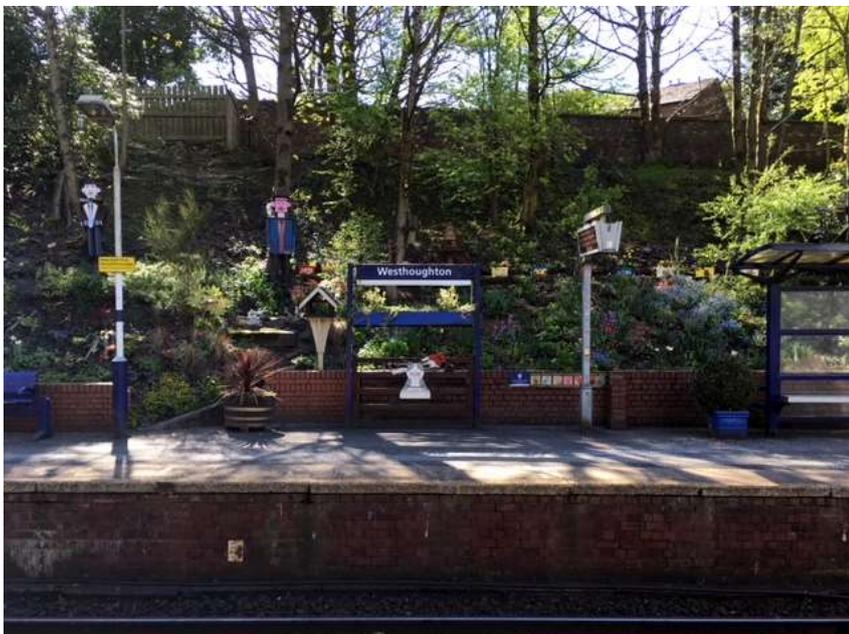




**North West Manchester Station Friends' Alliance
Response to DfT Community Rail
Strategy Draft Consultation
January 2018**



Foreword

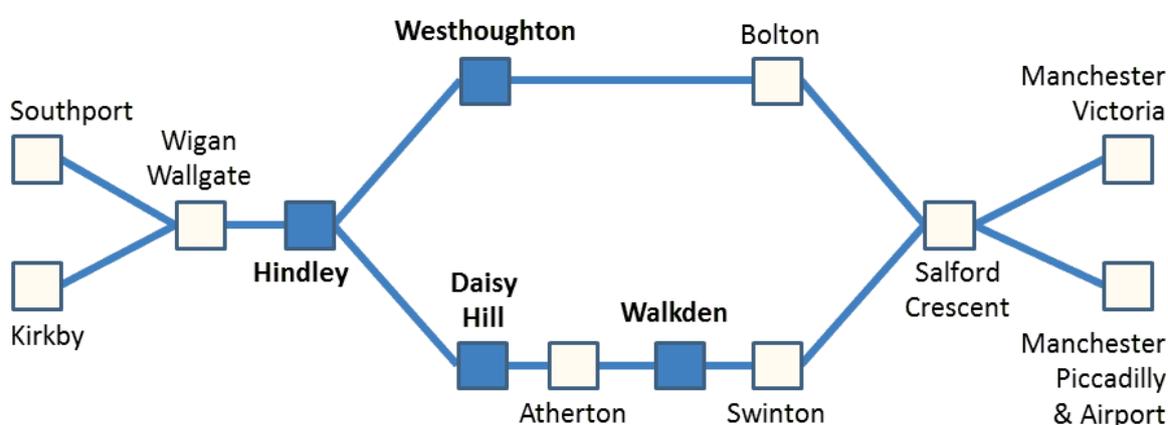
Community Rail has been a great success story. Many stations have been transformed by their communities, for their communities, by bringing together the drive and determination of volunteers with a wealth of great ideas. The effect has been transformational, and not just in rural areas or on quiet routes where the concept of community rail was born. It is now time for community rail to take the next step in its evolution, to become central to the development of a bigger, better railway, whether in deeply rural or densely urban environments. Every railway exists for its users, and every station should be a focal point for its local community, no matter how large or small. The rewards for the railway are highly significant, and rapidly growing.

