

CUMBRIA COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Portfolio Holder, Councillor Cath Giel

LEAD OFFICER: Julie Betteridge, Head of Development Strategy

REPORT AUTHOR: John Hughes, Planning Policy

SUMMARY: This report provides a brief overview of the Community Rail Partnership and highlights its relevance to the Energy Coast Masterplan delivery and the Council's Regeneration commitments.

Members are recommended to

- a) Agree to Copeland Borough Council becoming a member of the Cumbria Community Rail Partnership for the year 2009 – 10.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Community Rail Partnership currently comprises of Network Rail, Cumbria County Council, Northern Rail, Allerdale and Barrow Borough Councils and West Lakes Renaissance.
- 1.2 This Partnership links to the Transport Advisory Groups in each borough and has a rolling work programme included within the County Council's Local Transport Plan. It has a coordinating officer supplied by the County Council and works to develop initiatives and improvements and bring in specific funding for projects.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 The Cumbrian Coast Community Railway has been designated as such in line with its role in transporting local people about their everyday business as well as visitors to the area and hence underpins the Energy Coast and regeneration aspirations along the 88.4 mile railway line.
- 2.2 Apart from Carlisle City Council Copeland currently is the only local authority along the line not to engage in this partnership. Other newer members being encouraged to join are Sellafeld Ltd, Natural England and the Lake District National Park Authority.
- 2.4 The work programme aims to improve the provision and use of the railway. Specific projects along the line include:

- a pilot between Northern Rail, Network Rail and Cumbria County Council to raise platforms using prefabricated materials. This is due to roll out across the line.
- Application to Department of Transport to change the designation of the Cumbria Coastal route to Community Line which gives Northern Rail flexibility on services and opens the door to other funding sources
- Implementation of signalling modernisation scheme
- Improved timetabling – later trains, more rolling stock and Sunday services
- The County's Local Transport Plan aims to improve train and bus linkages and Whitehaven is one of the areas within the Plan.
- Community groups adopting stations eg at Sellafield station where improvements are being undertaken through a 'friends of the station' approach. The partnership is also assisting the development of the Sellafield Travel Plan. Future adoption schemes could be themed in relation to local historical or cultural stories like the planned Roman scheme at Maryport station.
- Millom Station (with a footfall of 200,000 annually) is to receive a £10,000 CCTV investment and service contract negotiations are advanced with the folk museum to run ticket office services.
- Community involvement in special features eg Art Trains, photographic competitions, school projects etc
- Expanding tourism: development of a web-site, magazine to be published in September, special offers to attractions along the line, trials of bikes on trains.
- Examining new ticketing strategies
- Initiatives to assist deprived communities and groups eg a youth/community café being developed at Askam
- A Community Rail Festival is being organised for 24th – 26th September this year and it is hoped to arrange local events as part of this
- An annual magazine, "Cumbrian Coaster" is being launched to help publicise the Partnership's activities.

3. OPTION TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The work of the Partnership would appear to press a number of policy buttons as regards sustainable community development. There is also a need to put fresh impetus into improving the Cumbrian Coastal Railway as part of the Energy Coast initiative and £2.5K is a relatively small contribution to have to make to match funding levels from the other local authorities. Other partners are making substantially higher contributions eg West Lakes Renaissance and Northern Rail who have committed £10K annually for three years.

- 3.2 Members are recommended to agree to the Council becoming a member of the Partnership for the 2009 – 10 and to review its effectiveness later this year before committing to any further involvement. At this stage it would only require officer attendance at meetings of the Partnership which are quarterly and involvement in any appropriate local projects/events.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Recommendation is for Copeland Borough Council to become an active partner in the community rail developments through becoming formal members of the Partnership.

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

- 5.1 The Partnership asks its local authority members to pay an annual membership fee of £2,500.
- 5.2 The 2009/10 contribution can be identified from the Economic Development Grants budget by reducing the festivals and events allocation. When reviewed this could then continue to be built into the annual budget build process.

6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 The quarterly meetings will be attended and reported on by a senior officer. Existing mechanisms will be used to both feed into and link activities in support of the work of the community rail partnership.

7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 7.1 The Corporate Plan is underpinned by our commitment to deliver good public transport in line with residents' priorities and our sustainability and regeneration activities.

List of Appendices

None

Background Documents

None

List of Consultees

Deputy Leader – Cllr Cath Giel
Corporate Team.

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Supports
Impact on Sustainability	Supports
Impact on Rural Proofing	Supports
Health and Safety Implications	Supports
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	Supports
Children and Young Persons Implications	n/a
Human Rights Act Implications	Supports
Section 151 Officer Comments	No comments to add – budget has been identified to fund contribution
Monitoring Officer Comments	Accords with Council's approach to partnering arrangements

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision No