

NORTHAMPTON RAIL USERS GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held 6th November 2010

Those Present: Brian Binley MP, Colin Bricher, David Cheney, John Ellerby, Willy Gilder (BBC Northampton), Shaun Hope, Alan Jones, Sally Keeble, Peter Mawson (WNDC), Paul Minton, Simon Mitchell, Cllr Suresh Patel, Patrick Rawlinson, Paul Smith, Tom Welsh, Paul Varnsvarry, Diana Wright.

Apologies: Simon Butterworth, Mike Clark, John Ellerby, Gyde Horrocks, Geoff Steel, Daniel Smith, Elisabeth Townsend, David Trill.

Minutes of Last Meeting: Accepted.

NEW STATION

NRUG welcomed Peter Mawson of WNDC. Peter gave a good description of the proposed new station and presented a number of drawings and illustrations. WNDC emphasise their desire for Castle Station to be a quality gateway to Northampton and one that satisfies the needs of the people using it. The new design doubles the size of the station to address overcrowding.

The main access will be off St. Andrew's Road. The station will be built first followed by a new multi-storey car park. Construction has to be worked so as to enable the use of the existing station and car parks whilst the new are built. Design work will continue to spring 2011, design and construction is anticipated for 2011 – 2013 with the station commissioned in 2013 followed by the new car park in 2015. The goods yard is presumed to remain.

The design will be DDA compliant and get a high BREEM rating for energy efficiency. A discussion ensued about DDA compliance, specific points being: how to verify the design is suited; ensuring the whole range of equal access is addressed and not limited to a designer's view of wheelchair ramps and disabled toilets. The Equality Act (successor to DDA) specifies a duty to anticipate and a duty to be evolutionary and covers the whole journey experience, and not just building regulations. It was pointed out that access needed to address all needs, including the elderly and people with buggies and prams who might be able bodied but still needed an appropriate design.

Peter's response to the discussion was: WNDC take as read the station will be technically compliant and that consultation will be the mechanism to test the design. NRUG, the Disabled People Forum and University Disabled People's forum were all identified as suitable consultees.

The anticipated cost is ~£40 million and has yet to be secured, however £1 million funding has been obtained to develop the design and case to "compelling" to enable it to go to the funding stage. The designers and consultants, BDC and Hyder, will present the costed options next year.

A variety of funding options were suggested by Sally, including mixing private (property development) with public (tracks), WNDC being "on side" with the strategy.

Whilst the UDC will be phased out Peter explained that the station was a bigger issue than the UDC and the development is robust to political and institutional changes and will continue.

AOB:

Alliance rail have proposals to run to Crewe and Carlisle – but not stop at Rugby so preventing access for Northampton based passengers.

John Ellerby has been approached by 1 company discussing post moderation of competition – he will let them know we would like to meet with them.

Long hold ups and delays – there is a perception staff seem to vanish in these events. For long delays on trains there may be an issue with supply of drinking water and access to toilets.

The safety/security implication of congestion in London and risk of travel through London was raised, including the desire for using peripheral routes to avoid the centre.

Crossrail will create disruption – we should get a briefing on the impact.

The conclusion of the off peak restriction is that it should start later and end later – bring up with LM next meeting.

ACTION ITEMS

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

Press release over station and next meeting – **Paul Varnsvarry/Paul Smith - DONE**

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 – draft to be written by Paul Minton**

Send list of members to Brian – **Paul Minton - DONE**

Brief WNDC re next months meeting ie agenda is to include: New station; HS-2; transfer of planning to NCC and UDC phase out mechanism – **Brian Binley - DONE**

Remind John Ellerby re NCC transport presentation – **Paul Minton - DONE**

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

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**

Prepare briefing sheet re off peak restrictions – **Simon Mitchell – DONE – BF to next months meeting with LM present.**

Write to NCC over lack of attendance at time tabling meeting. At same time express our thanks for John Ellerby's continued presence and effort - **Paul Varnsvarry – DONE**

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

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

Northampton Rail User's Group

**Agenda for Meeting to be held Saturday 4th December 2010
The Guildhall, Northampton**

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

10.05 – 10.45: LM Report

10.45 – 11.20: End of moderation of competition – new services and other opportunities

11.20 – 11.40: Review of action items from last meeting & new action items

11.40 – 11.50: AOB

11.50: Meeting closes