



Rail Executive

## Consultation Document

# Community Rail Service Designation: Hereward Line (Peterborough – Ely)

July 2015

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# Contents

Foreword .....	4
Executive summary .....	5
How to respond.....	6
The proposal.....	8
The Hereward Line Route Prospectus .....	9
What will happen next.....	10
Question and answer brief .....	11
Annex A List of those consulted .....	13
Annex B Consultation principles .....	14
Annex C Background on Community Rail and designation .....	14

# Foreword

A community rail line is a local railway supported by a local organisation such as a community rail partnership (CRP) or rail user group. A CRP comprises the railway operator, local councils and other community organisations including voluntary groups.

Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) began to be developed in the early 1990s against a backdrop of falling passenger numbers and possible line closures with an aim to engage all the interested parties in an attempt to revitalise local lines and increase passenger numbers.

The Community Rail Development Strategy aims to secure the long term viability of local and rural railways. It seeks to increase patronage, reduce costs, increase community involvement and support social and economic regeneration in developing local lines and services. Part of the strategy includes formal designation of suitable lines and services around the country.

# Executive summary

We propose to designate the Peterborough to Ely route as a community rail service. This proposal is in line with the Department's Community Rail Development Strategy.

Designation is intended to improve the financial performance, value for money and social value of the railways to help make sure of their long term future. Separate designation gives us the freedom and flexibility to try a new approach to achieve these aims. It also provides access to small scale additional funding.

We include a route prospectus, outlining the scope for development, including locally agreed objectives. Designation will help make this possible and to build on the good work of the Hereward Line Community Rail Partnership (CRP).

We would be pleased to get your views and comments on the proposed designation and all responses will be considered before the final decision is made.

As the Community Rail Development Strategy was widely consulted on, this is a short consultation involving key local and rail industry stakeholders.

Further information can be viewed under [Community Rail](#) in the rail section of the [Department for Transport's website](#).

# How to respond

The consultation period began on Wednesday 29 July 2015 and will run until Friday 25 September 2015. Please make sure that your response reaches us before the closing date. If you would like further copies of this consultation document, it can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hereward-line-community-rail-service-designation> or you can contact Simon Hankin if you need alternative formats.

Please send consultation responses to:

[simon.hankin@railexecutive.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:simon.hankin@railexecutive.gsi.gov.uk)

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LONDON SW1P 4DR  
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When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If responding on behalf of a larger organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.

A list of those consulted is attached at Annex A. If you have any suggestions of others who may wish to be involved in this process please contact us.

## Freedom of Information

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of

Practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information, we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

# The proposal

We propose to designate the Peterborough to Ely route, known as the Hereward Line, as a community rail service. This proposal is in line with the Department's Community Rail Development Strategy.

Designating the route will allow the community to design rail services according to local needs. In turn, this will help to increase passenger numbers, improve connectivity to key destinations and ultimately boost the local economy.

Designation will allow the Hereward Line Community Rail Partnership the opportunity to:

- Bid into the Designated Community Rail Development Fund (DCRDF) for projects that support their objectives. This grant provides funds for small projects covering marketing campaigns, community engagement schemes, research projects and small station enhancements.
- Attend ACoRP conferences and training events. The DfT support a bursary scheme which allows the Community Rail Partnership Officer (CRPO) to attend these conferences and training events free of charge.
- Attend the Department for Transport's annual Designated Lines Seminar. As a designated route the CRPO will be invited to the annual DfT Designated Lines Seminar which is used to update CRPs on wider rail developments; to share best practice and to network.
- Benefit from a more 'formal' status similar to a local authority. With designation there is often a strong psychological advantage with a feeling of recognition' and 'belonging' which cuts across the partnership.



# The Hereford Line Route Prospectus

A detailed route prospectus for the Hereford Line Route is provided as a separate document and we would ask that you refer to this before responding to the consultation.

The Fenland area in North Cambridgeshire is a large sparsely populated rural area with many communities ranging from small hamlets to market towns. There are local challenges with providing access to services and public transport to meet local needs. The district has three railway stations; Whittlesea, March and Manea. These offer great potential with some competitive journey times to nearby shopping and employment centres and travel opportunities in the evenings and at weekends.

The Fenland Rail Development Strategy will help shape the way that the partnership works through its three priorities which are: more community involvement; better stations and rail service improvements.

# What will happen next

A summary of responses, including the next steps, will be published within three months of the consultation closing on 25 September 2015. Paper copies will be available on request.

# Question and answer brief

Below is a list of frequently asked questions about these proposals. If you still have questions after you have read this section please contact:

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Email address: [simon.hankin@railexecutive.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:simon.hankin@railexecutive.gsi.gov.uk)

Further background information can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/expanding-and-improving-the-rail-network/supporting-pages/community-rail>

Q: Why are you holding the consultation at this stage?

A: The Hereward Line Community Rail Partnership approached us with a view for a service designation of the route. We are satisfied that they are a robust partnership able to work well with local groups and key stakeholders to improve their services. We are also satisfied that the route is suitable for service designation.

Q: Who is entitled to respond?

