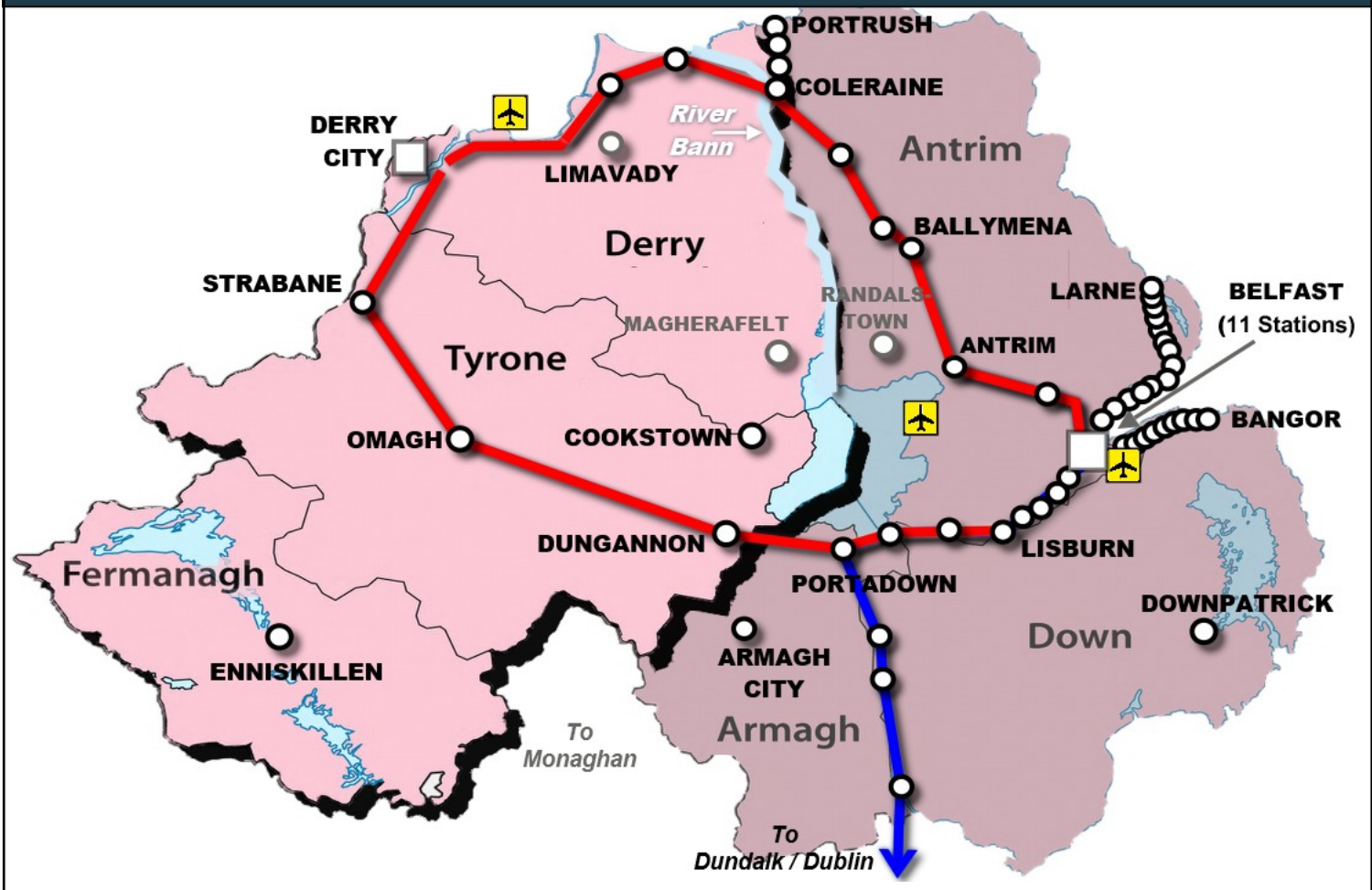- When connected to existing rail network, re-opened Derry-Portadown line would enable creation of new 'Heart of Ulster' rail loop around NI.

- Provide **unprecedented level of connectivity within island's rail network**.

