



## Railways: rural and community lines

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This note looks at the development of community rail under successive governments. It explains the purposes of rural rail, how it is structured, and proposals for its development.

References to 'rural railways' are often vague and undefined. What tends to be meant by the term are non-urban railway lines in areas of the country with limited population. These lines tend not to be part of the franchised train operations that are delivered on most of the rail network, but are partnerships between local, community groups and a train company.

The Labour Government developed a *Community Rail Development Strategy* to encourage more of these lines. However it did face some criticism for its plans on 'network modification' which, critics argued, makes it easier to close rural rail lines.

The Coalition Government appears to be generally supportive of community railways. However, there have been some concerns as to their future sustainability, particularly as the government bears down on the cost of the railway and local authorities see their budgets cut. At the same time, there has been a spurt of interest in the idea of developing 'co-operative' railways in a similar spirit to community lines.

A [list of all 31 designated Community Rail routes](#) is available on the Department for Transport website.

For information on other rural transport issues see HC Library note [SN365](#); information on other areas of rail policy can be found on the [Railways topical page](#) of the Parliament website.

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**Contents**

**1 What are rural and community rail lines? 2**

**2 Community Rail Development Strategy 3**

2.1 Initial proposals by the Labour Government, 1997-2007 3

2.2 Strategy review, 2007-2010 6

2.3 Developments under the Coalition Government, 2010- 6

**3 Co-operative rail 8**

**4 Network modification 9**

**1 What are rural and community rail lines?**

The Community Rail Development Strategy (see below) explains rural, local and community lines in the following way:

Local rail lines are vitally important for the many towns and villages they serve. Forming the core of a good public transport network, they enable residents of rural areas to access local towns, encouraging vibrant economic hubs for employment, shopping and doing business. Connections to the national network also provide convenient access to regional and national centres, important to the development of the rural economy. This importance was underlined by the recent survey by the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales, which showed that local rail links to the national network were seen as very important to business. From other responses, it is also evident that being on the rail network is seen as important in the context of inward investment.

Increasingly tourism has become a significant part of the rural economy. Rail is a convenient mode of transport for overseas tourists who are among the highest-spending groups of visitors and make extensive use of the 'BritRail' pass sold through the Internet and sales agencies abroad. Rail provides access not only for visitors who stay overnight but also for day-trippers from larger towns or cities. Perhaps most importantly, particularly for lines serving national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, seaside towns and historical sites, these railways are a sustainable mode of public transport for tourists. Some rural lines, such as the Cambrian Coast and the Looe Valley Line, are even tourist attractions in their own right by virtue of their scenic quality.<sup>1</sup>

These lines tend to form a 'discrete network' with its own particular requirements:

[Community rail] is based on the concept of a different category of local railway, separately specified, with standards appropriate to its use; and it builds on the wishes of local communities to be actively involved in the development of their railway. Essentially, it is about putting these lines on a sustainable basis by bringing costs and income closer together. It recognises that continued subsidy will be required, and that it needs to be commensurate with the value of the railway to the community in terms of

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<sup>1</sup> SRA, [Community Rail Development Strategy](#), November 2004, para 1.4

economic development, accessibility, social inclusion and the environment, as well as ... fulfilling its role as the backbone of the public transport network.<sup>2</sup>

The Department for Transport typifies Community Rail lines as being:

- low speed – less than 75 mph;
- single or double track (not multiple track);
- one train operator providing most services;
- do not provide major conurbations with commuter services;
- no major freight flows; and
- not part of Trans European Networks (TENs).<sup>3</sup>

Many rural, local and community lines are operated by the bigger train companies in alliance with local community groups who maintain stations, promote the line, etc. These community groups form the [Association of Community Rail Partnerships \(ACoRP\)](#), who describe themselves as: "...an organisation of 'do-ers', focused on practical initiatives which add up to a better more sustainable local railway. Improved station facilities, better train services and improved integration with other forms of transport are central to the work of ACoRP and its members".<sup>4</sup> A list of ACoRP's sponsors and its members, who represent partnerships across England, Scotland and Wales, can be found on the website.<sup>5</sup>

## 2 Community Rail Development Strategy

### 2.1 Initial proposals by the Labour Government, 1997-2007

In 2000 the then 'shadow' Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) commissioned a report from the Transport Research and Information Network (TR&IN) on options for developing rural railways.<sup>6</sup> Two reports were published, the first in June 2000<sup>7</sup> and the second in October 2002. The second report presented a strong case for devolving responsibility for running local railways - especially rural branch lines - to the communities they serve. The report, supported by the Rail Passengers Council (RPC),<sup>8</sup> outlined several options for local management. The approach favoured was to have a locally-based 'community company' working with an established franchised train operator. This was deemed the right balance between local management and protection of a large parent company.<sup>9</sup>