Our Alliance of station friends' groups reflects this drive to take community rail to the next level. We have developed strong links between local friends' groups working in a variety of different ways, bringing together a range of skills and strengths, with the common goal of transforming our stations and services for the benefit of our passengers and communities, and this has been achieved without formal CRP designation. We very much welcome this opportunity to contribute to the debate about the future of community rail, and therefore are very pleased to offer our response to the consultation document.

Our Alliance

Our organisation is an alliance of Station Friends' groups located on the Manchester-Wigan and Bolton-Wigan corridors. Constituent members are:

- **Friends of Walkden station**, located between Manchester and Wigan on the Atherton Line;
- **Friends of Hindley station**, located on both the Atherton Line and Bolton-Wigan line;
- **Friends of Westhoughton station**, located between Wigan and Bolton;
- **Friends of Daisy Hill station**, also on the Atherton line.



Our alliance was established in January 2014 with a view to strengthening constructive engagement between our groups and other stakeholders, such as Northern Rail, TfGM, Network Rail and local authorities. We are volunteers, working with our local communities to improve our station environments and to actively promote rail service developments in

our area. We also increasingly share ideas and best practice with other similar community rail groups. The individual Friends' groups are well established and have won a number of awards, including a number of awards and shortlisted entries in the 2017 ACoRP Awards.

Responses to Consultation Questions

We now set out our responses to the questions contained in the consultation document, together with supporting evidence in the form of examples of how our work has helped to deliver benefits and improvements to our stations. Our views relate to the area covered by our Group and how a future Community Rail Strategy can help to deliver further benefits that will contribute to achieving the aspirations of the community rail sector, and what forms that this may take.

Connecting People and Places

Q1a) What role can community rail play in improving end to end journeys?

Community Rail can play an active role in the customer journey experience. Passengers will choose rail over other competing modes if they find the journey convenient, reliable, cost effective and enjoyable. Tangible examples of the difference that community rail can make can be found at stations, where once forlorn and unloved buildings and platforms have been brightened up with floral displays and artwork. Involvement of the community in their local station fosters a sense of pride and belonging, increases awareness of the services and facilities on offer, and encourages increased usage and modal shift. This will result in increasing ridership and net revenue – a virtuous circle, and a key aim of the Government's 2007 Community Rail Development Strategy. Given the proven track record of community rail in improving station facilities, there should be increased funding available for projects such as restoring unused buildings for community and passenger use and a process to allow these projects to be fast tracked where possible.

Community rail groups such as our own Alliance also do considerable work behind the scenes, such as lobbying for service improvements and working with local stakeholders to improve station accessibility, pedestrian and cycle provision around stations and improved urban realm to make stations more welcoming. With a stronger voice, and strong backing from Government, community rail can have a very positive influence on the longer term planning of rail services and facilities, improving journeys for everyone.

Q1b) How can community rail help to:-

- Make journeys more sustainable?

There are well understood benefits of modal shift to more sustainable forms of travel, and to encourage this, rail needs to compete, in particular with the car, in terms of reliability, ease of access and value for money. Provision of car parking at stations can be a major driver of sustainability, in that motorists may drive to the station, park their cars and then make their main part of the journey by train, but if there is no car parking available they will drive all the way to their destinations. Working together, community rail organisations can promote services to places that are accessible by rail, but where awareness in the community may be low. This will help to reduce car use, and increase use of the railway for leisure travel which then increases the use of spare capacity. Increased load factors on existing off peak services will reduce emissions per train and passenger mile. Targeted

investment in stations and on trains should be made with full consultation with community rail in order to ensure that it is going to the right projects and maximises benefits.

In some areas, regular public transport can be limited, and community rail can work with demand responsive transport and community transport providers to optimise connectivity with rail services. In more urban areas such as ours, arrangements could be sought with taxi operators and demand responsive/ride sharing operators to offer discounts for multi modal journeys using rail, including through app based solutions. In the long term, development of driverless on demand solutions should be fully optimised to allow these to make journeys from home to destination, via rail, as seamless and cost effective as possible.

There is also a more general benefit in that community rail involvement drives greater usage of railways, which helps to make them more sustainable financially, helping to secure their viability and improve the business case for incremental improvements. The more successful community rail becomes in achieving this, the more sustainable rail will be as a leading mode of transport for the future.