- Linking together :

  - ✓ 5 of NI's 6 counties.

  - ✓ 12 of NI's 24 largest towns

  - ✓ 800,000+ people (42% of NI's total population).

The 'HEART OF ULSTER' Line / Loop

BACKGROUND - Letterrkenny

• Donegal's largest & fastest-growing town.

• Key regional growth centre, identified for significant population & economic expansion :

- *40%+ planned population increase by 2040.*

• Part of cross-border 'North West City Region' (NWCR).

• Faces key transport challenges :

1. Peripheral location in corner of the island.
2. Poor long-distance infrastructure (rail/motorway).
3. Limited regional public transport connectivity.

THE PROPOSAL :

• Extend reopened Derry-Portadown line 21 miles west to includeLetterkenny.

• End Donegal's rail isolation, & give it direct link to Dublin.
• Help bind together and enable modal shift across NWCR.
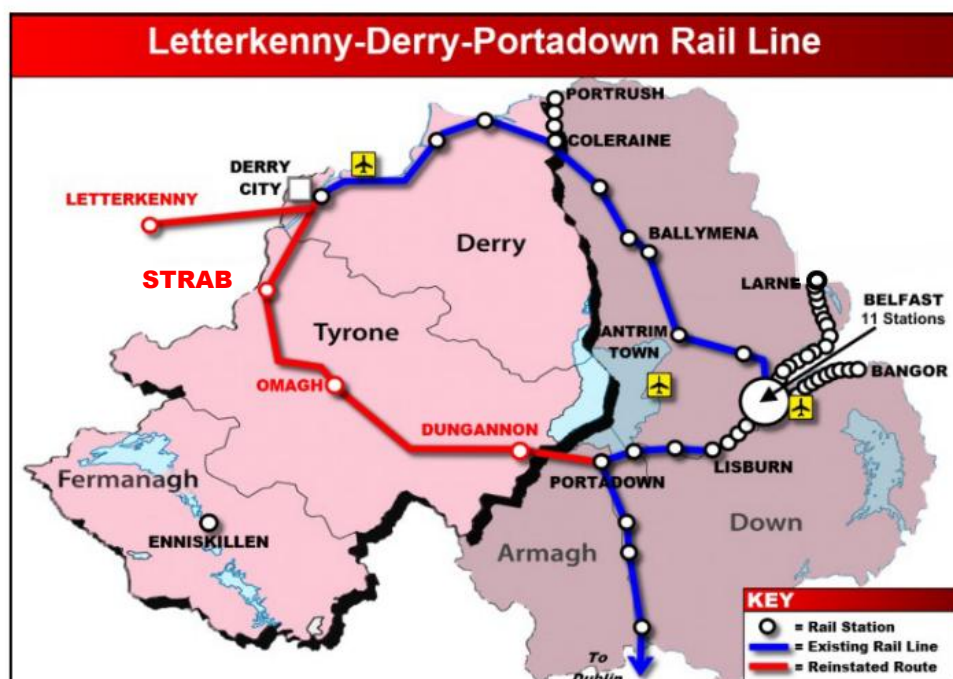
Letterkenny-Derry-Portadown Rail Line

PROPOSAL

• Restoring 26 mile Omagh-Enniskillen route would add Fermanagh to rail network, & include all 6 counties in NI.
• Continue reopening from Enniskillen to Sligo would link west of NI into proposed Western Rail Corridor.

