

## **Community Rail Route Prospectus for the railway line between Whitlingham Junction and Sheringham (The Bittern Line)**

The line between Whitlingham Junction and Sheringham is one of the routes listed in the Department for Transport Community Rail Development Strategy. This document sets out ideas for development of the line subsequent to the proposed formal designation as a Community Rail line during 2007.

The designation will also include the service from Norwich to Sheringham and the infrastructure between Whitlingham Junction and Sherringham (The Bittern Line). The aim is to give 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 shall be discussed and agreed with the Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership which presently consists of:

Norfolk County Council (lead organisation), one Railway, Broadland DC, North Norfolk DC, Norwich City Council, North Walsham Forward (The Griffon Partnership), North Walsham Town Council, Sheringham Town Council, Cromer Town Council, Sheringham Ladies W.I., The National Trust, The RSPB, Widen The Choice Transport Partnership, The Norfolk Coast AONB, The Links Hotel & Golf Club, The Little Theatre Sheringham, The Shire Horse Centre West Runton, Norfolk Tourism Partnership. In addition to the above most parish councils, station adopters and Gunton Station User Group are also members of the Partnership.

Designation of the line between Whitlingham Junction and Sheringham along with the service between Norwich and Sheringham will assist in the following tasks:

- Developing a better understanding of the costs of operating the Bittern Line 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 Sheringham line services looking at all aspects of the current operation.
- 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.
- Work with Local Councils to develop integrated transport initiatives to improve accessibility to the area.
- Identify ways to Increase seating capacity and services at peak times
- Assess the objective to re-connect the National Network with the North Norfolk Railway.
- Increases in station car park capacity at West Runton, Cromer and Sheringham.
- Assess the objective, and benefits of a half hourly train service between North Walsham and Norwich.
- All platforms to be increased to a compliant four carriage length.

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

Designation of the Line between Whittlingham Junction and Sheringham includes the following stations:

Salhouse  
Hoveton & Wroxham  
Worstead  
North Walsham  
Gunton  
Roughton Road  
Cromer  
West Runton

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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