

East West Rail Non Statutory Consultation Response from Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership



9th June 2021

Introduction

Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership (MVCRP) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the East West Rail Non Statutory Consultation.

Our consultation response has been drawn up by a sub-group of the MVCRP Steering Group.

We have been in discussion with and received information from a number of MVCRP member organisations including Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Milton Keynes Council, the Forest of Marston Vale, Wootton Academy Trust (umbrella body for Kimberley College) Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association (BBRUA) and the Beds & Herts Community Rail Partnership.

We have also received copies of consultation submissions from a number of town and parish councils along the Line and held discussions with stakeholders including Red Bull Racing and Covanta.

In addition, we have drawn on the results of a passenger & BBRUA member survey promoted via social media and distributed on Marston Vale Line services, and feedback from passengers and local residents.

We understand that all the above organisations will be making their own submissions to the consultation so this response should only be attributed to MVCRP.

Overview of Community Rail and MVCRP

Community Rail is 'A growing grassroots movement made up of community rail partnerships and groups across Britain. They engage communities and help people get the most from their railways, promoting social inclusion and sustainable travel, working alongside train operators to bring about improvements, and bringing stations back to life'. *Association of Community Rail Partnerships (2018)*. N.b. This organisation has since been rebranded as Community Rail Network.

There are currently over 70 Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) across the country, which work to deliver the Four Pillars of Community Rail in the Department for Transport (DfT) Community Rail Development Strategy published in November 2018. The Pillars are as follows:

- Providing a voice for the community
- Promoting sustainable, healthy and accessible travel
- Bringing communities together and supporting diversity & inclusion
- Supporting social and economic development



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The Marston Vale Line was designated as a Community Rail service in November 2006 by the DfT following a consultation process. MVCRP was established in 2007.

Line Designation was replaced by a new system of CRP Accreditation in 2018 as part of the Community Rail Development Strategy to reflect the more community-facing role that CRPs play.

Accreditation is formal recognition by the DfT that a CRP operates to a high standard and that its objectives and activities are supported by Government.

MVCRP was of the first CRPs to be accredited in February 2020 and was reaccredited in March 2021.

MVCRP currently covers the Marston Vale Line, but would welcome the opportunity to expand to cover the whole East West Rail route in future.

MVCRP's broad aims are closely aligned with the Four Pillars of Community Rail in terms of:

- To increase the ridership, profile and community involvement of the Marston Vale Line
- To encourage and promote rail travel for residents, visitors, business users and schoolchildren, including by participation in the progression of regeneration, tourism/leisure and community development projects
- To therefore enable local communities to increase their economic, social and environmental welfare
- To help raise awareness of the East West Rail (EWR) scheme and to facilitate communication between the communities and MVCRP stakeholders and the rail industry to support the successful delivery of the EWR rail link that best meets the needs of the communities it will serve

MVCRP prepared a Stations as Places Report and a Station Prospectus for each of the intermediate stations on the Marston Vale Line in March 2020. The former sets out a vision for 'stations as quality gateways between communities and the railway supporting the changing needs of our passengers, residents and visitors. Stations on our line will be community assets supporting the wellbeing and development of the areas that they serve.'

The Report also summarises feedback from passengers, station adopters and stakeholders and sets a target for a decrease in modal share of passengers travelling to stations on the Line by car by 2025.

Each Station Prospectus contains an Action Plan for quick wins and longer-term goals based on feedback received. A number of these schemes have already been delivered.

Copies are sent under separate cover.

MVCRP has delivered a number of enhancements to station facilities in recent years including:

- Covered cycle parking at Bedford St Johns
- New waiting shelter at Stewartby
- Artworks at Stewartby designed by Wootton Upper School pupils and project managed by Kimberley College students
- Cycle Hangar at Millbrook
- Enhancements to one of the waiting shelters at Millbrook
- A unique 6-foot bench at Millbrook in memory of Captain Sir Tom Moore (a former resident of the nearby village of Marston Moretaine)
- Station Enhancement Scheme at Woburn Sands including new fencing, weather proofing of the shelters, installation of water butts connected to the shelters on both platforms and a Bee Friendly Garden

A Next Bike Docking Station on land adjacent to the station is currently in progress, which will connect Woburn Sands to the Next Bike Network for the first time.

MVCRP has also submitted a number of successful applications to London Midland and London Northwestern Railway for Minor Works Schemes & Cycle Schemes along the Marston Vale Line including:

- New audio public address (real time) customer information system
- Covered cycle parking at Woburn Sands
- Cycle parking at Lidlington & Ridgmont
- Customer Information Screen on Platform 1A at Bedford Midland
- Customer Information Screen on the overbridge at Bletchley
- High level poster cases at Bedford St Johns, Lidlington, Aspley Guise & Bow Brickhill
- Accessible seating – benches with arm rests at all intermediate stations

MVCRP is currently working with Red Bull Racing over new covered cycle parking at Bow Brickhill and access to the new car park for rail users.

MVCRP has extended the range of services on the Marston Vale Line with the launch of a Bank Holiday Service in 2019 (the first such service since 1968) and the introduction of later evening services in 2017 as part of the London Northwestern Railway franchise.

MVCRP has also arranged late evening 'Fireworks Flyer' services and all day Sunday services for the bi-annual Bedford River Festival. An inaugural through services from Milton Keynes Central to Bedford was organised for the 2016 River Festival.

MVCRP promotes travel on the Line in a multitude of ways including on the Scenic Rail Britain website - <https://www.scenicrailbritain.com>

MVCRP worked with the community to adopt the majority of stations on the Line and has formed Station Friends Groups at the following:

- Bedford St Johns
- Stewartby
- Millbrook
- Lidlington
- Ridgmont
- Woburn Sands
- Fenny Stratford
- Bletchley

Interest has been expressed in forming groups at Aspley Guise & Bow Brickhill.

There are currently over 70 volunteers involved, part of a growing network of over 1,000 Station Friends Groups across the country. Not only is station adoption highly successful in reducing levels of vandalism and anti-social behaviour at stations, but also it has numerous benefits to the individuals involved including meeting new people, learning new skills, improving health & well-being and developing community pride.

Their work includes the following:

- Station inspections
- Installation and maintenance of planters
- Assistance with MVCRP themed trains such as the Santa Special
- Maintenance of land behind the platforms under a Network Rail Community Licence (Stewartby, Lidlington & Fenny Stratford)
- Maintenance of the Terry Silver Garden adjacent to the Bletchley Station entrance (Bletchley)
- Design and installation of murals (Lidlington, Woburn Sands & Fenny Stratford)
- Community notice board featuring displays on local history (Lidlington)
- Design and installation of history panels (Woburn Sands)
- Provision of a Christmas Tree (Bletchley)

The work of the Station Friends at Woburn Sands & Fenny Stratford was recognised at a national level in the 2020 Community Rail Awards with Silver and Gold Awards in the It's Your Station category respectively.

MVCRP has a growing social media presence with over 1,200 followers on Twitter and Facebook. The number of Facebook follower's places MVCRP is in the top ten for CRPs across the country.

Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre

The station building was first constructed in 1846 and was the Station House until 1968. The building is Grade II listed and one of four stations on the Line to be built in the distinctive Victorian Gothic 'Cottage Orné' style. It is the last remaining building on the Line available for community use.

A feasibility study commissioned by Silverlink Trains in 2007 identified great potential for Ridgmont Station to become a community hub.

The building reopened to the public in 2013 as a Heritage Centre after over 40 years of disuse and an extensive six-year restoration led by MVCRP and Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity.

Over £500,000 has been spent on the restoration of the building and lease of adjacent areas of land for the Heritage Centre garden and car park. The car park is available free of charge to rail users and walkers.

The Heritage Centre is MVCRP'S flagship project, and has brought it great benefits, such as a higher profile in the Community Rail sector; the building was featured as a case study in the Association of Community Rail Partnership's report 'Community Stations: Innovative community uses for railway stations and land' and the DfT Community Rail Development Strategy.

The Heritage Centre has both become a new generator of travel for the Marston Vale Line and brought a step change in facilities for rail passengers.

The restoration of the building has won a number of national and local awards including runner up in the 'Most Enhanced Stations' category in the 2014 Community Rail Awards and runner up in the Network Rail Partnership Category in the 2014 National Railway Heritage Awards.

The Heritage Centre very much provides a 'shop window' for MVCRP and a focal point for interaction with the public. Visitors can experience guided tours of the original Victorian Booking Office (now a museum with displays and temporary exhibitions) and enjoy breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea in the Tea Room (housed in the former Ladies Waiting Room) or Patio Garden.

In addition the Heritage Centre offers a valuable resource for tourist information & rail passenger enquiries and serves as the focal point for our both joint education programme with the Beds & Herts CRP and our Symbol Spot Trail, the first of its kind in the country – see <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/symbol-spot>

MVCRP is working to achieve Museum Accreditation from the Arts Council for the Heritage Centre. Museum Accreditation Scheme is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries.

The day to day operation activities of the Heritage Centre relies predominantly on the support of a dedicated team of the Friends of Ridgmont Station who contribute an average of over 1,500 hours each year.

According to three Mystery Shoppers from other museums in the East of England who made recent visits "having a 'personal tour' led by a knowledgeable volunteer is about as good as it gets."

Many of the Station Friends did not know each other before they started, but new friendships have since been formed, the benefits of which cannot be underestimated particularly over the course of the last 15 months during the pandemic.

To quote one of the Station Friends and a local resident, "It gives me great pleasure to see what was a sadly neglected semi-derelect building not only tastefully restored, but also evolved into a venue that attracts a variety of visitors to our village. I particularly enjoy meeting people from all walks of life, whether they be railway enthusiasts, local historians or ladies meeting for afternoon tea in the splendid Tea Rooms. We've even had people pulling off the clogged up M1 looking for a 'comfort stop' calling in and staying for an hour or so till the traffic clears."

Passenger Numbers

Contrary to some of the information presented in the consultation documents, the Marston Vale Line has seen significant growth in recent years with passenger journeys reaching a ten-year high of 330,000 in 2018/19 and on course to exceed this in 2019/20 until the intervention of the pandemic.

According to data from the Office of Rail & Road, footfall has more than doubled on the Line from 206,652 in 2010/11 to 464,378 in 2018/19 with an annual growth of 10.7%. Footfall has also increased at all intermediate stations over this period with the exception of Millbrook and Aspley Guise where there was a slight fall of 0.7% and 2% respectively. Strong growth of 5.6% was recorded at Kempston Hardwick, likely to be due in part to increased usage by employees and visitors to Coronation Car Auctions.

MVCRP thus questions the references in the consultation documents to 'many of the stations have amongst the lowest usage on the national network. Indeed, three of the ten stations see fewer than 40 passengers per day.' This is both misleading and disingenuous.

Consultation Length, Format & Documents

MVCRP feels the consultation should have been given the standard 12-week period due to the significance and complexity of the issues involved.

We have received feedback from a number of members of the community that the volume of consultation material and the number of questions in the feedback form has proved to be a deterrent in making a response.

MVCRP is extremely disappointed the photographs in the consultation documents do not feature any of the work of the Station Friends Groups such as planters or murals, and thus do not fully reflect the level of community involvement in the Line. The image selected for the front cover of the Bletchley and the Marston Vale Line Consultation Document is particularly drab and uninspiring.

We also note the lack of images of Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre. Again this is very disappointing and does not serve to promote the Marston Vale Line in the best light to readers who are unfamiliar with it.

The Overall Scheme

MVCRP has supported the East West Rail scheme to reconnect Oxford & Cambridge by rail via Bedford since its inception and continues to do so.

We do not take a particular view of which route north and east of Bedford should be selected.

In common with many passengers, stakeholders and BBRUA we feel strongly there is a real and pressing need for the Marston Vale Line to be extended to Milton Keynes Central. We are disappointed that East West Rail fails to provide this despite a major signalling programme being completed at Bletchley, and a dedicated platform being constructed at Milton Keynes Central for Bedford services. Whilst there may be some technical challenges these are not insurmountable.

Milton Keynes is one of the fastest growing cities in the country with significantly higher than average levels of employment growth. Moreover, Milton Keynes has one of the highest number of jobs created in a city over the last 15 years.

Research by the Centre for Cities demonstrates the huge growth – see www.centreforcities.org/city/milton-keynes

Milton Keynes is second only to London for the number of start-up businesses and digital & creative businesses.

There are currently over 70 large companies with over 250 employees in Milton Keynes City Centre. A new 21-acre site has been released near Milton Keynes Central Station. The size is the equivalent of to four of the Network Rail offices at the Quadrant in Elder Gate.