Restored Omagh-Enniskillen-Sligo Line
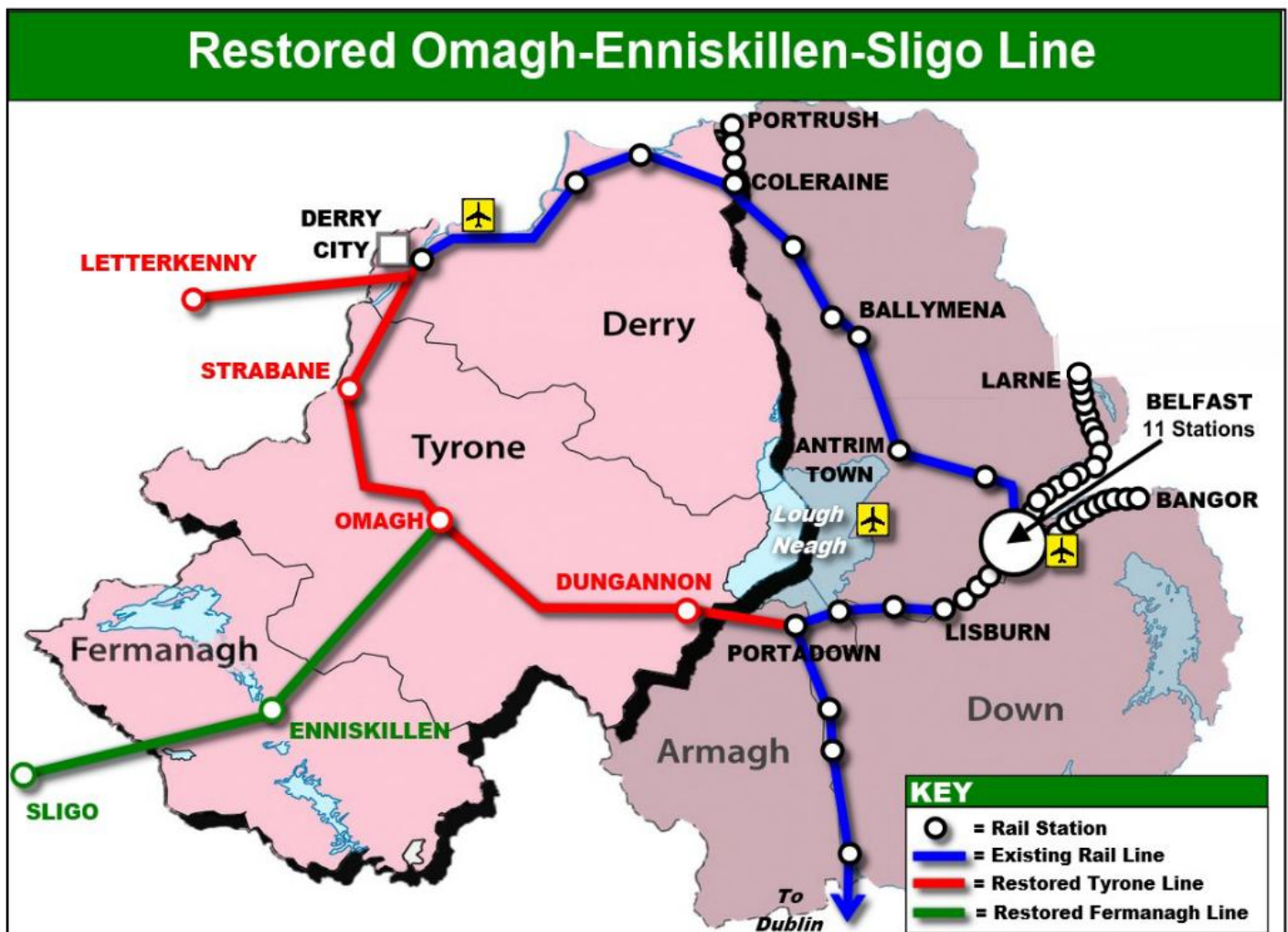
3. RE-CONNECT LIMAVADY TO RAIL NETWORK