In February 2004 the SRA published a consultation document intended to maximise the potential and sustainability of the 1,300 miles of local and rural railways throughout England and Wales. The consultation paper set out the SRA's strategy to:

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, para 1.2

<sup>3</sup> DfT, [HCommunity Rail](#) [accessed 2 February 2012]

<sup>4</sup> [HACoRP website](#) [accessed 1 February 2012]

<sup>5</sup> [HACoRP members and sponsors](#) [accessed 1 February 2012]

<sup>6</sup> the SRA was created by the Labour Government under the *Transport Act 2000* to develop a strategy for the UK's railways and, amongst other things, let passenger franchises; it was abolished in 2005; for full details, see: HC Library note [HSN1344](#)

<sup>7</sup> TR&IN, [HDeveloping Rural Railways: Options for Decentralised Operations on Secondary Lines](#), June 2000

<sup>8</sup> now [HPassenger Focus](#)

<sup>9</sup> TR&IN, [HRe-inventing the Local Railway: how locally-managed railways can be at the heart of a rural renaissance](#), October 2002

- Increase passenger volume and income;
- Manage down the unit costs of running the lines now and in the future; and
- Involve the local community more closely in the development of its railway.<sup>10</sup>

The paper also sought views on ‘microfranchising’. This is a generic term which covers several approaches, each representing a different form of local management:

This can range from subcontracting certain aspects of the operation of train services (for example station retailing, catering or cleaning), through to a separate vertically integrated operation similar in structure to the Wensleydale Railway. A pragmatic start might be with the establishment of a Railway Development Company, working closely and positively with the TOC [train operating company] and Network Rail to develop ways of delivering rail services which are both cost-effective and beneficial to the local economy. This approach could encourage the development of some smaller independent operators alongside the larger established train operators on the rest of the franchised passenger network. In considering this, the maintenance of network benefits (such as ticketing, information and main line connections) would be a key requirement. Microfranchising might provide the right solution for smaller self-contained routes – or groups of routes – but is not the universal solution for Community Railways. It is one innovative approach on the menu of initiatives.<sup>11</sup>

The SRA subsequently published a summary of responses to the consultation document in June 2004. There was general support for the SRA’s approach. Of the ‘handful of respondents’ who expressed reservations, these were focused on a lack of applicability in a particular local area; concern that the approach might be seen as an attempt to downgrade or fragment parts of the network; and any transfer of funding responsibilities from Central to Local Government.<sup>12</sup>

On 21 November 2004, the then Secretary of State, Alistair Darling, published the *Community Rail Development Strategy* for England and Wales, which aimed to increase the number of passengers using rural rail lines. The document, produced by the SRA, provided a framework for developing local and rural railways. The strategy document outlined the SRA/government approach to the rural rail network as follows:

The Community Rail Development Strategy is based on the premise that neither closure nor further conventional cost-cutting can improve the current situation of local and rural railways. Closure of rail infrastructure is not part of Government policy nor the Secretary of State’s Directions and Guidance to the SRA. Railways represent a long-life fixed investment, and closures leave huge residual liabilities, which have to be managed. Closures are hotly contested and the closure process takes significant senior management time to handle, with limited cost savings achievable.

The approach therefore is to narrow the gap between income and costs and to secure the maximum involvement and support, in cash or in kind, from the local community.

Many local services and stations will benefit from the initiatives on promotion, marketing and development outlined in this Strategy, even where they use part of the main line network. Reduction in costs will be facilitated by the separate specification of

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<sup>10</sup> SRA, *Community rail development: a consultation paper on a strategy for community railways*, February 2004, para 2.2

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, para 2.4

<sup>12</sup> SRA, *Community Rail Development Consultation: Summary of Responses*, June 2004, pp4-5

service and infrastructure requirements on routes that are separately designated as Community Railways.<sup>13</sup>

The key proposal in the document was that Community Railways would be given a separate designation of as a third group of lines alongside the high-speed and conventional networks, to facilitate proper specification, promotion and community involvement. This is an approach commonly adopted throughout Europe for local lines. The document stated that designation of self-contained branch lines would be “relatively straightforward”:

Designated Community Rail lines may operate or be engineered to standards appropriate to the nature and volume of traffic being handled and will be specified accordingly. These standards may be established directly from the specification through a process of risk assessment for the line. In some cases, derogation from the existing group or company standards or TSIs may be appropriate, supported by risk assessment, and in due course, these derogations may be grouped to form separate guidance for Community Railways. The standards may be proposed by the SRA/DfT, by the network or train operator, by a Railway Development Company or by partners in a Community Rail Partnership, but would be approved by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB).