However, the lack of through services has suppressed demand with MVCRP aware of only half a dozen passengers regularly commuting by train from Bedford & Marston Vale Line stations to Milton Keynes prior to the pandemic. This is clearly not reflective of the overall number making the journey.

The lack of through services to Milton Keynes also means Marston Vale Line passengers travelling to destinations on the West Coast Main Line need to change at Bletchley and a few minutes later at Milton Keynes, not an attractive proposition.

There is clear evidence of demand for through services to Milton Keynes from MVCRP's survey work at community events such as the Santa Special and Bedford River Festival since 2008. Extension of the Marston Vale Line is consistently in the top three factors that would encourage passengers to use the Line more often.

In short, it is a huge missed opportunity not to include extension of the Marston Vale Line to Milton Keynes as part of East West Rail and is directly at odds with the Strategic Objectives of the Scheme set by DfT namely:

- 'To improve east – west public transport connectivity by providing rail links between key urban areas
- Stimulate economic growth, housing and employment through the provision of new, reliable and attractive inter-urban services in the Arc'

We now turn to the questions in the Consultation Document.

Station Experience

The DfT's travel hierarchy of pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users and lastly other road users should be adopted at East West Rail stations. Stations should not be dominated by oversized car parks as is so often the case, but rather have an attractive and welcoming entrance with dedicated space for bus interchange and cycle & motorcycle parking.

MVCRP would like to be involved in the design of any new stations.

New stations should be autism and dementia friendly as is the case on other Community Rail Lines such as the Bentham Line - <https://thebenthamline.co.uk>
East West Rail stations should have the following facilities:

- Dedicated secure car parking with Electric Vehicle Charging Points with drop off and collection areas
- Priority space for car sharers
- Bus interchange
- Taxi drop off point
- Covered cycle and motorcycle parking
- Cycle docking station
- Modern waiting shelters illuminated at night with space for display of local information and history panels
- Monitored CCTV
- Toilets – located at the main entrance with a separate disabled toilet with baby changing facilities inspected & cleaned regularly
- A staff presence, at the very least during the day with the ability to sell the full range of tickets including local discounts such as the Marston Vale Line Senior Saver (50% discount for Bedfordshire Bus Pass Holders). There is a potential role for MVCRP's Station Friends to provide a presence at other times
- Ticket Vending Machines from which the full range of tickets is available including local discounts such as the Marston Vale Line Senior Saver
- Wi-Fi access
- Cafes – locally owned as oppose to national chains in order to give the station a unique identity and to maximise the benefit to the local economy Careful planning is needed to ensure station catering facilities do not compromise the viability of existing cafes or public houses adjacent to the station.
- Comprehensive recycling facilities with clear signage explaining which material should go in which receptacle
- Water refill stations registered on the Refill website - <https://www.refill.org.uk>
- Water butts connected to station shelters in order to provide easy water access for Station Friends Groups
- Zero carbon
- Customer Information Screens displaying all calling points and arrival times with provision to transfer to a stand by screen during disruption
- Tannoy system
- Passenger Help Points with an information button managed by a UK rail industry call centre (not National Rail Enquiries in Dubai) and an emergency button managed by a UK rail industry call centre
- Allocated space for community gardens

- Space for community artwork
- Wayfinding signage to and from the local area
- Dedicated onward travel information
- Sufficient poster cases for rail timetables and information on each platform including a dedicated case for Community Rail
- Station Neighbours Scheme

A 'Station Neighbour' is a local organisation willing to provide a helping hand for passengers using nearby railway stations. They are available voluntarily for passengers who may need to use their facilities or seek a place of refuge if they are feeling vulnerable or in need of assistance.

A number of Station Neighbours have been identified and an initial approach made in some cases. Please see attached Station Neighbours Guidance Note

Each East West Rail station should also have a Station Friends Group.

Stations should be powered by renewable energy sources.

On Train Experience

All trains should have a conductor to ensure safety (particularly where stations are unmanned) and serve passengers. The conductor should be located in an office in the middle of the train to provide easy access to passengers.

Passengers should have options for class of travel. A first class compartment would be an attractive proposition for business travellers between Bedford and Cambridge in particular. There are also opportunities to replicate good practice elsewhere such as the Standard Premium Class recently introduced by Avanti whereby passengers have roomier seats and are guaranteed a table.