4. COMPLETE WESTERN RAIL CORRIDOR,
(AND CONTINUE IT NORTH TO DONEGAL/DERRY)

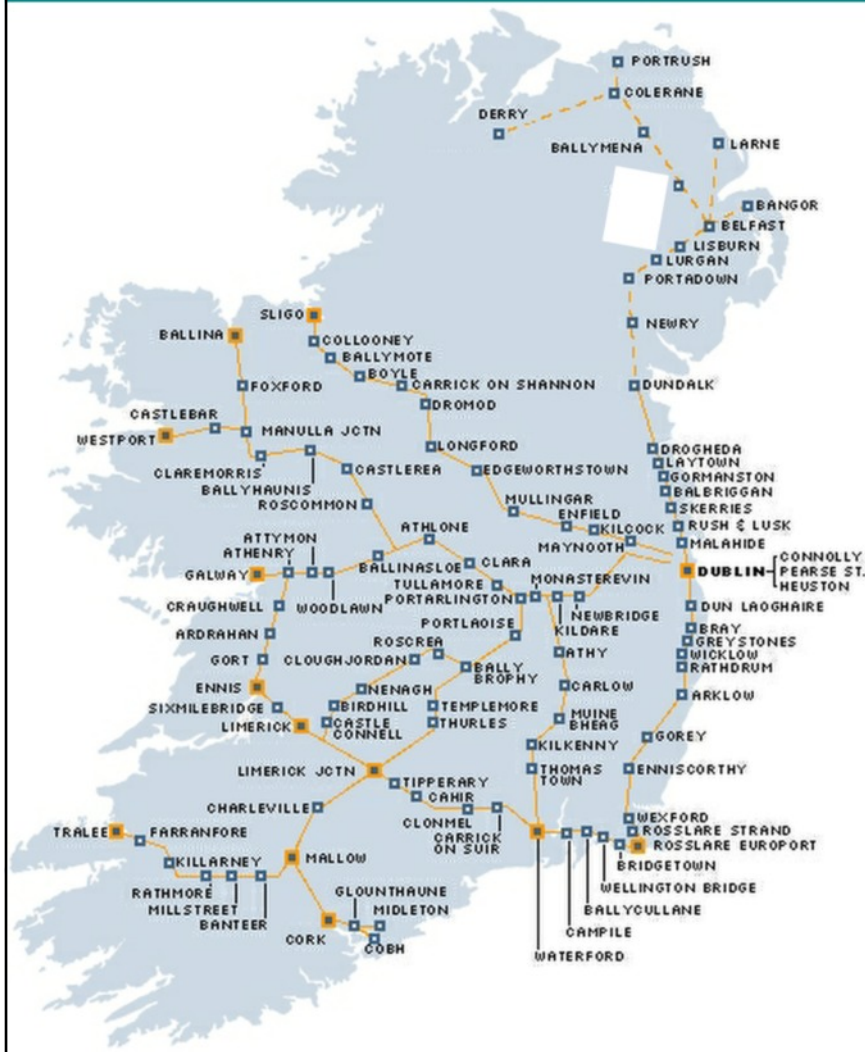# 5. CONNECT NI's 3 AIRPORTS TO RAIL

Location of NI's 3 Airports

BEFORE
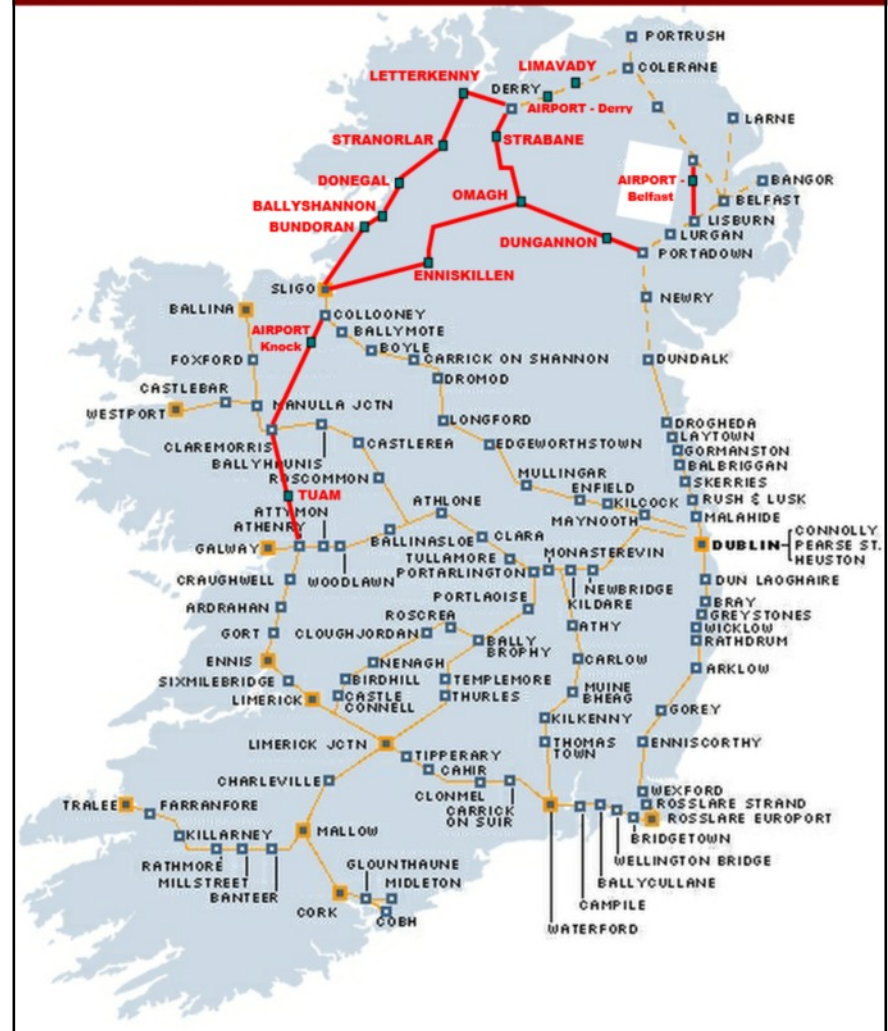
AFTER

COOKSTOWN SPUR (LOUGH NEAGH LOOP)

- A marginal proposal in terms of viability - likely to improve over time.

- Mid-Ulster is fastest-growing part of NI.

- Cookstown located 10 miles north of Dungannon, and 10 miles south of Magherafelt.

