

## **Constitution.**

### **1. Definition:**

- 1.1 The East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership (ESL CRP) is an unincorporated association of local government, public transport operators and community groups. Nothing in this Constitution will be construed as creating a legal partnership between the members of the ESLCRP.
- 1.2 The Partnership aims to bring together representatives of the local transport authority, local planning authorities, train operating company, infrastructure operator and a wide range of local community groups, with the objective of securing the future of the Lowestoft to Ipswich and Felixstowe to Ipswich railway lines through increased patronage and revenue.
- 1.3 The importance of these rail lines for local people and the local economy in respect of businesses and tourists cannot be overstated. Greater community involvement is one of three key priorities in the National Community Rail strategy and the ESL CRP is intended to ensure that this element of the strategy is fully delivered.
- 1.4 The National Community Rail strategy and the ESL CRP are aimed at ensuring there is a vibrant railway at the heart of the local community both now and in the future.

### **2. Aims and Objectives:**

2.1 The aims and objectives of the CRP (the Partnership) are as follows:

<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Commentary</u></b>
More rail users and revenue	We aim to increase the use of rail services between Ipswich & Felixstowe and Ipswich & Lowestoft including the destinations in between. We encourage longer journeys by train that start and finish at the destinations within the CRP. We want to see an increase in the number of rail users as a way of reducing car use and carbon emissions. We seek to enhance and preserve the passenger services on both the East Suffolk Lines whilst recognising the vital importance of freight to the wider transport network.
Community Involvement and Ownership	We aim to encourage greater community involvement in the railway from volunteers, users and promoters to ensure the local railway's place at the heart of the communities it serves.
Stations - cleaner and more inviting	We want to ensure that stations are attractive and inviting to existing and potential users.
Stations - facilities and Services	We aim to ensure that stations have services and facilities of a high standard commensurate with their potential use.

Interchange - all modes of transport	We encourage an enhanced journey experience through bus and rail integration but also interchange with other modes of transport.
Influence county & district council, LEP and DfT policy	At local, regional and national levels we aim to be a serious partner helping to influence decisions. We will respond to consultations and also to be consulted by the rail industry. We support a strategy that will maintain and improve the quality of the rolling stock availability for these rural lines.
Rail industry involvement in the community	We will continue to work closely with the rail industry. We hope that developing CRP related projects will ensure that there is better engagement between the community and the rail industry. We aim to provide local people with a voice with the rail industry.
Publicity and awareness	We want to ensure the community as well as the industry is involved in promotion and publicity of services. This includes issues such as things to do & places to go by train as well as promotion of leisure and tourism activities that are accessible by train and local public transport.

### **3. Composition of the Community Rail Partnership:**

- 3.1.1 From the date of the adoption of this document the Community Rail Partnership structure will comprise the Partnership Board and three Line Groups [one for the Felixstowe branch including Westerfield and Ipswich, and two for the Lowestoft branch divided into North (Lowestoft to Halesworth) and South (Darsham to Woodbridge)], supported by Project Teams as and when required.
- 3.1.2 The Partnership may execute its functions through:
- The Board which will provide overall direction and identify specific projects to be undertaken.
  - The Line Groups to provide the community with the fullest opportunity to participate in the CRP.
  - Project Teams to execute individual work areas at the discretion and under the direction of the Board.
  - A Community Rail Partnership Officer to carry out the day to day responsibilities of the partnership.

### **3.2 The Partnership Board.**

- 3.2.1 The Partnership Board has responsibility for ensuring the delivery of the CRP vision and of the aims & objectives as set out in this Constitution.
- 3.2.2 The Board shall normally meet four times per year (see 5.1.1 below).
- 3.2.3 The Board shall comprise up to ten representatives drawn from a range of organisations. These organisations may be as follows (\* denotes a strategic member, see 9.1):
- Suffolk County Council \*
  - Ipswich Borough Council \*
  - East Suffolk Council \*
  - the Train Operating Company holding the franchise for the services \*
  - Network Rail
  - One representative from each Line Group (see 3.3.4).