Trains should have the following:

- Level boarding for wheelchair & mobility scooter users, carers with buggies and passengers with heavy luggage
- Dedicated space by a window for wheelchair and mobility scooter users with a power point, optional folding table, and seating for a companion. The space should be sufficient to accommodate wheelchairs & mobility scooters of all sizes.
- Free Wi-Fi
- USB and power points at all seats
- Customer Information Screens (CIS) visible from all seats displaying all calling points and arrival time
- Comfortable seating - not the 'ironing boards' as in use elsewhere on the network with adequate width and leg room, and folding tables
- Combination of airline and table seating (particularly useful for families).
- Plentiful space for luggage
- Dedicated cycle storage – not confined to just a couple of spaces bearing in mind the likely high demand
- Accessible toilets
- Baby changing facilities
- On-board catering – there may be a role for Community Rail in acting as a contractor here as on the Settle & Carlisle Line – see <https://settle-carlisle.co.uk/tickets-times-travel/your-journey/trolley-service>

All staff should have disability awareness training including autism and dementia.

Bletchley Station

MVCRP fully supports the work proposed at Bletchley. We have long been concerned over the lack of step-free access to platform 6, and are pleased to see this included in the Scheme.

We welcome the provision of an eastern entrance at Bletchley station, but are disappointed that this does not currently include toilet facilities.

We also welcome the inclusion of an additional low-level platform adjacent to platform 6 and request further detail.

We feel that the current station building on Sherwood Drive should be retained, and the interior refurbished to include a 'Welcome to Bletchley Home of the Code Breakers' mural and eye-catching signage provided outside to direct visitors to Bletchley Park. MVCRP would be pleased to lead on both projects.

MVCRP feels the station footbridge could be made more welcoming with the installation of artwork designed by the community. There are a number of examples of such projects across the Community Rail network.

Additional Track at Fenny Stratford

MVCRP supports the additional track at Fenny Stratford. Our preferred option is to build new bridges next to the existing.

Marston Vale Line Concepts

MVCRP believes Concept One (with some adjustments) best meets the needs of current and future passengers. Our view is endorsed by the survey commissioned by BBRUA referred to earlier.

All of the existing stations serve a distinct purpose as follows:

- Kempston Hardwick – local residents (including the growing community of Wootton less than a mile away) and Coronation Car Auctions customers
- Stewartby – Kimberley College
- Millbrook – local residents (including the large community approximately a mile away in Marston Moretaine)
- Lidlington – at the heart of the village community
- Ridgmont – Marston Gate Business Park (recently expanded) and Ridgmont Station Heritage Centre
- Aspley Guise – staff, volunteers and visitors to HULA Animal rescue
- Woburn Sands – well placed for large areas of the town community and staff & visitors to Frosts Garden Centre
- Bow Brickhill – Caldecotte and Tilbrook Industrial Estates
- Fenny Stratford – the community east of Bletchley and a number of employment sites

This is not an exhaustive list and many stations also have other functions. There are a significant number of local residents along the Line who do not have access to a car and for whom it is thus a lifeline.

It should also be noted that there are limited or non-existent other public transport options for a number of communities along the Line, particularly in Liddington, Ridgmont, Brogborough, Husborne Crawley and Aspley Guise.

It is recognised that land is constrained at some stations, but the picture is not as painted in the consultation documents. For example, there is a large area of land adjacent to Millbrook station that has recently been surfaced that would serve for car parking and bus interchange. There is also a large area of land in railway ownership at Woburn Sands currently used by a car dealership.

Wootton Academy Trust have advocated that Stewartby station should remain in its current location to best serve Kimberley College and we believe this should be explored further. There is scope to lengthen and widen the platforms to cater for the growing number of college students. The College is the single largest user of the Line and as such its needs should be catered for.

As highlighted earlier we believe modifications should be made to Concept One prior to the statutory consultation. These are as follows:

1. Ridgmont Station to remain in its current location to serve the Heritage Centre and Marston Gate Business Park. A significant proportion of Heritage Centre visitors travel by train for whom it is an integral part of the visitor experience. A large number of Marston Gate employees commute by train and there is scope to grow this through the Travel Planning process.

The proposed new location is too far away to be attractive to Heritage Centre visitors, many of whom who are Senior Citizens. We note references to demand responsive bus links from the new station, but experience elsewhere is that such services often run for a few years and are then quietly withdrawn.

