

# **THE HEReward COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP ROUTE PROSPECTUS**

**Community Rail Service Designation of the  
Hereward Line (Peterborough to Ely)**

## **Background**

The Route Prospectus outlines the aspirations of the partnership for developing the line and services over a 5 to 10 year period and has been prepared as part of the consultation to designate the Hereward Line (Peterborough to Ely) route as a community rail service.

The final prospectus will be published on the Departments' website following designation. Working with the DfT, the CRP have provided much of the content. This prospectus aims to set out ideas for the development of the local railway services and stations.

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. The route prospectus is not the same as an action or project plan which provides details of specific projects.

Service designation of the route would not preclude investment in the future to support economic development, nor would it hinder the use of the railway as a freight line, express or diversionary route.

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

## Summary

Route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peterborough to Ely</li> </ul>
Region and locale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East of England</li> <li>• Fenland District, Cambridgeshire.</li> </ul>
Stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Peterborough</b></li> <li>• Whittlesea</li> <li>• March</li> <li>• Manea</li> <li>• <b>Ely</b></li> </ul>
Service designation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the passenger services between Peterborough and Ely.</li> <li>• Including the three stations on the route Whittlesea, March and Manea.</li> <li>• Excluding Peterborough and Ely rail stations which fall outside the designation</li> <li>• Excluding other infrastructure such as the track and signalling.</li> <li>• Excluding those freight services which share the line.</li> </ul>
Journey time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41 minutes one way, stopping at each station.</li> <li>• 29.25 mile (47.07 km) route.</li> </ul>
Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hereward Community Rail Partnership launched October 2012</li> </ul>
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More Community involvement</li> <li>• Better Stations</li> <li>• Rail service improvements</li> </ul>

## **Introduction**

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. 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 Hereward Community Rail Partnership**

The Hereward Community Rail Partnership covers the line between Peterborough and Ely with a specific focus on the stations at Manea, March and Whittlesea. The CRP was formally launched in October 2012 and was the new CRP that formed part of the Abellio Greater Anglia Rail Franchise which commenced in February 2012.

The Hereward CRP has been successful in a number of partnership projects aimed at improving the passenger experience. These projects include the new two hour train service from Manea, the Friends of March Railway Station bringing two redundant buildings back into local community use, securing S106 development funding to improve the railway stations, attracting new station adopters and the development of masterplans setting out a range of improvements for Manea and Whittlesea Railway Stations. The CRP have also produced local timetables and other printed material aimed at encouraging more use of the train services, including delivery of such materials to individual homes as well as a large range of local venues. Data showing the use of the railway stations indicates significant increases in customers. The CRP local partners are listed below.

The Core Funding Partners are:

- Abellio Greater Anglia
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Fenland District Council

Other Partners include:

- Manea Parish Council
- March Town Council
- Network Rail
- Peterborough – Ely – Norwich Rail Users Group (PENRUG)
- Whittlesey Town Council

## **Prospectus**

This prospectus aims to set out ideas for the development of these local railway services and stations. The service designation will be used to facilitate improved outputs for the railway and particularly the communities and industries that are served by the Peterborough to Ely Line. Improvements for local people will increase accessibility by public transport, reduce rural isolation and facilitate a more prosperous local railway. Service designation excludes the track and signalling 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.

The Fenland Rail Development Strategy 2011 – 2031 sets out the Fenland commitment to improving stations, railway services and greater community involvement between Peterborough and Ely. Service designation of the service along the line will assist the Hereward CRP in playing a vital role in meeting these challenges. The Fenland Rail Development Strategy will also help shape the way that the partnership works through its 3 priorities which are:

- More Community involvement – working with local communities, businesses, local people and tourism organisations to encourage people to be involved in their local railway and to use train services.
- Better Stations – A railway station is the gateway to the rail network and to the community it serves. The 3 stations are looking tired. They require improvements to meet modern day standards and through the rail strategy and station masterplans the partners are committed to making such improvements
- Rail service improvements – railway services offer an opportunity to travel but local people would like to see further enhancements to meet their local needs.

The Cambridgeshire LTP 2011 – 2026 also sets out the Cambridgeshire Commitment to Community Rail. The LTP will also help to shape the Hereward CRP through:

- Reducing the length of the commute and the need to travel by private car
- Making sustainable modes of transport a viable and attractive alternative to the private car
- Ensuring people – especially those at risk of social exclusion – can access the services they need within reasonable time, cost and effort wherever they live in the county
- Supporting the work of Community Rail Partnerships to promote the provision of increased rail services in the county.

### **Key Aspirations of Service Designation:**

The Hereward Community Rail Partnership are seeking the following:

### **Short & Medium Term Aspirations**

- **An increase in local community involvement to improve stations, champion rail services in their local area and to volunteer.** A continuous programme of support to encourage people to volunteer and enable them to have an active role. To help improve the appearance of the railway stations, encourage their use and attract investment. The CRP already have volunteers delivering an excellent range of projects and supporting their stations. The CRP want to enable this to continue.
- **Improved station environments through the production and implementation of the railway station masterplans.** Working in partnership with the local community, the train operating companies and Network Rail to deliver improvements at stations. This includes securing S106 developer funding in line with the Fenland Local Plan. To date the partnership have successfully secured around £500,000 towards car parking, ticket machines, new waiting shelters and connecting bus services. New cycling parking has also been installed.



- **An improved train service between Ipswich and Peterborough.** This service is currently two hourly and is the main railway service for two of the stations. At a two hourly frequency this limits opportunities for travel. Business case & wider economic benefits study work completed in 2012 shows that there is a case for this railway service improvement.
- **Additional Norwich – Liverpool trains stopping at the stations.** The Norwich to Liverpool service is approximately an hourly service travelling through all the stations, however most of these services do not stop at all these stations. There are some services for commuters stopping at March and Whittlesea but nothing further. The CRP would like to see additional trains stopping which would allow people to use this service for other purposes such as day trips and shopping.

### **Longer Term Aspirations**

- **Improved station environments through the production and implementation of the larger projects in the railway station masterplans.** Please refer to the comments above in the shorter term aspirations. Some of the projects in the masterplans such as platform lengthening will be long term projects. Initial feasibility study work is about to commence for the platform lengthening.
- **The upgrade of Whittlesea Station to a parkway station for Peterborough.** The railway journey between Whittlesea Station and Peterborough is 11 minutes. This is very competitive compared with the car which is more than double this time. Peterborough is a regional service centre for employment, shopping, tourism and other key services. It therefore draws significant numbers of travelling people on a daily basis. The proximity and journey times between Whittlesea and Peterborough makes Whittlesea Station, with an improved service and better facilities a viable transport option for many people.
- **Additional train services to Birmingham New Street, Cambridge & Stansted Airport.** This service is currently hourly at certain times of the day. Local people would like to see more trains as part of this service and also for longer periods of the day. They would like to see a timetable that allows for evenings out in Cambridge, Peterborough, Leicester and Birmingham and to connect with early and late flights to and from Stansted airport.

### **Key measures of success**

- Increase community involvement
- Increased ridership and revenue
- Improved train service
- Improved and upgraded train stations

### **Stations included in the designation:**

The following stations would be included in the designation;

Manea, March and Whittlesea. Consideration is needed about how Peterborough and Ely may be involved in any designation.

### **Freight**

This route carries significant freight traffic. It is part of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton route and is therefore expected to carry additional freight services in future.

Service designation is intended to be for the passenger services along the line; it is not specifically about freight. The activities proposed by the Hereward CRP and through the delivery of the Fenland Rail Development Strategy would not preclude investment in the railway for freight or the continuing future use of the line for additional freight services.