- A spur line from Dungannon to Cookcstown and on to Magherafelt may become justified over time by population growth.

- Could eventually be continued east for the 18 miles from Magherafelt to Antrim Town - via Randalstown, where a 'Park & Rail' facility could be provided to draw vehicles off A6 Derry-Belfast road corridor.

Re-opened Cookstown Spur (Potential Lough Neagh Loop)
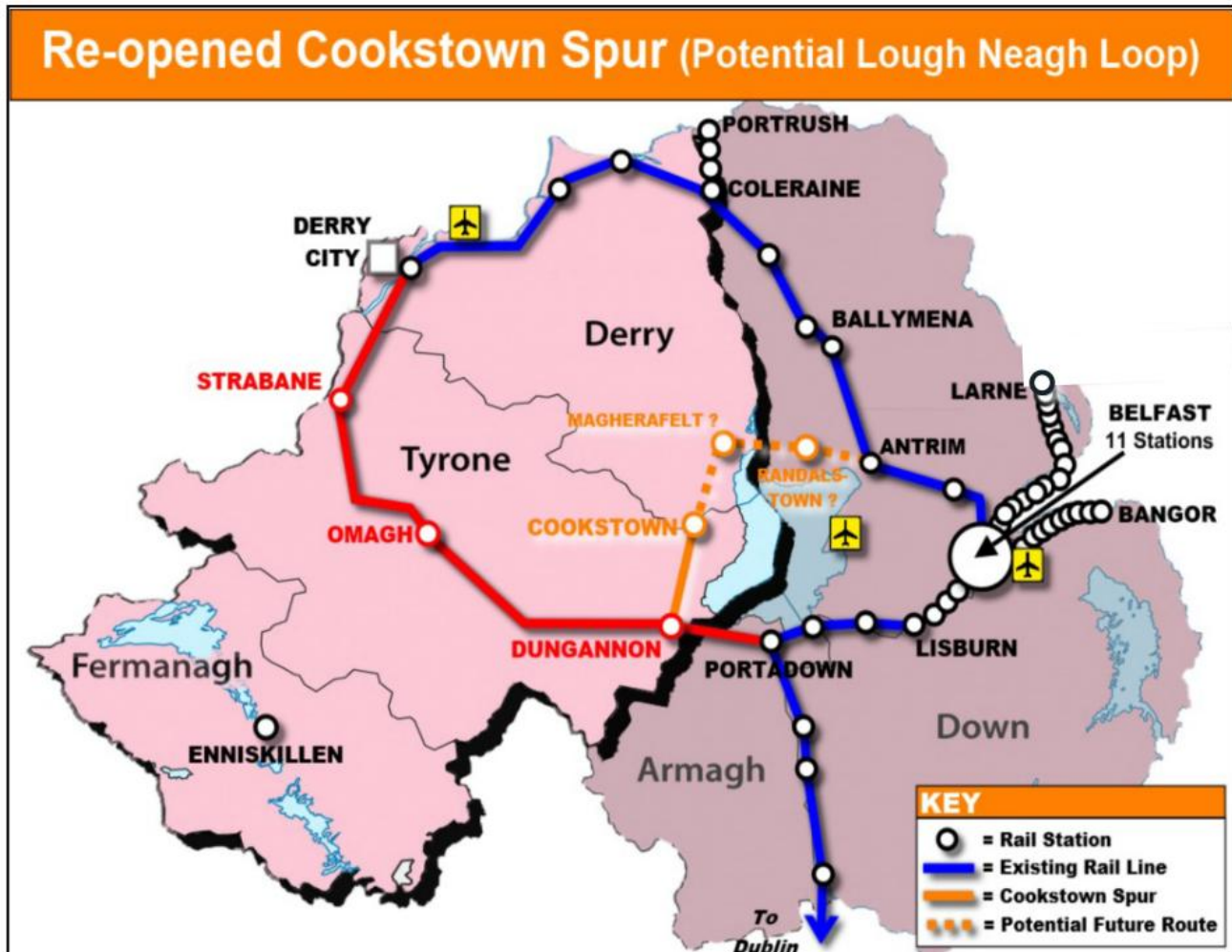
3. What's Required to Achieve These Ambitions ?