- ***Encourage more healthy travel?***

Community rail organisations can and do lobby for improved cycle and pedestrian facilities at stations, and access to them, in order to increase active travel as part of the end to end passenger journey. This in itself makes journeys more sustainable and has health and societal benefits. These can then be promoted in the community to raise awareness, with appropriate funding and TOC support. This needs to be part of a joined up process, working with TOCs to ensure that cycle facilities on trains and at destinations is to the required standard. Healthy travel choices can be linked with other promotions in raising awareness of healthier and more sustainable lifestyle choices – for example fare promotions and publicity to encourage the use of rail to visit coastal and rural destinations, with discounts on cycle hire, local public transport and access to attractions with a rail ticket. An example from our own area is the opening of the RHS Garden Bridgewater in 2019 which will be a major tourist attraction and has huge potential to be promoted across a wide area as a destination that can be reached by train.

Community rail should also work closely with schools and colleges to encourage young people to choose healthier travel options such as rail. Engaging with young people in projects at stations, and raising awareness of community rail by social media, are examples of how this can be achieved. Families travelling together should also be actively encouraged to use rail by using promotions to make off peak travel cost competitive with the car, with targeted marketing.

- ***Reduce the environmental impact of travel?***

Modal shift away from more polluting modes of transport will in itself reduce the environmental impact of travel. On a local level, community rail has made very a positive difference to station environments, for example with an array of gardening projects, which has a positive impact on the environment.

Community rail can also play an active part in lobbying for more sustainable rolling stock, with electrification the best solution for intensive urban lines such as ours, and emerging technologies being developed to replace diesel traction on more rural services.

An example of best practice (requested in paragraph 3.12) from our area is the outstanding success of our campaign for Sunday service improvements. Prior to 2010, the Atherton line lacked any Sunday services at all, and following a sustained campaign by our community rail groups with strong local political support, a limited service was introduced which performed well ahead of expectations. From December 2017, this was increased to an all day, half hourly service with further improvements expected in the future. This would not have been achieved without the hard work of our community rail volunteers.

Q2) How can community rail help:-

- **Communities have a voice in influencing the provision of rail?**
- **Complementary transport services and development of the rail network?**

This is about constructive engagement between community rail and the communities that it represents, and between community rail and the wider rail industry. In order to achieve this, community rail needs to be fully engaged in the rail industry planning process, with regular consultations and briefings. Feedback is very important, as it can be very frustrating when issues can take a long time to resolve. A good example is the issue of step free access, which can be a top priority for the community but progress can be painfully slow and very difficult to achieve. Community rail for its part has access to a wealth of local knowledge and can act as “eyes and ears” for the rail industry in order to raise awareness of local issues that TOCs would find difficult to monitor without this input. This must be strongly encouraged, and where “quick wins” are possible to deliver, this needs to be done promptly, which then proves to communities that their voices are being heard.

Community rail may also be able to help to identify travel patterns and market demand that could help influence planning of services and timetabling to increase rail usage, especially off peak, that could then increase revenues for the railway. Our Alliance has worked closely with Northern on the timetabling process for forthcoming improvements to our services and will seek to help maximise the benefits by promoting them in our local areas and raising awareness of the new links on offer. We also work closely with our local authorities, and have established good working relationships with them. As an example, our Walkden group has worked closely with Salford City Council on the Salford Rail Strategy, a good example of what can be achieved by community rail groups with effective constructive engagement. By working closely with local decision makers, Daisy Hill was provided with enhanced services during recent engineering work which affected service provision at nearby Westhoughton, while Hindley will enjoy better interchange opportunities in the new timetable.

We have outlined some of the benefits of a better integrated transport network in Q1(b) above, and they also apply here. Local groups will be able to identify areas where links to and from stations are in need of improvement and can help to ensure that investment in better complimentary transport links is targeted in the right places. Community rail groups can also be engaged in wider transport decision making processes, for example the planning of cycle route networks, community transport initiatives and bus network franchising in order to provide the necessary input to optimise links with rail services on a local level.

Q3) Where should the Government encourage community rail to develop on parts of the network currently without active CRPs or other community participation?

This is a particularly pertinent question for our Alliance, as we do not fit the standard model for CRPs in the traditional sense. Our lines do not benefit from a designated CRP, and the area which our individual groups represent does not feature any rural areas or lightly used

lines – we are a suburban area and our railway is a heavily used commuter route linking our regional centre with its suburbs and satellite towns. As such we don't fit the original model of promoting lightly used rural railways to put them on a sounder footing and manage costs down, perhaps even saving some from the threat of closure. Our challenges are more centred on accommodating peak demand, alleviating overcrowding, and ensuring that our stations and services are fully accessible and offer as many journey opportunities as possible to serve a rapidly increasing local population.