- 3.2.4 The Board may co-opt any individual and shall elect from its own members a Chairman and Vice-Chairman (see 5.1.7 below) who should ensure that meetings are convened and coordinate the activities of the Partnership.
- 3.2.5 The purpose of the Board is to oversee the management and governance of the Community Rail Partnership.
- 3.2.6 A consensus approach shall be taken in the work of the Board and only in exceptional circumstances shall decision making be other than by general agreement. In such circumstances, a simple majority vote of those present at a Board Meeting and entitled to vote shall be required (see under Meetings 5.1.6 below).
- 3.2.7 The responsibilities of the Board shall be:
- a) To ensure the financial stability of the Partnership.
  - b) To agree an annual Activity Plan specifying projects which fulfil the agreed aims and objectives of the Partnership.
  - c) To lead practical developments and implementation of projects, by identifying funding opportunities and partners.
  - d) To award, manage and support small grants to the station adoption groups or station adopters to allow them to undertake work on behalf of the CRP.
  - e) To monitor the progress of the CRP Activity Plan and any related projects to ensure they are managed and completed appropriately and within agreed timescales.
  - f) To provide a link to their own organisations and elected members to promote the vision, aims and objectives of the partnership.
  - g) To evaluate and measure the success of projects.
  - h) To handle all strategic matters affecting the CRP.
- 3.2.8 The secretarial role shall be undertaken by the Community Rail Partnership Officer (see 4.1).

### **3.3 Line Groups.**

- 3.3.1 The Board shall have the power to establish Line Groups which shall function at a local level in support of the aims and objectives of the partnership.
- 3.3.2 The purpose of the Line Groups is to allow local community groups and organisations to have an active and full role with the Community Rail Partnership. Membership is at the discretion of the Board. Membership shall comprise representatives of:
- town and parish councils/parish meetings
  - user groups (currently East Suffolk Travellers' Association and Felixstowe Travel Watch)
- In addition, membership can include representatives of:-
- local businesses
  - operators of local bus services in the area
  - the Train Operating Company holding the franchise for the services
  - voluntary, youth and community groups
  - station Adopters and Adopter Groups, including 'Friends of Xxxx Station' groups
  - other groups or individuals who support the aims and objectives of the partnership
- 3.3.3 The aim is to bring together user groups, station adopters and adopter groups, local public and private sector organisations, and the voluntary & community

sector. Each of the locations where a railway station is situated within the CRP will have their own views about how they would like their railway to develop in the future. In line with the overall aim and objectives of the CRP, these Groups will enable local people to be involved. They are not, however, designed as a simple feedback facility for the day to day performance of the TOC, for which other channels (e.g. Customer and Stakeholder Panels) exist.

3.3.4 Each of the Line Groups shall:

- a) Elect a Chairman, who shall represent the Group on the Board.
- b) Ensure that the delegated parts of the CRP Activity Plan are delivered and that progress is reported to the CRP.
- c) Deliver local projects and events in partnership with the wider CRP.
- d) Offer support and assistance to Station Adopters and Adopter Groups.
- e) Receive support from the Community Rail Partnership Officer or a nominated representative to assist as appropriate with their plans and projects.
- f) Act as a local champion for their railway station and rail issues.
- g) Support the CRP Board in the delivery of the strategy as appropriate.
- h) Support the integration of train services with other forms of public transport.

### **3.4 Project Teams.**

3.4.1 The Board has the power to establish Project Teams, which shall function at a technical level in support of the aims and objectives of the partnership. These will be established where appropriate to deliver specific projects, such as:

- Business liaison.
- School and college liaison.
- Station improvement projects.
- Leisure and recreation.
- Promotion and publicity.
- The Board will set up and disband Project Teams and decide upon their composition and purpose.

3.4.2 The Project Teams shall:

- a) Assist with the delivery, monitoring and management of the project to which it has been assigned.
- b) Meet regularly to co-ordinate and offer support with implementing the project.
- c) Provide regular updates to the CRP Board.