Initial designation would be made by SRA/DfT with the agreement of ORR, following consultation, and a change process would also be introduced to deal with subsequent proposals to designate routes, or to de-designate them if circumstances changed and it was more appropriate for them to revert to the conventional network.<sup>14</sup>

A simple Route Prospectus would be prepared for each Community Rail service to identify the constraints and opportunities, the economic benefits and funding opportunities and suggested timescale for implementation. The plan would be consistent with Network Rail's [Route Utilisation Strategies](#) and would feed into and be informed by Regional Planning Assessments. The plan would be discussed with key stakeholders prior to publication, including the transport planning authorities served, Passenger Focus and the Community Rail Partnership or Railway Development Company.

With regards to fares and ticketing, the Strategy intended that the regulatory cap would be removed from Community Rail fares to allow them to be determined locally and, where appropriate, integrated with bus fares. In particular, the aim was to give the freedom for local promotional fares on routes where there is only one operator. Improvement of revenue protection would also be a core part of the strategy to increase income, through off-rail sales and through modification of door controls on units, to allow more efficient fare collection between frequent stops.

In terms of funding, the SRA/government intended to involve a range of partners in order to help realise local enhancement schemes. Potential sources of funding cited in the Strategy included: the [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#); the Department for Transport (through Local Transport Plans and Challenge Funding Schemes); the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister<sup>15</sup> (through regeneration funding); and other local council funding.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> op cit., [HCommunity Rail Development Strategy](#)H, para 2.1

<sup>14</sup> [ibid.](#), para 2.2

<sup>15</sup> now the [HDepartment for Communities and Local Government](#)

<sup>16</sup> there has been a significant overhaul of local finance generally and local transport funding in particular since the 2010 election, for details, see: HC Library note [HSN5735](#)

## 2.2 Strategy review, 2007-2010

In March 2007 the Department published a review of the Strategy, outlining progress since the original publication back in 2004.<sup>17</sup> Looking to the future, the Department indicated its intention to continue with the pilot projects, subject to review.<sup>18</sup> The Department stated that it would continue to 'roll out' the Strategy through the programme of designations, work on cost reduction and work to integrate the ideas contained within the Strategy more broadly into the way that the railway industry works. The Strategy identified over 50 lines which could be designated as community rail lines. Subsequently the Strategy was expanded to allow the designation of *services* without the *lines* on which they run. The Department estimated that around a further 40 designations might be worthwhile. However, Network Rail was unable to identify the costs of each designated line.<sup>19</sup>

The July 2007 rail White Paper indicated that the government had no intention of closing or reopening any community lines during the period up to 2014 but that it did expect to see further reductions in operating and infrastructure costs. It also stated that "the carbon footprint of the most lightly used lines is likely to come under increasing scrutiny".<sup>20</sup>

In May 2008 the then Railways Minister, Tom Harris, announced the creation of a new £60,000 fund for community rail. The Designated Community Rail Development Fund (DCRDF) was intended to help deliver improvements at local stations (e.g. more seats; cycle parking; better information for passengers) and to help fund awareness campaigns to encourage more people to use community lines.<sup>21</sup> The first grant was awarded to the Clitheroe Partnership for their DVD Rail Journey Project.

In June 2009 the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) published a report looking at small scale improvements to the rail network, including short links to (or new stations on) existing lines, and by making use of railway land left by the line closures and capacity reductions of the 1960s and '70s. The report was based on demographic changes which have left growing communities with little or no access to the rail network.<sup>22</sup>

Nothing further happened before the 2010 General Election.