However, community rail has moved on, and we believe that every railway, no matter how busy, can only benefit from the involvement of its local community. Some of the benefits of designation, such as relaxation of TSIs, would not apply to us. Therefore the CRP model is in need of evolution, so that busy urban railways can harness the benefits of community rail, with a CRP template that is specifically tailored towards this type of railway. Some of the models used on rural lines, including marketing names for lines and predominantly heritage themes, may not sit as comfortably on intensive urban railways. We will explore possible options for urban CRP designation later in this document (Q10).

Any community rail group, including a CRP, relies on volunteer input and should be established in such a way that volunteers feel that their input makes a real difference. While our groups enjoy considerable local support and positive feedback, it is always a struggle to encourage more people to become actively involved with our projects, especially amongst younger people. Community rail events and conferences are often held during working hours which does not help and this does need to be addressed.

Supporting Communities, Diversity and Inclusion

Q4a) What is the role of community rail in supporting:-

- Community cohesion?

Community cohesion promotes a sense of belonging for all communities, providing economic opportunities for all, regardless of background. It values the contribution of individuals and groups to work towards a future local or national vision. The Government's 2007 Community Rail Development Strategy espouses the greater involvement of the local community – and in urban areas this can be especially important where there can be areas of deprivation which brings many challenges. Community rail has much to offer by offering these communities opportunities to become involved in their stations and their railway and to have their voices heard. It is a way of uniting communities in supporting something that will really benefit them, but we must be able to get the message out to them. People have a strong sense of their local identity, and community rail can align with this, helping to promote an area's heritage through its station as a community hub as well as its future.

- Promoting Diversity

Community stations can provide a great opportunity to showcase the diversity of the area it represents, both in order to engage the rail industry with the local community and to provide a showcase to visitors to the area by rail. This can help to raise awareness of the cultural diversity of an area within its own communities and promote social inclusion to people from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds. In order to achieve this, community rail can engage with a host of other community organisations from beyond the rail industry, which will widen its appeal and encourage more people to become involved.

- **Enabling Social Inclusion**

Community rail can work with people of all ages and backgrounds, including young people and those with special needs and physical or hidden disabilities. There are some excellent examples of this throughout community rail. However, there needs to be an understanding that in order to deliver social inclusion, significant investment must be made in providing accessibility improvements to stations and to trains. Volunteer groups such as ours have spent a huge amount of effort lobbying for this, as if these members of the community can't access their services, for them the service may as well not exist. It should be a top priority for investment but there appears to be no proper strategy in place for accessible stations.

Q4b) How is this best achieved?

Community rail must engage with a wide variety of other community groups from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, representing different age groups from schools and colleges to groups supporting older people, and groups representing people with both physical and mental disabilities both visible and hidden. This will allow their needs to be more clearly understood and inform a strategy that will allow community rail to best attract them to using the railway, while advising the rail industry as to how best their differing needs can be met. For example, Friends of Westhoughton Station are members of the very successful Westhoughton Community Network which meets quarterly.

Station projects can raise awareness of different cultures and identities to foster a sense of belonging. Our Friends' groups have worked on these with a variety of different community groups of different ages, backgrounds and interests, including the following examples:-

a. Friends of Westhoughton Station

The environment at suburban Westhoughton station has been transformed with plants, colourful decorations, and wildlife-friendly features.



b. Friends of Walkden Station art project 2017

Friends of Walkden Station collaborated with art students from Salford City College, the Salford City Council Neighbourhood Team, and a local artist to install 10 unique laser-cut panels celebrating local history, transport, wildlife, and community.

The project was short-listed for the 2017 ACoRP Community Rail Awards.



c. Friends of Hindley Station, various projects

Friends of Hindley Station have won nationwide acclaim and multiple awards for a long list of station enhancement projects involving many different sectors of their local community, from schools to disadvantaged youngsters, young offenders, and Young Police Cadets.