3.4.3 Membership of a Project Team will reflect the nature and scope of the project for which the group has responsibility. Invitation for membership should be used as a way to try and involve new people and different sectors into the partnership. It is expected that at least one Member of the Board and/or the Community Rail Partnership Officer will be a member of each Project Team.

### **4. Community Rail Partnership Officer:**

- 4.1 A Community Rail Partnership Officer (CRPO) shall be retained to champion the partnership and to oversee the day-to-day work of the CRP, including progress on the annual Activity Plan and the activities of the Partnership Board, Line Groups and Project Teams.
- 4.2 The day to day work of the CRPO includes the maintenance of meeting notices, agendas, minutes, web sites, social media and financial matters.
- 4.3 The responsibilities of the CRPO shall be defined by the Board. They will include the development and implementation of activity plans, promotions and projects.

- 4.4 Line management of the CRPO shall be by the Board Chairman.
- 4.5 For as long as the partnership remains an unincorporated body, all contractual and HR aspects of employment of the CRPO shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified organisation, on terms to be agreed by the Board.

## **5. Meetings and Decision Making:**

### **5.1 Board Meetings.**

- 5.1.1 The partnership Board shall hold at least four meetings a year. Immediately preceding one board meeting each year the Annual General Meeting will be held, which shall be open to members of the Line Groups and Project Teams.
- 5.1.2 The meetings will review achievements, set out the work programme for the future and report on finance and administration of the CRP. The Board will be responsible for agreeing an Activity Plan for each year, together with the appropriate resources to implement it. In doing so it will take into account any conditions for use of funds set down by the funding partners.
- 5.1.3 Any proposal to amend this Constitution shall only be considered if one month's notice is given in writing to the CRP Officer and all Board members of the proposed change(s).
- 5.1.4 An annual programme of partnership Board meetings shall be produced and given in writing to all the constituent bodies of the CRP.
- 5.1.5 A consensus approach shall be taken in the work of the Board and only in exceptional circumstances shall decision making be by other than general agreement. In such circumstances, decisions shall be made by the Partnership on the basis of a simple majority vote of those present and entitled to vote. One organisation on the Board has one vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall have the casting vote.
- 5.1.6 For all Board meetings a quorum is one-third of the Board or four voting members, whichever is the greater. Organisations may send one or more representatives to the meetings, but only one may vote.
- 5.1.7 At the Annual General Meeting, the Board shall elect from its own Members a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman on an annual basis. If either role falls vacant within the year then an interim appointment can be made for the remainder of the year at any Board meeting. There will be no limit to the period a Chairman or Vice-Chairman may serve, subject to the annual election.

### **5.2 Line Group Meetings.**

- 5.2.1 Other than one meeting per annum which will be the Annual General Meeting and shall be open to members of the Board & Project Teams, and one other meeting each year, meetings may be held by exchange of emails. Email exchanges comprising all such 'virtual meetings' shall be addressed to all members of that Line Group. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Line Group Chairman.
- 5.2.2 The meetings will review achievements, set out the work programme for the future of the Line Group and report on any other relevant matters. The Line Groups will also be responsible for developing ideas for future projects in their area for recommendation to the Board. Subject to Board approval, the Line Groups will be responsible for implementation of these projects.

- 5.2.3 A consensus approach shall be taken in the work of the Line Groups and only in exceptional circumstances shall decision making be by other than general agreement. In such circumstances, decisions shall be made on the basis of a simple majority vote of those present and entitled to vote. One organisation on the Line Group has one vote. In the event of a tie, the Chairman shall have the casting vote.
- 5.2.4 At the Annual General Meeting, each Line Group shall elect from its own Members a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman on an annual basis. If either role falls vacant within the year then an interim appointment can be made for the remainder of the year at any Line Group meeting. There will be no limit to the period a Chairman or Vice-Chairman may serve, subject to the annual election.