## 2.3 Developments under the Coalition Government, 2010-

Prior to the General Election, the Conservative Party published a rail policy paper, which indicated that were it to win the next election, the Party would make funding for smaller scale capacity enhancements open to Community Rail Partnerships and conserve any disused railway lines still in public ownership.<sup>23</sup> The Liberal Democrats stated that they would make it possible for Community Rail Partnerships to draw down funds from a proposed 'Future Transport Fund' to re-open viable rail lines and give Integrated Transport Authorities (ITAs)

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<sup>17</sup> DfT, *Review of Community Rail Development Strategy*, March 2007, pp9-22

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, paras 3.1-3-2

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, para 3.15

<sup>20</sup> DfT, *Delivering a sustainable railway*, Cm 7176, July 2007, section 7

<sup>21</sup> DfT press notice, "Extra funding for rural stations", 15 May 2008

<sup>22</sup> ATOC, *Connecting Communities: Expanding Access to the Rail Network*, June 2009, p11

<sup>23</sup> Conservative Party, *Conservative rail review: getting the best for passengers*, February 2009, p2 & section 5.7

greater control over local light and community rail.<sup>24</sup> There was no mention of Community Rail in the Coalition Agreement.<sup>25</sup>

The January 2011 local transport White Paper stated that support for the railway in the form of Community Rail Partnerships “has delivered an estimated £27m in added value for the railway, and the North Yorkshire Moors Railway estimates an additional £30m in benefits to the local economy through Heritage Rail”.<sup>26</sup> The paper confirmed the government’s support for these schemes and set it within the context of its broader ‘Big Society’ agenda:

While a number of partnerships are hosted by and almost all receive some funding from their local authorities, they are essentially Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise bodies. There are around 40 Community Rail Partnerships in England and Wales. Community Rail Partnerships allow local people to play an active role in the developing local rail services and they bring together train operators, Network Rail, local authorities, local employers, development and tourism agencies, community groups and other locally based groups.

Research by Independent Rail Consultancy Group showed that over 4,000 volunteers are involved in community rail activities on the national rail network (excluding heritage railways), contributing in excess of 1.2m hours of work, bringing an estimated £27m additional value to the rail industry (Independent Rail Consulting Group, 2009).<sup>27</sup>

A January 2011 article in *Local Transport Today* pointed towards proposals to give local areas more power to aid community rail lines:

The cost of running rural rail services could be cut by giving local authorities and local communities a bigger say in how they are run, according to a blueprint by one of the country’s leading community rail experts.

Merseytravel this week considered the proposals that have been submitted to ministers by Paul Salveson, who runs the Railway Doctor consultancy. Salveson initiated the community rail concept in the early 1990s and established the Association of Community Rail Partnerships in 1997.

[...] Salveson says the previous Government’s community rail strategy has increased patronage and community involvement in rural lines but has “hardly made a dent in the area of costs”.

[...] Salveson calls for local network franchising managed by PTEs, county councils or consortia of local authorities. Networks would be funded by a top-slice from the DfT’s payments to the parent franchise, or they could be funded by the parent franchise on a sub-contracted basis [...] Salveson suggests feeder bus services could be included in the franchise specification.

He believes the networks could attract bids from established operators as well as open access operators, bus operators and social enterprise companies.

Salveson says infrastructure should remain in the ownership of Network Rail but maintenance of track and stations could be devolved to the local operator or to a joint

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<sup>24</sup> Liberal Democrats, *Fast Track Britain: Building a Transport System for the 21st Century*, Policy Paper 85, June 2008, pp7&18

<sup>25</sup> HMG, *The Coalition: Our Programme for Government*, May 2010

<sup>26</sup> DfT, *Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen*, Cm 7996, January 2011, p80

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, paras 8.18-8.19

venture body including the train operator, NR, the local authority, community rail partnership and bus operator.<sup>28</sup>

As indicated above, in May 2008 the Labour Government launched the Designated Community Rail Development Fund (DCRDF). The fund is still in existence and has been increased to approximately £100,000 for 2011-12.<sup>29</sup> In total, the Coalition Government provided £208,000 in core funding for ACoRP's work in 2010/11.<sup>30</sup> More generally on the funding side, the public spending cuts that have affected all departments have raised concerns about the potential impact on community rail lines. That said, a May 2011 report in *The Guardian* stated that despite the cuts community rail lines are 'thriving':

Many of the lines have experienced double-digit growth, thanks to imaginative promotion and community involvement, backed up by modest investment. Stations have experienced a new lease of life through community adoption, including a social enterprise which runs the booking office of a formerly unstaffed rural station [...]

But as local authorities face hard decisions over budgets, some of these partnerships have already had their funding reduced and train operators are unable to make up the shortfall [...]

Despite looming local authority cuts, Neil Buxton, general manager of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP), says he is "optimistic" about the future. "A small number of councils have withdrawn their support. But the contribution our members make to regeneration and social inclusion is being recognised, as well as the transport benefits."

