



The 76th meeting of the Board of Southeast Communities Rail Partnership CIC held on 25th April 2025 at SCRП Office Lewes

1. Present. Tim Barkley (Chair) Cllr Bob Lanzer, Philip Ayers, Tim Sparrow, Patrick Warner (Teams), Mike Knott, Kevin Boorman, Trevor Field, Fiona Morton
2. Apologies: James Abbott, Paul Goddard, Mike Goodman
3. The minutes of the meeting held on 30th Jan 2025, were approved.
4. Matters arising - None
5. Chief Executive Report.

Fiona updated the Board on the progress of the recruitment for Hounslow to Richmond Line Officer post. The Board discussed the possibility of looking at adding a London weighting to both the SWR posts in the future if funds become available to help with recruitment.

For re-accreditation CRN have suggested Wed Aug 20th and they hope to streamline the process.

The Board congratulated the team on achieving the LOtC quality mark.

The Board invited Andy to present the social value figures which were circulated today at the SAB meeting on 1st Aug 2025. The data is key to presenting our case for continued support.

Board noted the CEO report and verbal updates..

6. Finance

6.1 Budget 2025/26

Philip drew the Board's attention to the late arrival of information from GTR and Trevor's work over the Bank Holiday weekend to prepare the budget. The Board recorded their appreciation of this and also the loyalty of staff who did not have a pay raise for the last few years, although we have been able to pay an annual bonus. The Board:

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1. Confirmed a salary increase of 3% to all staff with effect from 1st April 2025.

Proposed: Tim S, Seconded Tim B and

2. Approved the budget for 2025-2026

Proposed: Bob Lanzer, Seconded Tim S.

Looking ahead to 2026,

3. Board agreed the principle of the use of reserves for a staff/Director's event at Christ Hospital School in Spring 2026

4. Board agreed the business continuity measures and upgrade of Quickbooks.

The meeting was suspended briefly to allow the Board to join the celebration event at Bishopstone to officially open the restored Art Deco toilets.

6.2 Management accounts 2024/25 update

Trevor reminded the Board that the management accounts reflected transactions to date. There may be fine tuning upon receiving recommendations from the auditor. Further reserves may need to be released in 2025-2026.

The Board noted that it was still an aspiration to have more independent funding.

The Board noted the report.

6.3 Fundraising and Grants update

Board noted the report and congratulated Trevor and the team for the impressive results.

7. Governance/Projects

7.1 Quarterly review of Strategic and Management Risk Register 2025

The Board noted the changes and approved the report.

7.2 Devolution Verbal update (Bob)

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Bob outlined the current thinking and timetable for decision making. Key points:

- White Paper was published in Dec 2024 to streamline the patchwork of local government systems.
- The aim is to have Mayoral Regional/Strategic authorities all over England.
- In 1990s, Wales and Scotland established larger unitary authorities which still stand today.
- Combined Mayoral Strategic Authorities need to cover 1.5 million people and need to be a geographical entity that is recognised by local people.
- Mayors will initially be joined by representatives from their current principal local authorities (for Sussex it could mean there is a Board made up from seven representatives from B&H, WS & ES.)

The mayor will have responsibility for

- Strategic leadership
- Growth
- Oversight of Transport
- Skills and employment
- Housing
- Environment and climate change
- Public sector innovation
- Police, Fire & Rescue

The timetable for submissions to Government for Local Government Reorganisation runs until Sept 2025 when central government will make its final decisions on areas. Guidance is that new unitary councils should have a population base of at least 0.5 million people.

Other dates to note:

- 2026 May Elections for Mayors
- 2027 Shadow unitary authorities established through elections
- 2028 March new unitary authorities take over

There will be an implication for Town and Parish councils. Their roles and powers have yet to be decided. For rail, there will be issues about cross boundary routes and the interface between GBR and devolved local government.

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The Board agreed it would be useful to produce a briefing paper for staff so they are able to answer any questions that may arise at steering groups. Bob will update Board at its meeting in October.

Action: Fiona to co-ordinate.

7.3 Action Plans 2024/25 and 2025/26 Fiona reported that Andy had gathered all 2024-2025 together and they all looked positive with most plans completed for 2025-2026. There were varying degrees of input from steering group members. It may be wise to build on Railway 200 by asking steering groups to become involved in integrated transport initiatives and marketing their lines.

7.4 Marketing, Communications, & Annual Review 2024/25. Railway 200 verbal update

On Railway 200 there was a lot of work to do to make 1st Aug successful, the project team now meeting fortnightly. The Board thanked Kevin and Paul for their thorough report and noted the use of Bluesky.

7.5 Key roles for Board members

Mike Knott was happy to take on more of an active role in relation to SWR & GWR subject to availability.

Action: Mike and Philip to discuss further. Board agreed that work on succession planning would be useful.

8. Verbal updates from Directors

Patrick Warner updated the Board on his new role and would follow up with Tim S to share details of his contact at TfL.

Philip noted that we had not heard about our proposal to work in the London metro area from SER. GTR had received interest from community groups north of Thames to create and extend community rail.

Kevin reminded the Board about the Ore Garden open day, part of community rail week.

Mike K thanked everyone for their get well wishes which were gratefully received. The corporate volunteering event takes place on 28th April at Reg's Garden. Craft workshops planned for just after community rail week. Some misinformation had been spread about the reliability of the lifts at FN. Lifts have been operational for three weeks and only experienced two malfunctions which were quickly repaired.

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Tim S updated the Board about TfSE. They have not discussed English devolution but in light of today's discussion may wish to do so. TfSE have been nominated for an industry award for the support they give to transport authorities.

Tim B reminded the Board about GTR drop in on Monday and sends his apologies. A suggestion was made at a steering group that financial information and local KPIs could be shared for transparency. Trevor reported that we have the information, and it would be good to roll this out to all lines to show the impact they have in terms of grants raised and social impact.

9. AOB None

11. Forward Programme of meetings for SCRP CIC.

23rd July 2025 Board Lewes Office

1st August SAB and Railway 200 event Lewes Town Hall

9th October 2025 Board and AGM Lewes Office

The meeting ended at 12 noon to allow Sam Agnew, Head of Member Services at CRN, to introduce herself . She stressed the need to have good data to demonstrate our worth. The discussion continued informally when new and existing staff joined for a sandwich lunch.