

NORTHAMPTON RAIL USERS GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held 4th December 2010

Those Present: Brian Binley MP, Colin Bricher, John Ellerby (NCC), Shaun Hope, Gyde Horrocks, Mitzi Latham (London Midland), Paul Minton, Simon Mitchell, Cllr Suresh Patel (NCC), Patrick Rawlinson, Geoff Steel, Paul Smith, Tom Welsh, Paul Varnsverry.

Apologies: David Cheney, Mike Clark (Passenger Focus), Neil Langford (LM), Daniel Smith, Elisabeth Townsend, David Trill.

Minutes of Last Meeting: Accepted.

The group pass on their best wishes to Elisabeth.

LONDON MIDLAND REPORT

The past 3 performance periods have seen PPM of 92.6% overall and 91.9 on the Euston and SE route. Autumn leaf fall had an impact as did points failures and rail cracks. NR will provide 24hr mobile operations managers to address points failures and the such in order to speed up rectification, a welcome response by NR.

Cable thefts have the attention of the police and are being addressed through the use of smart water.

LM are meeting the remedial plan set by DfT. On top of these LM have set some more rigorous stretch targets for internal performance measure which have yet to be achieved.

Simon Mitchell went through the analysis of the impact of the evening off-peak restrictions with the suggestion to start and end the restrictions later. However LM report the 16.48 to be very busy already and no carriages are available to lengthen the train. The issue seems to be displacing passengers to the least crowded train.

The half term offers seem to have contributed to considerable overcrowding, Mitzi will feed back our comments regarding the impact of the offer – as far as NRUG are concerned it was good to see the offer result in a good uptake of rail travel since increased rail travel is part of our objective, however the impacts on ticket queues and overcrowding were negative.

The recent cold weather resulted in delays due to points problems at Kings Heath and Riverside. NRUG to take up the issue of lack of heating a poor ensuing reliability with NR (post meeting note – this seems to have been a premonition of bad times to come for the rest of December!)

The Passenger Focus report on delay announcements etc was brought to Mitzi's attention – LM are holding disruption training sessions, including information and customer focused training.

Contingency planning – the plight of some of the severe delays to Southern trains was mentioned and LM asked about how they would handle such problems. Mitzi reported that LM have contingency plans in the case of failed trains and how to get water/food etc to them in case of severe delays. General contingency planning for delays, fatalities, bridge bashes etc are underway and getting better.

Extra sets: LM are “on the task” but do not know what they will get yet.

Northampton car park – the credit card readers not working: the radio mast (amongst others) has been switched off by BT. New machines are being sought PDQ, and NRUG give credit to Mitzi’s fast actions on this. The problem affects all stations.

The bus signs for replacement coaches no longer work for coaches on West Bridge since they can not turn into St Andrews Road – John Ellerby to look at.

LM has asked for increased track access to improve the WCML and TV services.

3rd LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

Individuals are encouraged to respond. The secretary will submit a response for NRUG. A NRUG meeting on Sat 8th Jan has been convened to develop our reply. 10am in the Guildhall as usual, but single agenda.

SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE SUBGROUP

Paul Varnsberry, Geoff Steel and Paul smith presented a charter for their subgroup. This was accepted by the group, who also asked then to consider the impact of the ending of moderation of competition and the end of the Virgin franchise.

NRUG express their appreciation to Geoff, Paul and Paul in taking this on.

AOB:

Brian saw Peter Morson after last month’s meeting. Peter thought the meeting immensely constructive, appreciated the level of expertise in the feedback and hopes we can “stay together” on the station development.

ACTION ITEMS

Write to the University of Northampton regarding presence of the University of Northampton transport committee at NRUG meetings – **Brian Binley - DONE**

Add UoN representative as blank line on attendance sheet - **PAM**

Talk informally to Phillip Hammond. Topics to include: IEP; additional carriages for existing fleet; fare increases - regulated and unregulated; line speed upgrade MK to Northampton to Rugby to enable Northampton to benefit fully from fast line slots; impact on upgrade via maintenance programmes if maintenance is cut back. – **Brian Binley – ONGOING**

Add desirability of getting more Rugby stops to enable decent connections to the north into conversation with Philip Hammond. First stop Warrington does not serve Northampton at all well. – **Brian Binley.**

Write to Network Rail re need for loop upgrade, and specifically emphasise the strategic importance of planned maintenance and upgrades via planned maintenance and the need for it to be in CP4 – **Brian Binley – DONE**

Press NBC & NCC to protect Northampton's interest over HS-2 – **Brian Binley & Paul Varnvarry**

See if we can get NR to a meeting – **Geoff Steel/Paul Smith – IN HAND**

See if we can get one of LM's timetabling staff for a future monthly meeting - **Geoff Steel/Paul Smith – IN HAND**

Make contact with Chiltern, Grand Central - **Paul Smith**

Add Chamber of Commerce to circulation list – **Paul Minton**

Bus signs off West Bridge – **John Ellerby**

Find out if Virgin can rebid for the franchise – **Brian Binley**

NR re need for heated points at Riverside and Kings Heath - **PAM**

Northampton Rail User's Group

**Agenda for Meeting to be held Saturday 8th January 2011
The Guildhall, Northampton**

10.00 – 10.05: Meeting opens, apologies, minutes of last meeting and AOB

10.05 – 11.00: NRUG reply to 3rd local transport plan

11.00 – 11.10: AOB

11.10: Meeting closes