These Ambitions Will Require...

1) **Stormont** and **NICS** = A Sea-Change in Outlook

- Alter spending priorities on Transport & Regional Balance.

- Chronic underfunding of transport =

For every £100 spent per-capita on public transport in Scotland, NI spends only £40.

- Work with Westminster/ROI on major capital funding.

- Take rail seriously as tool to deliver multiple Gov priorities.

Per-Capita Spend on Public Transport Across UK

£ per head of population

350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0

2012/13   2013/14   2014/15   2015/16   2016/17

Scotland — Wales — NI — England — UK
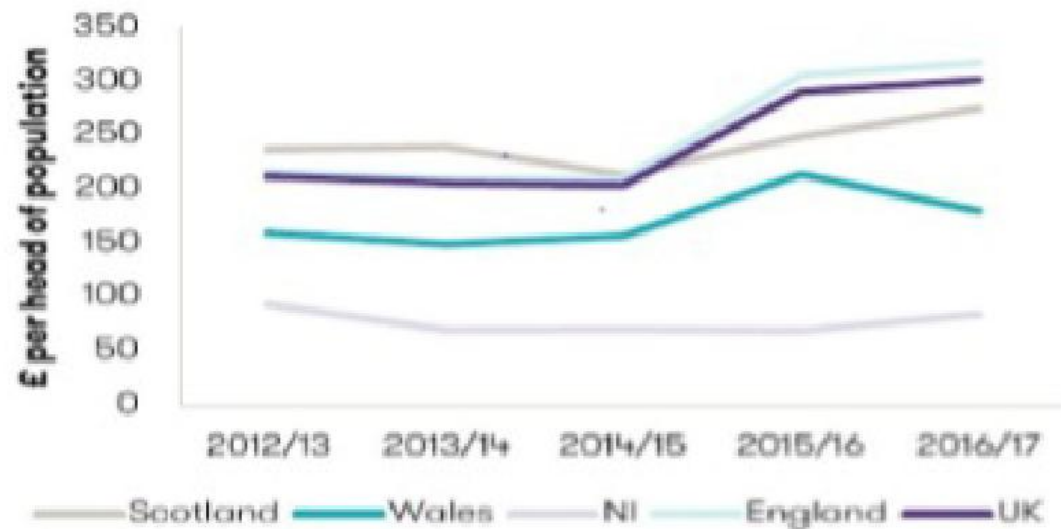
These Ambitions Will Require...

2) **Councils** = Proactive Leadership

- Protect former trackbeds.

- Identify preferred routes for new/restored lines.

- Include rail in LDPs and Transport Plans.