The Heritage Centre is integral to MVCRP's educational programme with which we work closely with Beds & Herts CRP.

We have been working with local schools to tailor visits to match both the school curriculum and also to fit in with the available visit time within the daily school timetable. Currently, there is sufficient time for a Bedford-based school to arrive at Bedford Station, receive a safety talk and tour by Thameslink and CRP staff, then take a train to Ridgmont, undertake a range of activities and return back to Bedford within the core of the school day. Relocation of Ridgmont station would add extra journey time to walk to the Heritage Centre, which would make such visits unviable.

Moreover, the Heritage Centre is regularly used by both CRPs as part of themed trains such as the 'Easter Eggspress', Ghost Train and Santa Special, all of which attract a large proportion of first time passengers. Activities at the Heritage Centre are timed around train arrivals and departures and it would not be practical for families to walk from a relocated Ridgmont Station.

There is land available for car parking and bus interchange adjacent to the Cranfield Haulage site behind the Heritage Centre.

We recognise that it would be difficult for Ridgmont Station to remain in its current location and continue to be served by East West Rail services so would be willing to explore reallocation of the calling point to Stewartby.

2. Exploration of the merger of Kempston Hardwick with Stewartby, but only on the basis that direct foot and cycle links are provided from Coronation Car Auctions & Wootton and existing Section 106 funding committed for car parking at Kempston Hardwick and improved foot & cycle access is reallocated to the new merged station.
3. Exploration of a new station at Kempston Interchange Retail Park (KIRP); a recently expanded site with poor public transport access. A study was commissioned by the former Bedfordshire County Council a number of years ago and a business case justified the provision of a new station and a connecting overbridge to Kempston. A further study published by the English Regional Transport Association in 2021 makes some salient points on the subject.

The CRP put the case forward for a KIRP station in our response to the West Midlands Franchise Consultation and would like to see this further considered; it is a valuable opportunity to stimulate modal shift.

We refer to the initial assessment of the advantages of such a station, which is attached to Appendix A of the Beds & Herts CRP response.

We are aware of the concerns of Woburn Sands Town Council and a large number of local residents over relocation of the station and feel further work should be undertaken to explore retention of the current location. Permission is already in place to extend the Bletchley bound platform and there is scope to bring the historic station building back into community use, perhaps providing a facility for adults with learning disabilities and a social prescribing service as at Kilmarnock Station – see <https://ksrht.org>

As discussed earlier, our Stations as Places Report identifies the opportunity for Woburn Sands (and Ridgmont) to become community hubs.

Train Operation

It is vital that the stopping service and East West Rail services are integrated and run by a single operator which also manages all the stations.

Having two separate operators is simply not in the interest of passengers.

Bedford St Johns

MVCRP supports the relocation of Bedford St Johns to the area broadly opposite the current site (the Hospital station in the Technical Report) to best serve the hospital, Borough Hall, Bedford College and Riverside Bedford.

We wish to see Bedford St Johns able to accommodate East West Rail services in addition to the stopping services and refer to our earlier comments on station experience.

Marston Vale Line Crossings

MVCRP advocates retention of a number of level crossings, particularly in locations where they connect two parts of a village or an area which otherwise would involve an extended road journey.

We believe there is a particular case for retention of the level crossings at Fenny Stratford, Woburn Sands, Aspley Guise and Lidlington.

We would like to explore further the closure of foot crossings, a number of which feature in our promoted walking routes – see <http://www.letsgo.org.uk> for details, and request further detailed discussion in this area.

Our preferred option is to provide underpasses where foot crossings are closed.

Marston Vale Line Upgrade

MVCRP feels option 2 (prolonged blockade) would be extremely damaging for the Line particularly for the leisure market and current & future travel to Kimberley College. A prolonged blockade would also undoubtedly have a significant impact on our work.

There would also be an impact on the mental health & wellbeing of our station adopters; there is little incentive for them to maintain the planters at their stations when services are not running as few people will see the results.

We would like to explore single line working for the blockade; we understand this has been done successfully elsewhere.

Should this not be possible we advocate option 3 (mix of short and long blockades) on the proviso that the length and timing is agreed with MVCRP to minimise impact on events & activities.

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Transport Team Leader (Rail) & Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership Officer

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Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership Chairman