A: As the original strategy was widely consulted on, this is a short consultation involving key stakeholders and local groups. However, we have made this publically available and therefore welcome responses from any organisation or member of the public.

Q: How do I respond? What issues do I need to cover and comment on?

A: Details on how to respond are provided in this pack. How much detail you provide and what issues you cover are entirely up to you. Responses can be as short or as long as you like.

Q: The original Community Rail Development Strategy was published in 2005 and reviewed in 2007. Can you explain why you are still referring to a strategy which is over 10 years old?

A: The four values of the original strategy to increase revenue, reduce costs, increase community involvement and support social & economic development still remain valid.

Q: Will designation result in less subsidy from the Government for the upkeep of the line or development of services?

A: No. Subsidy and money available for local track maintenance and improvements will not be adversely affected by designation. Indeed designation will strengthen the CRPs bargaining power for grants and funds to improve local services.

Q: Will designation in any way impact on freight or divisionary services?

A: This proposal is for service designation of the community rail line including several rail stations along the route. Service designation excludes the track and signalling and is used if there are other non-community services sharing the line. On this basis freight services will not be adversely affected by designation. More information on community rail and designation is provided with this consultation pack.

Q: How will the local community benefit from designation?

A: Designation will strengthen the remit of the Hereward Line CRP allowing them to work closely with local groups to improve their rail services and stations. This is outlined in more detail under the proposal.

Q: Is designation a permanent arrangement?

A: Designation is intended to be a permanent arrangement, but it can be reviewed periodically to assess whether designation is still appropriate.

# Annex A List of those consulted

Abellio Greater Anglia  
Cross Country  
East Midlands  
DB Schenker  
Direct Rail Services  
Freightliner Ltd  
GB Railfreight Ltd  
Network Rail  
Office of Rail Regulation  
Transport Focus

Association of Community Rail Partnerships  
Peterborough - Ely - Norwich Rail Users Group  
Hereward Line Community Rail Partnership

Cambridgeshire County Council  
City of Ely Council  
Fenland District Council  
Manea Parish Council  
March Town Council  
Peterborough City Council  
Whittlesey Town Council  
East Cambridgeshire District Council  
Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise  
Partnership  
New Anglia LEP

# Annex B Consultation principles

The consultation is being conducted in line with the Government's key consultation principles which are listed below. Further information is available on the Better Regulation Executive website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>

If you have any comments about the consultation process please contact:

Consultation Co-ordinator  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/29 Great Minster House  
London SW1P 4DR  
Email [consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

Please do not send consultation responses to this address.

# Annex C Background on Community Rail and designation

Community Rail involves local people and organisations in the development and running of local and rural routes, services and stations.

Community railways aim to increase revenue, reduce costs, increase community involvement and support social & economic development.

Although many community rail routes are 'rural' a few, such as the Severn Beach Line in Bristol, operate in largely urban areas. There is a wide variation in the length of community rail routes and the number of stations they serve. The St Ives Bay Line in Cornwall is 4.25 miles long, whereas the Cumbrian Coast Line in the North West covers an 88 mile route.

Community rail lines and services are part of the national rail network, with services operated by the train companies and infrastructure owned and maintained by Network Rail. Although many provide a tourism service they are largely separate from those heritage and private railways which function as tourist attractions.

Support is usually provided through a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) comprising the railway operator, local councils and other community organisations.

Community rail initiatives can help get better value for money from the rail network. Community rail initiatives include station enhancements and innovative promotional schemes aimed at developing and improving services. This could range from local people helping to maintain station gardens or the refurbishment of small stations with artwork from local schools. It can also include major schemes.

The **Association of Community Rail Partnerships** (ACoRP) is an umbrella organisation representing over 60 community rail partnerships and rail promotion groups. The Department provides core funding for the organisation.

ACoRP helps to identify innovative solutions for local railways and supports its members through disseminating examples of good practice;

organising training sessions for its members and works with local stakeholders to develop new partnerships.

## **Community Rail Designation**

The Department has designated 39 routes as 'Community Railways'. These designated routes are intended to clarify the expectations and aspirations for the line and can be 'service' or 'line' designations.

The Community Rail Development Strategy aims to secure the long term viability of local railways and includes the formal designation of suitable local community rail lines and services.

Designation encourages good standards of practice and provides a more flexible approach in the way they are run. Designation reinforces the importance and status of the Community Rail Partnership for the line.

Designation can be either 'line' or 'service'. Line designation covers the track and signalling, service designation excludes the track and signalling and is used if there are other services such as freight sharing the line or if the line is part of a 'Trans European Network' (TEN) route. Many community rail routes are a combination of both 'line' and 'service'.

Designation follows a consultation process with local and rail industry stakeholders and endorsement by the National Community Rail Development Implementation Steering Group. This steering group is a partnership of central and local government, Network Rail, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) and ACoRP. It aims to support community railways to secure their future and put them on a more sustainability footing.

## **The Route Prospectus**

The Route Prospectus is a short document which outlines the aspirations of the partnership for developing the line and services over a 5 to 10 year period and will be published on the Departments' website following designation.