

Community Rail Route Prospectus

For the railway line between Paddock Wood and Strood (The Medway Valley Line)

The line between Paddock Wood and Strood is one of the routes listed in the Department for Transport Community Rail Development Strategy as having potential for designation as a community rail route. This document sets out ideas for development of the line subsequent to the proposed formal designation during 2007.

The designation covers the service from Paddock Wood to Strood (The Medway Valley Line) giving more freedom to the operator and the community in running the service and the stations.

The key measures of success will be:

- The contribution of Community Rail Development in achieving locally set objectives.
- Reducing the call on taxpayers' funds for the service.
- Establishing the effectiveness of different methods for reducing the net financial loss of Community Rail lines by increasing revenue and reducing costs where practicable.
- Enabling local rail to play a larger role in the economic and social regeneration of the area.

This prospectus has been discussed and agreed with the Medway Valley Community Rail Partnership (which presently consists Kent County Council, Medway Council, Maidstone BC, Tonbridge & Malling BC, Snodland TC, Cuxton PC, Halling PC, East Malling & Larkfield PC, Aylesford PC, East Farleigh PC, Barming PC, Watlingtonbury PC, Nettlestead PC, Yalding PC, Paddock Wood TC, Southeastern, Nu-Venture Coaches, North Kent Rail Users Group.)

Designation of the service between Paddock Wood and Strood will assist in the following tasks:

- Identification of the costs of operating the Medway Valley service and the passenger revenue attributable to the line.
- Showing how Train Operating Company costs might be reduced on the service by changes to franchise management (including the Ticketing and Settlement Agreement arrangements), working practices and operation.
- Evaluation of cost effective methods of delivering improvements to Medway Valley line services and possible extensions - looking at all aspects of the current operation.
- Enhancing the role of the Medway Valley Line as an integral part of the rail network in the south east of England by improving connections with services on other lines.
- Exploration of opportunities of alternative fares structures to ensure the line is allocated a fair contribution of all through rail fares and that fares are appropriate to the local market.
- Look for innovative ticketing and marketing schemes with the aim of making it easier to buy tickets away from staffed stations, effective collection of revenue and higher service awareness and take-up by the local population.
- Working with local councils and other transport providers to develop integrated transport initiatives to improve accessibility to the area.
- Encouraging social enterprise initiatives at railway stations along the line.
- Engaging with the local communities in obtaining improvements to station facilities, environment and security.

It is intended to build on the work already undertaken on the route by the Community Rail Partnership, Southeastern and other local stakeholders in developing this service.

Designation of the service between Paddock Wood and Strood also includes the following stations:

- Beltring
- Yalding
- Wateringbury
- East Farleigh
- Maidstone West
- Maidstone Barracks
- Aylesford
- New Hythe
- Snodland
- Halling & Cuxton.

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

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