### **5.3 Project Team Meetings.**

- 5.3.1 Project Teams shall have full discretion in their method of working, subject to the need to nominate a convener and to provide progress reports to the Board.
- 5.3.2 It shall be the responsibility of each Project Team convener to call meetings or initiate work streams.

### **5.4 Other Meetings.**

- 5.4.1 A Special General Meeting may be called in response to a written request from four or more members of the Board.
- 5.4.2 Other meetings may be held at the discretion of the Board.

## **6. Principles of Behaviour:**

- 6.1 The partnership shall abide by the principle of equal access and equal opportunity for all.
- 6.2 Each member of the Partnership, whether a corporate body or individual, shall be accorded the same degree of respect and consideration as other members of the partnership. Behaviour contrary to this, in particular that which causes offence on grounds of race, gender, disability or age, shall be deemed grounds for expulsion from membership.
- 6.3 Whilst wishing to encourage local business development, it would be contrary to the spirit of the partnership for one business to seek advantage over another through membership of the partnership.
- 6.4 The spirit of the Partnership is that whilst it will of course work closely with the train operating company or infrastructure operator, its role is not to discuss, feedback or relate to day-to-day operations of the railway except where these materially impact on the ambitions and objectives of the National Community Rail strategy or the objectives of the CRP. Other channels (e.g. Customer and Stakeholder Panels) exist for this purpose.
- 6.5 CRP Board members shall declare the nature and extent of any interest, direct or indirect which he/she has in a proposed transaction or arrangement with the CRP and absent him/herself from any discussions of the CRP Board in which it is possible that a conflict of interest will arise between his/her duty to act in the interests of the CRP and any personal interest.

## **7. Communications and Media:**

- 7.1 Communications with the media shall be delegated to the Chairman and the CRP Officer, who shall inform the Board of all such activity in a timely manner.

## **8. General:**

- 8.1 Campaigning Activity. The Partnership is primarily a development and promotion group, not a lobbying organisation. Any campaigning activity will only be undertaken with the agreement of the Partnership Board.
- 8.2 Community and voluntary sector rail groups & individuals. The Partnership fully recognises the work of station adopters, station adopter groups, rail user groups and local organisations. Each of these groups and people has their own distinct role and the Partnership sees it as essential to work in harmony and co-operation as appropriate.
- 8.3 Assistance from other organisations. The partnership may call upon assistance and advice from other bodies - such as ACoRP or the DfT Community Rail Team in carrying out its normal activities. This participation may include their attendance at Board, Line Group or Project Team meetings, as necessary.

## **9. Funding. Finance and Administration:**

- 9.1 The minimum annual financial contribution of members of the partnership shall be set by the Board at the first meeting following the Annual General Meeting. It is the expectation that each strategic member of the partnership should make a substantial contribution to the partnership's finances.
- 9.2 As an unincorporated association, the partnership has no separate legal status, and thus relies on its members for its legal powers, e.g. by agreeing that one of the members will act as the "lead" for such purposes. The Board shall set out the principles on which contracts, grants, purchases, etc. will be entered into.
- 9.3 A statement of current balance and the transactions undertaken on behalf of the partnership shall be presented for the approval of the Board at each meeting.
- 9.4 The Board may appoint such a third party (or parties) as it sees fit to manage, coordinate or undertake functions such as finance, HR, marketing or administration. Currently financial services are provided by Suffolk County Council.
- 9.5 The income and property of the CRP must be applied solely towards the promotion of the CRP's objectives. CRP Board members are entitled to be reimbursed from the income and property of the CRP or to receive reasonable expenses properly incurred when acting on behalf of the CRP. None of the income or property of the CRP may be paid or transferred by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to any members of the CRP.

## **10. Dissolution of the Partnership:**

- 10.1 A decision to suspend or disband the Partnership shall only be taken at an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting and shall require a two-thirds majority of those present and voting. Any assets remaining on dissolution shall be allocated to another organisation having as nearly as possible similar aims or interests as those of the partnership.

Approved by the CRP Working Group 12<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

Amended and approved by the ESLCRP board 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020.