The signs are that most community rail partnerships will survive the austerity drive, though some with less capacity. Dr Beeching wouldn't be pleased, but many local communities will be.<sup>31</sup>

### 3 Co-operative rail

As indicated above, in recent years there have been calls from across the political spectrum to help community rail lines grow and to enable them to take more control of the management of their lines and infrastructure. Since the election all political parties have been looking at ways of decentralising power from government to communities. Community rail was one of the pre-existing successful examples of how this has been achieved. The government is looking to entrench the idea in its broader ideas of 'the Big Society', while Labour and the Co-Operative Party have looked at alternative ways to develop the idea.

In April 2011 the Co-operative Party published a paper by the noted transport commentator Christian Wolmar aimed at introducing co-operation into the rail network alongside competition. While this looked at many issues beside community rail, it did remark that together the "...McNulty Review on the structure of the industry, the opportunities offered by devolved transport policy and the grass roots entrepreneurship of small-scale co-operative and community rail add up to a unique opportunity to foster a culture of social responsibility

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<sup>28</sup> "Give councils key role in reducing cost of community railways", *Local Transport Today*, 14 January 2011, (LTT 562)

<sup>29</sup> ACoRP, *Train Times*, Spring 2011, p8

<sup>30</sup> op cit., *Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen*, para 8.16

<sup>31</sup> "Community railways are on the right track", *The Guardian*, 31 May 2011

alongside the discipline of commercial enterprise".<sup>32</sup> It also favourably mentioned Paul Salveson's proposals for 'microfranchising':

A more modest proposal has been put forward by Paul Salveson, a long time advocate of community involvement in rail. He suggests that a particular line or a small group of lines could be operated on the basis of a microfranchise, under community and passenger control: 'The operations could either be sub-contracts from existing franchises, or taken out and run as small, discrete, franchises which are managed by a sub-regional body (eg a county council, Passenger Transport Executive, or consortium of local authorities) over a long franchise period (up to 25 years)'. They could even be combined with local bus services and run on a mutual basis. Small franchises work well in Germany, Sweden and Denmark – and the franchising body is usually the regional government or county council – although up to now most franchises have been awarded to the big multi-national groups such as Arriva and Veolia.<sup>33</sup>

There was a debate in the House on co-operative rail in October 2010. While this focused more broadly on trying to get mutual and co-operative enterprises involved in the rail franchising process, towards the end of the debate the Railways Minister, Theresa Villiers had the following to say on co-operative, community rail:

The voluntary and not-for-profit groups are already successfully engaged with the UK's railways: I refer to community rail partnerships. The Government are very supportive of such partnerships and the work that they do. They have successfully brought additional passengers to many lines and helped to build up services and make better use of redundant property. For example, the Devon and Cornwall rail partnership works with the train operator in selling tickets at a number of locations. It encourages rail use by making it easier for the public to buy tickets. Partnerships such as South Fylde, Leeds to Morecambe and the Clitheroe line have produced impressive promotional material. Others such as the Bittern line in Norfolk have run successful promotional events. Almost all partnerships see the voluntary sector involved in improving and maintaining station facilities. There are numerous examples of local enthusiasts devoting huge care and attention to station gardens and floral displays. Right across the country, from Penmere in Cornwall to West Runton in Norfolk and Green Road in Cumbria, we see the visual evidence of the value of the work done by the voluntary and not-for-profit sector on our railways.<sup>34</sup>

## 4 Network modification

Part 4 of the *Railways Act 2005* concerns 'network modification'.<sup>35</sup> The *Regulatory Impact Assessment* that accompanied the Bill stated that the provisions in Part 4 did not imply an attempt to make it easier to close rail lines and that "the Government has no plans for a programme of discontinuing passenger services or closing parts of networks, stations or light maintenance depots".<sup>36</sup> The *Explanatory Notes* to the Act state Part 4 set out "procedures for operators and public sector funders to follow when they wish to discontinue all passenger services on a line or from a station or close all or part of a network or station".