Left: artwork designed by groups at Pye Studios including people of all ages and abilities from young children to those of more mature years with varying degrees of disabilities and young offenders. Each person was given a square of paper which they did their design on. The designs were then digitised and the printing department of Wigan MBC

The local High School has provided three display boards in the ticket hall which are updated each year using a 'theme'. Shown (right) is a piece of artwork completed in 2016 to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme



FoHS projects have raised the profile of the railway station to extraordinary levels in and beyond the local area. In 2017 FoHS reached beyond the station boundaries to collaborate with local businesses to raise funds for and install Christmas decorations along the local high street (poster, left).

Q5) How can community rail help to make sure that the railway is accessible to as many people as possible?

Stations and trains need to be easily accessible and those with special needs must be confident that their needs will be catered for and that assistance will be reliably available where required. The starting point is the station, and any station that lacks step free access, as some of our stations do, is by definition unable to meet this aspiration. The only answer to this is investment, and a proper defined strategy with timelines as to how this will be addressed. It is acknowledged that infrastructure improvements can be expensive, but the role of community rail in promoting accessibility to all is severely hampered without it. We must also remember that it is not just disabled people that need step free access, as young families with prams and buggies also need it, for example. Our Alliance represents stations with over 300,000 passengers per year that have no step free access which is surely not a situation fit for a 21st century railway.

Station projects can raise awareness of different cultures and identities to foster a sense of belonging. Funding could be provided for community rail groups to produce promotional material in other languages and/or Braille and audio formats with the help of the rail industry. Successful lobbying for improvements to rail services will expand opportunities for those without access to a car, which has a positive effect on social inclusion especially in more economically deprived areas, helping them to access work, healthcare and leisure opportunities. Economic opportunities for all will maximise benefits for the railway and support our economy. Examples of best practice and innovative ideas should be widely shared through ACoRP and other channels such as social media. Anyone who is precluded from using the railway is a potential customer lost to the railway, and it is in everyone's interest to address this.

Supporting Local and Regional Economies

Q6) How can community rail support local economies and railways grow through:-

- ***Increasing employment?***
- ***Education and training opportunities?***
- ***Supporting small businesses?***
- ***Social enterprise development?***

All of these four points are intrinsically linked by the theme of connectivity. Community rail is effective in raising awareness of rail travel, improving the customer experience at and around stations, and strongly supporting improvements in services. The stronger that this voice becomes, and the more effective its outputs, the more effective and attractive travel by rail will be.

Not everyone has access to a car, and other public transport alternatives may not offer realistic options to allow people genuine access to opportunities. Bus travel only really works for local journeys, whereas rail can open up far more choice for people in terms of where they work, study and enjoy their free time. Employment patterns have evolved, with people no longer just working office hours. The seven day and night time economies rely on staff being able to reach their employment, as well as customers, and hence more aligned

rail service provision needs to reflect this. Community rail can have a powerful voice in influencing decision makers to make a case for improved service levels. Our Alliance worked hard to secure Sunday services on our line and then improve them, and as a result people who rely on the rail service can now access opportunities seven days a week. This is mutually beneficial, for employees who can access greater opportunities and hence develop their careers, increase their income and living standards, and also for employers, who will have access to a wider pool of talent. It also increases social inclusion, improves the wellbeing and confidence of people, and ultimately leads to regeneration and a stronger local economy as this increased spending power feeds through to local businesses.

Access to education and training is similar in that the better the service provision, the more choices that people have as to where they can study – choosing establishments and courses that are best for them and their career prospects rather than having their choices severely limited by poor connectivity. Community rail can promote the accessibility of opportunities by working together with education and training providers to promote these within their own communities, providing information about access to them which people may not realise is possible. Engagement with schools and colleges promotes interest in rail travel and also in railways as a career – the industry itself has a huge need for young people from all backgrounds to train for a career in rail, and community rail can and should work with the industry to play a part in promoting these opportunities.

While rail has a very important role to play in areas such as ours in providing reliable and efficient links into our regional centres and major towns, it can be equally effective in bringing customers in to local stations. This can encourage small businesses to take advantage of lower costs to establish in areas where rail provides convenient access for customers to reach them. This helps to regenerate local areas, providing employment for local people close to home, including for those with restricted mobility for whom longer journeys to work could be difficult or even impossible.

For small businesses located in areas such as the ones that we represent, the ability to reach their regional centre to meet with clients and conduct business is very important. Provision of fast, reliable rail services helps them to do this, providing cost savings for them by avoiding road congestion and reducing time spent travelling.

Q7) What role can community rail play in making best use of:-

- Station buildings?

