



Southeast Communities Rail Partnership CIC



SCRP Business Plan 2024-2027

Our vision for community rail is that we work with stakeholders to improve and enhance connections to the railway, increasing sustainable, healthy, and accessible travel. Supporting social and economic development, and enhancing communities by bringing them together, through local projects and initiatives.

SCRP continues to fully support the Four Pillars of the [DfT Community Rail Strategy](#) and will work in partnership with organisations to combine their respective expertise to help deliver this strategy and adapt to the changing environment. The four pillars are:

1. Providing a voice for the community.
2. Promoting sustainable, healthy, and accessible travel.
3. Bringing communities together and supporting diversity and inclusion.
4. Supporting social and economic development.

The SCRP fully supports the [Transport for Southeast Regional plan](#).

In 2023, the SCRP conducted a stakeholder survey to help revise and update our business plan to support this vision. The survey gave clear indications that stakeholders recognised our many achievements and wished us to build upon our success. The call was for more community rail partnerships and an expansion of our education programmes. In doing so, our stakeholders recognised the impact of COVID on travel behaviour; the changing political and financial climate and renewed public interest in simpler ticketing options, more accessible and safer railways, and greater choice for first and last mile active travel options.

SCRP Business Plan 2024-2029

The Line groups play a significant role in the delivery of the business plan. They represent the community and bring people together to allow all stakeholders to have a voice. SCRP will continue to seek new partners: involve diverse groups, TOCs and stakeholders in developing action plans. Steering group members not only wish to function as a critical friend to transport providers, but they also contribute time and energy to projects and add a considerable amount in social value to their local communities. The SCRP will continue to make their contributions visible, by displaying their work through case studies, nominations for awards and media reports. The SCRP will also safeguard their interests by working in collaboration with TOCs and stakeholders on policies to make their volunteering experience a positive one.

In our annual Line Action Plans we will prioritise ideas developed by community members including but not exclusively:

- Finding solutions to first and last mile issues to promote modal shift.
- Supporting improvements to make travel more accessible to all

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- Creating Volunteering opportunities
- Encouraging further station adoptions
- Support for members who wish to set up Friends of Groups and/or CICs to facilitate the conversion of redundant premises to community use,
- Offering financial oversight and banking facilities
- Improvements to the station environment through art and history installations and sustainable gardening
- Supporting events and celebrations
- Collaborating with community safety organisations to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Taking part in Try the Train programmes and educational visits
- Increasing participation and assistance to TOC and destination management organisations for marketing initiatives.

The stakeholder survey identified several areas where local communities and stakeholders expressed a wish for additional community rail partnerships. These were:

Southeastern Line from Ashford International to Tonbridge and Sevenoaks

GTR Lines from:

Horsham to Dorking; Lewes to Eastbourne and Hastings; Lewes to Gatwick.

The ambition for GBR and many TOCs is to have Community Rail Partnerships on every Line. The above list may be achievable in the near future.

Travel patterns have changed and there is more of an opportunity to support marketing initiatives aimed at leisure travel. Where financial support exists, the SCRП will commit core resources and focus action plans to promote healthy and sustainable leisure travel.

The SCRП has overriding objectives of modal shift, sustainable travel, protection of the environment and efficient resource use. SCRП will contribute to shape local transport plans through consultations and press for plans to address climate change to steer people away from car use and onto public transport and walking and cycling options.

The SCRП also supports greater connectivity from Kent to Gatwick Airport and from Gatwick Airport to the West, Midlands, and further Northwards.

The SCRП also welcomes and supports initiatives to offer through ticketing and discounted fares.

The SCRП will commit resources to helping local groups and businesses make use of underused station buildings. Similarly, SCRП will continue to revitalise derelict spaces into community gardens and outdoor spaces.

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The education programmes Go Learn and Go Train educate young people about rail safety, sustainable travel, the environment, teaches lifelong active travel habits, and inspires them to consider careers in rail. The survey recognised that there were capacity issues for the GO Learn programme and wished for this to be resourced to provide greater geographical coverage and engage students of all ages.

The SCRP will continue to work on art, environmental, heritage and Try the Train projects with diverse groups. Our outreach work with under-resourced groups is acknowledged through nominations and awards. The SCRP will continue to share good practice with the wider community rail network.

The SCRP will develop an outward facing strategy to improve community support for SCRP work by improving press and publicity, demonstrating added social value through improved recording, and diversifying our funding base by securing financial support from key stakeholders and third parties.

The SCRP will Strengthen the links between Line Steering Groups, the SCRP Board and the SAB.

The SCRP will discuss with all our TOCS the content of their annual business plans prior to their submission to DfT and provide direct advice and assistance to TOCs to widen their direct involvement in Community Rail issues and activity.

To support this work, the SCRP will seek to consolidate its core funding and endeavour to persuade the DfT to raise our core funding to the levels enjoyed by most community rail partnerships. Without people to support the steering groups, deliver education, raise project funding, comply with company law, maintain DfT Accreditation, there will be no community rail.

We are incredibly grateful for the support we receive from our stakeholders and volunteers and cannot thank them enough for their guidance, expertise, and willingness to support our aims and objectives.

FM 23/01/24

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