The use of the term 'network modification' did raise questions when the Bill was being debated in the House; Members argued that the intent behind the relevant clauses had not

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<sup>32</sup> Christian Wolmar for the Co-Operative Party, H*Co-operative rail: a radical solution*H, April 2011, p4

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p16

<sup>34</sup> [HHC Deb 20 October 2010, c312WH](#)

<sup>35</sup> further details can be found in section H of HC Library Research Paper [HRP 04/86](#)

<sup>36</sup> RIA to Bill 6 of 2004-05, p49

been properly explained and would permit the government to close lines at will.<sup>37</sup> The Transport Minister at the time, Tony McNulty, refuted the claims:

This is not about a secret agenda. It is not about closures. It is not about me or any successor of mine being the new manifestation of the Conservative Dr. Beeching. It is about putting in place as robust a process for network modification as we possibly can, not least because of the demise of the SRA and the old RPCs. I cheerfully apologise for taking 22 clauses to do that, but we start from an extremely complex body of legislation. We sought, at least in part, to detract from rather than add to that complexity by bringing things forward in the way that we have done.<sup>38</sup>

The closure issue was also highlighted by the Transport Committee in a March 2005 report on rural railways.<sup>39</sup>

In January 2006 the government published a consultation document on the implementation of the provisions in the *Railways Act 2005* relating to network changes.<sup>40</sup> In a statement to the House, the then Secretary of State for Transport, Alistair Darling, said:

This guidance will ensure that safeguards and standard practices are applied to any proposals for changes on the rail network. For the first time, statutory guidance will be put in place on rail closures, making procedures clearer and more transparent. It will also ensure certain procedures are taken into account before any rail closure can be considered.<sup>41</sup>

Concerns were expressed at the time in the transport press that the guidance was poorly drafted.<sup>42</sup> Reports indicated that the government had 'pledged' to clarify the guidance following further criticism from economists.<sup>43</sup> There was also some debate in the press, reflecting concerns earlier expressed during the passage of the 2005 Act, that the guidance, combined with the government's spending priorities, might lead to more rural rail lines being closed. Many newspapers picked up on a comment made by the then Secretary of State during a debate on the Government's 10 year transport plan in February 2006 that community rail was in "the last chance saloon":

I have said time and again that I am happy to support rural railway lines. The community development partnerships that we announced a couple of years ago are designed to give lines that are in the last chance saloon a chance to continue, and they have been quite successful. It beggars belief that we should reach a point at which no one is using a train or a station, and say that nothing can ever be done about it.<sup>44</sup>

There were subsequent reports in *The Times* that rural rail lines would be cut despite growing popularity, particularly in the West Country.<sup>45</sup> Adrian Lyons, director-general of the Railway Forum, was quoted as saying: "There is a hard-nosed view that the rail share of the

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<sup>37</sup> e.g. [HSC Deb \(A\), 13 January 2005, cc195-196H](#) (Rt. Hon. Greg Knight MP) and c199 (Dr John Pugh MP)

<sup>38</sup> [ibid.](#), c204

<sup>39</sup> Transport Committee, [HRural RailwaysH](#) (fifth report of session 2004-05), HC 169, 15 March 2005, para 12

<sup>40</sup> DfT, [HRailways act 2005: Implementation of network modification provisionsH](#), 26 January 2006

<sup>41</sup> [HHC Deb 26 January 2006, cc67-68WS](#)

<sup>42</sup> e.g. "Does rail closure guidance represent merely good housekeeping, or agenda-setting?", *Local Transport Today*, LTT 436, 9 February 2006

<sup>43</sup> "DfT pledges to clarify rail closure guidance", *Local Transport Today*, LTT 437, 23 February 2006

<sup>44</sup> [HHC Deb 1 February 2006, c402](#)

<sup>45</sup> see, for example, "[HBiggest cuts since Beeching will slash rural train servicesH](#)", *The Times*, 25 February 2006; and "[HRural rail services to be cut despite growing popularityH](#)", *The Times*, 9 March 2006

transport budget must be reduced. Any service seen to have low patronage is now vulnerable".<sup>46</sup>

The government published its response to the consultation in October 2006.<sup>47</sup> The new [Railways Closures Guidance](#) was laid before the House on 24 October.<sup>48</sup> The guidance was brought into effect on 1 December 2006 by the *Closures Guidance (Railway Services in England and Wales) Order 2006* ([SI 2006/2836](#)) and the *Closures Guidance (Railway Services in Scotland and England) Order 2006* ([SI 2006/2837](#)).

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, "Biggest cuts since Beeching will slash rural train services"

<sup>47</sup> DfT, *HGovernment Response to the Consultation on the Implementation of the Railways Act 2005 Provisions on Closures and Minor Modifications*<sup>H</sup>, 18 October 2006, pp6-9

<sup>48</sup> HHC Deb 24 October 2006, c88WS