Helping stations to become assets of greater community value is central to the aims of the community rail movement. They are the “shop window” of community rail and have the potential to really engage communities in regarding their station as a focal point of their community and not just somewhere to catch a train. The development of local stations through investment in buildings, establishment of station master plans, and turning stations into community hubs can provide opportunities for social enterprises to be established at stations, for example cafes, cycle hire and repair facilities, meeting spaces and training facilities. In rural areas, this could allow facilities to be provided for a community that could otherwise be lost, but there are plenty of possible applications for urban stations too, many of which have either unused buildings or unused space within buildings. At Walkden, there are disused storage areas that could be put to good use for the benefit of rail users and the wider community.

This all contributes towards a stronger local economy with all of its associated benefits, and community rail needs to be supported strongly in making it happen, especially with regard to access to funding for bringing unused and neglected station facilities back to life.

- ***Railway land?***

We must be careful when making decisions about the future use of surplus railway land that could have a constructive future railway role. In the past land has been sold off which was no longer needed, and whole lines closed which may have seemed sensible then but is deeply regretted now. Our stations require the provision of car parking, step free access and good connectivity with complimentary transport modes, and it is vital that potential sites to provide this are not lost. Community rail needs to have an input into the planning process so that the decision making process takes these factors into account. They can then consult with the local communities that they represent and garner feedback.

Where surplus land exists within the station footprint but is no longer required (for example disused platforms and track formations), this can be put to good use by community rail groups with floral displays, artwork and heritage projects – Hindley station is an excellent example of what can be achieved. In the future, if the platforms and tracks need to be restored to railway use, then they can be, and in the meantime they can be an asset to their stations.

Suggesting innovative ways to improve the way the railway works

Q8) How can community rail be best supported to act:-

- ***Innovatively?***
- ***Effectively?***

Community rail is full of new ideas and determination to find new ways of bringing the very best potential out of stations and lines. In order for this innovation to have the maximum positive effect, there needs to be sharing of best practice amongst groups and ACoRP provide a medium to do this. However, the rail industry could do more to showcase the work of community rail, for example featuring examples of volunteers' work by using on train publicity and at major stations. There is no doubt that our communities are very positive about the work that our volunteers have done at our stations, but ultimately we are all volunteers with no paid staff, and there is a limit to how much we can raise awareness of how community rail works and the difference that can be made by people becoming involved with us and bringing with them fresh ideas and innovation.

In order for community rail groups to work effectively, it is important that they are able to deliver small scale projects in realistic timeframes, with full support from TOCs and with easy availability of funding. Effective communication is equally important – if projects become stalled or volunteers feel that they can't obtain answers or make progress then they could lose interest and opportunities could be lost.

Q9) What opportunities are there to secure a:-

- ***Diverse income base for community rail?***
- ***Sustainable income base for community rail?***

This question is mainly directed at CRPs, and as we are not a CRP it is more difficult for us to make suggestions as to how funding mechanisms could work. From our point of view, we do of course welcome access to funding opportunities from outside the rail industry, and our groups have delivered projects using a combination of funding from ACoRP and TOCs with other funding from local councils, community committees and other sources of funding from outside the rail industry. The dependability of funding and ease of access to it is vital if community rail is to deliver further benefits and work innovatively and effectively.

Q10) How can community rail designation be developed to more fully realise its potential?

As discussed in our answer to Question 3, community rail has grown considerably since designation was first introduced. Friends' groups increasingly work together and share ideas and best practice without formal CRP designation, but there are some areas, including funding sources, that are contingent on a line or area having a designated CRP. However, in our case the classic CRP model designed for rural and lightly used lines would not be strictly relevant, and hence work is needed to establish a different model for urban CRPs.

An urban CRP could take different forms and the concept requires careful consideration. In inner city and suburban areas, markets and travel patterns can be very focused on the travel to work market, with limited use of the railway for off peak and longer distance journeys, which is where the best potential may lie. Urban railways and their timetables may not be optimised for connectivity, but rather for taking passengers into and out of their regional centres without any promotion of onward connections. While the core market will always be very important to the success of these lines, there will be many people who don't use them for this purpose who might never therefore use rail at all, or only occasionally, as it doesn't work for them. This extends beyond service patterns and timetables to fare levels, accessibility, off peak ticket restrictions and the existence of convenient end to end journey connections to and from stations in their local areas.

