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| Key Decision Required: | No | In the Forward Plan: | No |
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CABINET

23 JANUARY 2013

REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE

A.3 REVIEW OF THE POOR STATE OF REPAIR OF THE DISTRICT'S RAILWAY STATION INFRASTRUCTURE

(Report prepared by Ian Ford, Mike Badger and Gary Guiver)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To enable Cabinet to consider the comments of the Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee, following its review of the District's railway station infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee, at its meeting held on 24 September 2012, discussed the current state of repair of the District's railway stations. Mr Geraint Hughes, the Partnerships Manager for Greater Anglia (Abellio) attended the meeting. Set out below is an extract from the relevant minute from that meeting:

“Geraint Hughes informed the Committee that Greater Anglia (Abellio) had taken over the franchising for station infrastructure in February 2012, for a period of 29 months until July 2014, when it would have a longer term franchise of 15 years.

He gave an overview of the stations in the Tendring District with the varying opening times based on customer use. Greater Anglia had a 99 year lease on station buildings and was responsible for the maintenance of all structures on stations. Network Rail, he said, was responsible for track, overhead lines, bridges, lineside land and also certain commercial tenancies.

Mr Hughes said that community involvement had been undertaken at various railway stations by way of the Greater Anglia Station Adoption Scheme, which involved litter picking, looking after flower gardens and school projects. He said that Alresford Primary School had designed a railway safety poster which had been displayed at a number of railway stations.

Mr Hughes advised Members that Greater Anglia was seeking to maximise commercial lease opportunities during the 15 year franchise which could allow more favourable terms for commercial tenants. Suggestions had included investment in stations by way of S.106 agreements, community tenancies by identifying non-profit making tenants with peppercorn rents. It had been identified that demolishing redundant buildings would allow stations to look better, save money and provide better facilities of a higher quality for customers.

During questions from Members, areas of interest included:

- Tourism was key to the Tendring District with many stations very important to tourism;

- Bathside Bay development could have a major impact;
- Greater Anglia would like to be consulted on Local Plan issues that affected it, as, until now, it had no official contact at Tendring District Council;
- Concern over station closures and reduction of staffing levels;
- Access to platforms at Manningtree station for the disabled was a major issue with wheelchair users having to be carried over the railway tracks.

The Chairman thanked Geraint Hughes for his interesting and informative presentation.”

The Committee’s comments and the proposed Portfolio Holder’s responses thereto are set out below:-

| Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee comments | Inward Investment and Growth Portfolio Holder’s responses |
|--|---|
| (a) that Greater Anglia have a named Tendring District Council officer, to liaise with, particularly in relation to Local Plan issues; | |
| (b) that a copy of the draft Local Plan be sent to Geraint Hughes to assist Greater Anglia in its work; | |
| (c) that the Committee have sight of the growth and pressure point forecast from Greater Anglia; | |
| (d) that Cabinet understand and be involved in the Department for Transport consultation process; | |
| (e) that Greater Anglia be lobbied for proper access for the disabled at Manningtree Station; and | |
| (f) that a link be made with the Tendring Tidy Campaign and a possible special prize for the tidiest stations. | |

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Cabinet supports the proposed responses of the Portfolio Holder to the comments of the Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee.

PART 2 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

OFFICER COMMENTS AND CURRENT POSITION

Tendring District Council are members of the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership Steering Group (ESSCRP) which is led by Essex County Council and includes the two branch lines within the District which are named The Mayflower Line (Manningtree to Harwich) and the Sunshine Coast (Colchester to Clacton on Sea and Walton on the Naze).

The mission statement of the ESSCRP is to improve the economic, social and

environmental welfare of the communities on the branch lines and seeks to do so through community led projects that result in increase opportunities for the use of rail travel and infrastructure for business, leisure and tourism.

The Steering Group meets 4 times per year and includes representation from the rail operator. Gill Burden is the Officer who attends on behalf of the Council.

Essex County Council employ 2 part time Community Rail Officers who are supported by a Senior Transport Development Specialist based in the infrastructure team in Passenger Transport at County Hall.

The Department for Transport's franchise consultation on the Greater Anglia Rail Franchise is due to commence in mid-2013.

The items raised at the Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee on 24 September 2012 will be taken to the next meeting of the ESSCRP scheduled to take place on 18 March 2013.

It would appear that no comments on the Local Plan have been received from either the rail operators or Network Rail. However, comments have been received from ONTRACK Rail Users Association and the Essex Rail Users Group. Cabinet may wish to consider whether it would want to request the Development Plan Manager to chase up Network Rail and the rail operators for their comments and to allow time for these to be received given their importance.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

None.

APPENDICES

None.