- Secure funding for feasibility studies.
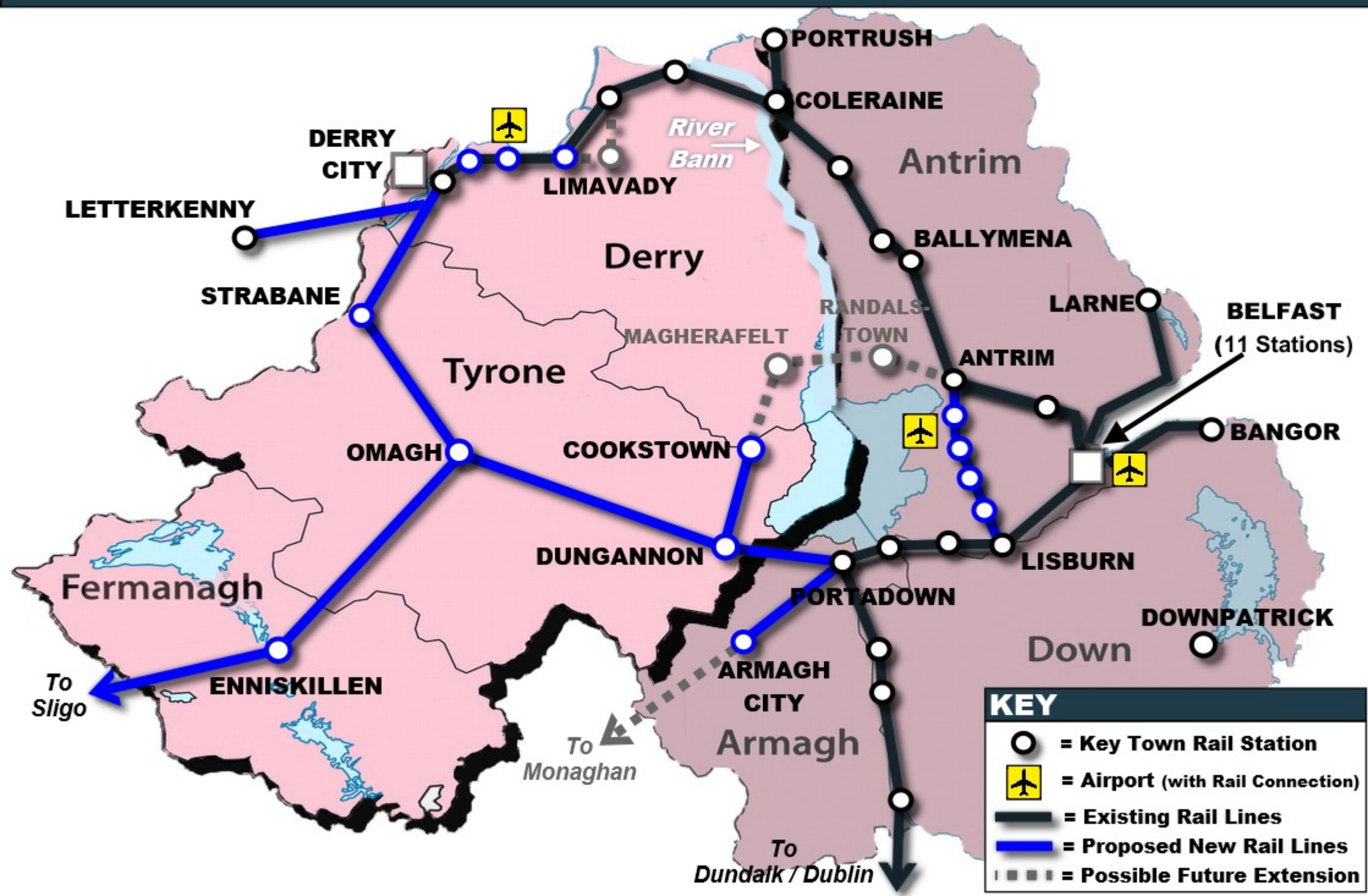
- Work Together.

3) **Translink** = Attract More Users to Rail

- Recognise untapped potential of rail.

- Be less a bus company, more an integrated transport provider

A Principle-Based Approach to Rail Expansion

1) Presumption in favour of rail returning to places with 10,000+ population.

