



TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

Item 11 – Town Council 17th Feb
2020

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REPORT TO TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Hill Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
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Date	17th February 2021
SUBJECT	Community Rail Partnership

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform Members that Todmorden Town Council has been invited to be a Member of a new Community Rail Partnership to be established covering the Calder Valley Railway Line- see Appendix 1 - Calder Valley Line Community Rail Partnership Route Prospectus
2. To advise Members that this is being driven by Rochdale Council and Calderdale MBC with Strategic partners, Northern Rail, Train Operating Companies, West Yorks Combined Authority and Transport for Greater Manchester, which through the establishment of such a Partnership, will receive recognition from the Dept of Transport and with it access to investment opportunities.
3. To advise Members that whilst currently there is no clarity in terms of the benefits or influence that such a partnership would bring to local Station Groups to supplement and or help with what they do already, and many in existence will not join the partnership until the community aspect/benefit is better defined.
4. To advise Members that given that we do not have formally established Station Groups, there may be an opportunity to access resource through the partnership to take this forward whilst potentially opening up a funding route that may also be of benefit to other community groups with similar community aims.
5. To recommend that Todmorden Town Council should initially participate in this partnership so as to gain a better understanding of what the Strategic benefit may be to Todmorden, and how our involvement may help formal Friends/Station Groups to be established Todmorden and Walsden, noting that Todmorden in Bloom already have some limited involvement.
6. To determine at this stage whether Members wish for Todmorden Town Council to be represented by a Town Councillor or for the Town Clerk to initially represent the interests of the Town Council until such time as a clearer way forward emerges.

7. To agree that the Town Clerk may commit time to periodic liaison with Yorkshire Station Groups to further understand the direct contribution these Groups make to community life and the nature of direct delivery projects they are involved in.

BACKGROUND AND CONSIDERATIONS

8. Community Rail Partnerships are the backbone of the community rail movement, bringing together local groups and partners along railway lines to work with industry, and delivering a range of community engagement and promotional activities.
9. They emerged out of the Community Rail Development Strategy, last reviewed in November 2018, that at its foundation supports community rail organisations themselves to flourish as inclusive, independent and sustainable groups so they are well placed to deliver the strategy's key pillars of :-
 - Providing a voice for the community
 - Promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel
 - Bringing Communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion
 - Supporting social and economic development.
10. These partnerships aims are attuned to local needs and aspirations, and are passionate about rail; some have been going decades while others are just emerging. The work of community rail partnerships is varied, responding to local contexts, but includes:
 - promoting understanding, use of and access to the railways, such as communicating service improvements, running visits and workshops, **and promoting tourism by rail;**
 - helping communities engage in and have a voice in railway development so it meets their needs, such as coordinating and supporting volunteers and station "friends" **to enhance stations or advising train operators on timetabling.**
 - bringing disused station property back into use, such as by achieving renovations, setting up community group spaces, or running social enterprises.
 - running a range of activities to bring people together and promote social inclusion linked to the railways, such as local events, creative projects, and educational programmes.
11. There are around 60 formal Community Rail Partnerships with over 1000 local "station adopter groups",
12. The proposed Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership seek to take a "whole line view" and in establishing this Partnership, is keen to focus on use of the railway to encourage tourism.
13. In considering this issue the Town Clerk has attended the first "forming" session run by Rochdale and then subsequently spoken to Station/Friends Groups for Mythalmroyd, Hebden Bridge. Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge – see Appendix 2 for background notes.
14. What is clear from the notes kindly provided by both Brighouse and Mythalmroyd is the positive impact these Station Groups can have locally in terms of community involvement and support and something that Todmorden Town Council may wish to build on for future engagement with its Community.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. None directly relating to this report but projects may evolve of a community benefit nature that may need an element of matched funding to be considered.

RECOMMENDATION

16. That Todmorden Town Council becomes a Member of the Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership.
17. That Members consider whether at this early stage a Town Councillor represents the Town Council in this partnership or the Town Clerk until such time as clearer way forward is known.
18. That Members agree for the Town Clerk to commit some time to liaising with other station Groups so as to gain a better understanding of front-line involvement of community groups and what projects are delivered.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

19. This is not a core service of the Town Council and therefore to commit resource to this requires Council approval.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

20. None arising from this report

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:

21. None arising from this report other than informal discussion with other Station Groups.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

22. None directly arising from this report however train travel is supported.

IMPACT EQUALITY ASSESSMENT

23. None arising from this report but the potential to influence station accessibility improvement would be welcomed.

SUPPORTING PAPERS:

24. Appendix 1 - Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership Prospectus
- Appendix 2 - Outline notes re Town Clerk conversations with local Station Groups and Initial meeting of proposed Partnership.
- Appendix 3 - Minutes CVCRP dated 13th Jan 2021.

FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Colin Hill