

Route Prospectus

For the line between St Erth and St Ives (St Ives Bay Line)

The line between St Erth and St Ives is one of the routes chosen for the SRA Community Rail Development pilot projects. The pilot projects were chosen to demonstrate how the Community Rail Development approach can increase revenue, reduce costs through effective management, and encourage greater community involvement in the local railway.

The key measures of success of the pilots will be

- establishing the contribution of Community Rail Development in achieving locally set objectives such as reducing road congestion and increasing accessibility;
- establishing the costs for the line and services;
- establishing the effectiveness of different methods for reducing the net financial loss of Community Rail lines by increasing revenue and reducing costs where practicable.

A remit for the pilot project has been agreed by the Client Group for the pilot project. This remit forms the basis for this Route Prospectus. Like the remit, it is expected that the route prospectus will be a flexible document that will evolve (in format and substance) as the pilot project develops.

The Client Group referred to brings together those authorities with operational management, funding, specification or statutory transport planning responsibilities for the St Ives Bay as well as the Looe Valley and Tamar Valley lines, and consists of Cornwall and Devon County Councils, Plymouth City Council, Wessex Trains, the Devon & Cornwall Rail Partnership, Network Rail and the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA).

The branch is four and a quarter miles long, and the line speed is 30 mph, with lower local speed restrictions. It is single line throughout, with no crossing loops or sidings, other than at St Erth, and only one train is permitted to operate on the line at any one time. The current capability of the route, on which the pilot scheme proposals are based, is that it has a capacity of two trains per hour each way, operated by diesel units in the class 15x series.

As part of the pilot scheme, it is proposed that in future, engineering works on the branch would be planned to ensure the infrastructure was highly reliable and available during public holidays and for the school holiday period, particularly during July and August. Where possible, blockades on the branch should be planned in conjunction with the train operator to take place at times of low demand, preferably during November, or between January and March.

Designation of the line between St Erth and St Ives as a 'Community Rail line' is needed to progress these aspects of the remit:

- Demonstrate the potential for cost effective operation of a higher frequency service, and monitor effect on performance regime
- Introduction of new non standard ticket types appropriate to the branch, and not applicable nationally
- Introduction of a wider range of retail outlets, including bus operators, and local stores
- Introduce simpler and cheaper ticket issuing machines for passengers, capable of selling local tickets
- Establish the real profit and loss figures for current operating, maintaining and renewing of the St Ives Bay Line
- Show how Train Operating Company costs might be reduced on the line by changes to regulatory arrangements, working practices and operation
- Demonstrate how joint working of infrastructure owner, Train Operating Company and local community might reduce infrastructure costs, through joint planning of routine work, of work on track structures and stations, through sharing staff and through other cooperation

Designation will also enable the pilot project to proceed, and therefore support the achievement of other objectives from the remit:

- Promote the St Ives Bay Line as the artistic gateway to St Ives
- Development of public art on stations on the line
- Improved signage along the line
- Extend the scope for station adoption
- Rolling stock branding

Without designation, the pilot project will not be able to deliver all its aims and objectives. The pilot project is expected to last up to five years. During the time of the pilot project the designation may be reviewed, and if there is a significant demand, then the consultation on designation can be repeated. This review process will enable designation to be reversed if circumstances change or the pilot has not been effective in delivering the objectives.

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