2) Acknowledgement there will be exceptions to that rule
   Example :towns with 10,000+ that are either :

   a. Geographically distant from existing rail infrastructure, *&/or*
   b. Not en-route between large settlements with rail potential.
   e.g. Downpatrick (population 11,000).

3) Confirmation this does not rule out return of rail to every place with population *below* 10,000 either. E.g. Smaller settlements that are :
   a. En-route between key settlements e.g. Newtonstewart.
   b. Significant generators of people movements e.g. university towns, key tourist destinations.

4) Presumption that all major airports should have rail connectivity.

NI's KEY TOWNS & AIRPORTS CONNECTED BY RAIL

River Bann

PORTRUSH
COLERAINE
Antrim

DERRY CITY
LETTERKENNY
LIMAVADY
BALLYMENA
LARNE
BELFAST (11 Stations)

STRABANE
Derry
RANDALS-TOWN
MAGHERAFELT
ANTRIM

Tyrone
BANGOR

OMAGH
COOKSTOWN
LISBURN

Fermanagh
DUNGANNON
PORTADOWN
DOWNPATRICK

To Sligo
ENNISKILLEN
Down

To Monaghan
ARMAGH CITY
Armagh

To Dundalk / Dublin

KEY

- ○ = Key Town Rail Station
- ✈ = Airport (with Rail Connection)
- ▬ = Existing Rail Lines
- ▬ = Proposed New Rail Lines
- ┄ = Possible Future Extension

Summary of our Ambitions

OUR PROPOSALS TO EXPAND THE EXISTING RAIL NETWORK

1a. RESTORE DERRY-PORTADOWN LINE

1b. RESTORE DERRY-LETTERKENNY LINE

2. RESTORE OMAGH-ENNISKILLEN LINE

3. RE-CONNECT LIMAVADY TO RAIL NETWORK

4. COMPLETE WESTERN RAIL CORRIDOR,
(& CONTINUE IT NORTH TO DONEGAL/DERRY)

5. CONNECT NI's 3 AIRPORTS TO RAIL

COOKSTOWN SPUR (LOUGH NEAGH LOOP)

Our Ask of Mid-Ulster Council

1) **Adopt an ambitious vision for rail within your District**.

   - Accept the hugely positive role rail can play for your District.

   - Include an ambitious vision for it in all strategies (LDP, Transport Plan)

   - Get it into All-Island Rail Review Strategy.

2) **Become consistent and vocal advocates for rail in your District**.

   - Lobby Ministers, Department for Infrastructure, UK & Irish Govs.

3) **Work closely and collaboratively with other Councils to achieve objectives**.

4) **Establish a Rail Working Group (RWG) within Council**.

   - To take detailed view re possible routes, protection of track beds etc.

5) **Support other improvements to rail on the island**.

   - Rail functions as a network.

Into The West

The Rail Campaign for Derry, Donegal, Tyrone & Fermanagh

Thank You.

VERY INDICATIVE COSTS FOR PROPOSED REOPENINGS - 10,000+ Towns & Airports

PROJECT	INDICATIVE COST
1a. Derry-Portadown Reopening	£850m *(Possible ROI / EU contributions)*
1b. Derry-Letterkenny Reopening	£300m *(Primarily ROI / EU Funded)*
2. Omagh-Enniskillen Reopening.	£310m *(Possible ROI / EU contributions)*
3. Rail Access for Limavady	
Access via existing Bellarena Station	£0.5m
Access via new halt at Balykelly	£5-10m
FUTURE - Redirect Belfast-Derry line through Limavady	*£100-120m*
4. Cookstown Spur *(Lough Neagh Loop)*	
Dungannon-Cookstown	£125m
FUTURE - Cookstown-Magherafelt	*£125m*
FUTURE - Magherafelt-Antrim (P&R at Rndalstown)	*£200m*
5. Connect NI's 3 Airports to Rail	
- Belfast International *(3 Options)*	£10-30m
- Belfast City Airport *(3 Options)*	£5-10m
- City of Derry Airport	£5-10m
TOTAL	£1.93bn - £2.08bn