An urban CRP needs to be a voice for local communities in a number of decision making processes – integrated transport across modes, planning of housing and industrial developments and spatial frameworks, representation with different local authorities across lines of route where priorities might be different. An urban CRP will need to forge strong links with stakeholders from the very local level up to senior political decision makers in order to ensure that the needs and views of local communities about their railway are heard and acted upon.

There are different possible models that could apply to areas such as ours, a line of route model which may cross a number of local authority boundaries is one example, while an area approach encompassing different routes aligned with local authority or geographical areas could be another. Our Alliance represents a line of route (across two broadly parallel railway routes between Wigan and Manchester) and is an informal group with no CRP designation. As such, our group could form a template for developing such alliances between Friends' groups or rail user groups before progressing to a full CRP. This then allows groups and stakeholders to give due consideration to which model may be best to follow. ACoRP should retain and strengthen its role as the "guiding mind" in community rail and help to continue the evolution of the CRP to meet the challenges of a fast changing railway network. How these are funded would be a fundamental part of this debate.

Q11) How can community rail:-

- ***Support the development of rail line and stations improvement?***
- ***Contribute to the development of rail line and station improvement?***

There are a number of ways that community rail groups can influence this. Small scale cosmetic improvements to stations can make a big difference, as we have discussed, which in themselves can encourage increased usage of the railway. With increased passenger numbers and revenues it is then easier to propose a business case for further, and possibly larger scale, improvements to stations and services. Proposals for new services and new stations can be backed up with evidence at a local level, working together with the rail industry, transport authorities and potential funders. Our Alliance has promoted various initiatives to improve service patterns and train frequencies and some of our suggestions have now, or will soon, come to fruition.

Community rail groups can also have a wider role in future rail planning. In our local area, our groups have produced ideas as to how the future of rail services on our line could look over a longer term horizon, and how these can be integrated with future developments in light rail and other transport modes. Transport for Greater Manchester's 2040 transport strategy consultation is one example of longer term thinking that we have contributed to.

- ***Make greater use of heritage railways?***

There is potential for initiatives between national rail operators and heritage railway operators to make greater use of heritage infrastructure and to increase passenger numbers by through ticketing and promotions. Community rail can work with heritage railway operators on such initiatives and there could be potential to share ideas and best practice from heritage railways to deliver improvements to historic infrastructure at national rail stations, in co-operation with TOCs, Network Rail and heritage railway bodies such as the HRA.

As an example, if the East Lancashire Railway is extended to Castleton, there may be services from our stations that could interchange there, and our passengers could have the option of through ticketing if agreements can be reached.

Q12) Do you have any other comments on how Government can best support the future of community rail?

Government should continue to offer strong support to community rail and ensure that legislation that may affect it is drafted with the purpose of making the aims and objectives of community rail easier to achieve. Government can provide a flexible framework whereby different CRP models can be applied to different operating environments – whether rural, urban or other hybrid models. Strong political support both locally and nationally can help to promote good ideas and best practice, and encourage successful projects. Through the franchising process, Network Rail devolution, and TOC/Network Rail partnerships, community rail can be embedded in the decision making process with CRP engagement in joint working groups. Government support for line re-openings should, wherever possible, include community rail involvement from the start, with groups being formed to promote lines and services before the trains begin to run. On a local level, the input of community rail groups should always be encouraged – the Salford Rail Strategy is an excellent example of how local knowledge and ideas can be embedded in both short and long term planning.

Conclusion

Community Rail has come of age. We very much welcome the Government's objectives to deliver world class services for passengers in a cost effective way, helping to provide economic opportunities for all by making travel as accessible and convenient as possible.

We hope that our feedback and ideas will prove to be a useful contribution to this debate.

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Friends of Hindley Station
Friends of Westhoughton Station
Friends of Daisy Hill Station

January 2018

Cover Pictures

Front page, top: Sunday Service re-opening gala at Walkden Station
23/5/10

Front page, bottom left: A floral embankment at Westhoughton Station

Front page, bottom left: Children engaged on a community project jointly organised by Friends of Hindley Station and Hindley Young Police Cadets

This page, right: Christmas celebrations in the community, organised by Friends of Hindley Station

This page, below: The Friends of Hindley Station have won many national and regional awards for their restoration of the station gardens. Local school children are often involved in the gardening schemes.

