

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER OR OFFICER

This form can be used for any decision but **MUST** be used to record:

- any decision taken by The Elected Mayor or an individual Councillor
- a key decision taken by a Council Officer

In these circumstances the form must be completed and passed to the Service Manager (Members' Services) no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Service Manager (Members' Services) has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership
Provision of funding contribution to the partnership.

2. Date of decision

3 May 2007

3. Reasons for decision

To enable a funding contribution to be made to the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership to promote the rail service to increase ridership and to allow the Borough Council to remain a partner on the Community Rail Partnership Steering Group.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

None.

5. How decision is to be funded

The contribution of £5,000 can be funded from the Borough Transportation Initiatives reserve.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (if yes give details and date of dispensation)
None		

Signed Apu Bagchi Date 3.5.07

Name of Decision Taker:
Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, twinning and Transportation, Cllr Apu Bagchi
[this must be signed by the decision maker or, if the decision was made by the Mayor or Councillor then the relevant Head of Service may sign it].

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Service Manager (Members' Services) as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: 14.5.07

Date decision can be implemented if not called in: 24.5.07

Report to Portfolio Holder for Partnership Working, Twinning and Transport

1st May 2007

Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership

1. Executive Summary

The Department for Transport has introduced a Community Rail Partnership strategy for managing local and rural rail services. Marston Vale line has been identified as a route that would benefit from this strategy and the line was designated a Community Rail Partnership service in November 2006. Local stakeholders are invited to join the partnership and provide some funding to enable the partnership to promote the service and encourage increased ridership along the line.

2. Recommendations

The Portfolio Holder for Partnership working, twinning and transport is invited to:

- i. note the designation of the Marston Vale line as a Community Rail Partnership; and**
- ii. provide a sum of £5,000, from the Borough Transportation Initiatives reserve, to the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership to fund the promotion of the service.**

3. Reasons

To enable the Borough to remain an active partner in the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership and contribute towards the promotion of the service and encourage improved ridership.

4. Implications

Legal

None arising from this report.

Resource

The funding of £5,000 can be made available from the Borough Transportation Initiatives reserve.

Risk

The risk of not contributing towards the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership would be the inability of the Borough to influence the partnership as it would not remain a partner on the steering group.

Details

In November 2004 the Minister for Transport launched the Community Rail Development Strategy; effectively a new approach to managing local and rural rail.

The strategy covers railways with the following characteristics:

- Relatively low speed (less than 75mph);
- Single or double track;
- One train operator providing the bulk of the services;
- Not directly serving a major conurbation with commuters; and
- No major freight flows.

The lines are loss makers and the new strategy had the aim of:

- Increasing ridership; freight use and net revenue;
- Managing costs down; and
- Greater involvement of the community.

At the heart of the strategy is the idea of a community rail partnership made up of Train Operating Company (TOC) and local stakeholders, supported by Network Rail, focused on developing and promoting the line. The more successful partnerships are the ones that have the support and participation of the local authorities, especially those with responsibilities for transport and planning.

The partnership can take a number of forms but has to be primarily a local organisation with local funding and support. They do not run the lines or services themselves; these continue to be the responsibility of train operators and Network Rail.

The partnership is supported by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships ("ACoRP"), which is funded by the Department of Transport.

Designation to a community rail partnership has a number of purposes:

- It identifies the line as local in nature taking it outside of EU regulations;
- It identifies a lightly used line that can have the maintenance practices and standards reviewed;
- It changes the franchise management giving more freedom to the TOC; and
- It clarifies future expectations for the line.

The Marston Vale Line Steering Group comprising of Silverlink, Network Rail, Beds County Council, Bedford BC, Mid Beds DC, Milton Keynes DC, Bedford Rural Communities Charity, Marston Vale Community Forest and Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users Association have been working towards membership of ACoRP and then designation of Marston Vale Railway as a Community Rail Partnership.

Membership of ACoRP was obtained last September and in November 2006 the Marston Vale Railway became designated as a 'Community Rail Partnership'.

The TOC (Silverlink) provided £10,000 of funding in 2006/7 to set up the partnership and Beds County Council has provided £35,000, per annum, to fund the Community Rail Partnership Officer.

Mid Beds DC and Bedford BC have been invited to contribute £5,000 each to provide initial funding to allow the partnership to implement some projects on the approved action plan. Projects include better signage to stations, promotion of events on the line, and some minor infrastructure improvements to stations along the line.

Funding is available from within the current Transportation Measures Reserve and it is recommended that the sum of £5,000 is made available to the Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership to contribute towards implementing projects within the approved Action Plan.