



Report of a meeting of the NRUG 'Service & Infrastructure Strategy Group'

Held on Friday 26th November, 4.30 pm in the Jeffery Room, Guildhall

Present: Geoff Steel, Paul Smith and Paul Varnsberry

Also in attendance: Daniel Smith (NRUG Webmaster)

Apologies: None

Background: NRUG had agreed to establish a sub group to investigate and advise the main group on key strategic issues pertaining to timetabling, service and infrastructure which might impact on the interests of rail users in Northampton.

The sub group proposes the title '**Service & Infrastructure Strategy Group**' for consideration and approval by the main group.

ACTION 1: NRUG December meeting to approve/amend the sub group's title

The sub group proposes the following DRAFT Terms of Reference, for consideration and approval by the main group:

1. To consider the implications for Northampton rail travellers arising from the end of Moderation of Competition and how this might open up access to other operators;
2. To consider the London Midland strategy for the post 2012 timetable;
3. To consider the implications for Northampton rail travellers arising from the announcement that the Intercity Express programme (IEP) has been placed on 'hold';
4. To provide an analysis of the outcome of the 25 November announcement on central government investment in the rail network and decision on fares increases;
5. To inform NRUG's contributions to the consultations on the draft West Coast and West Midlands Route Utilisation Strategies.

ACTION 2: NRUG December meeting to approve/amend ToR as required.

In arriving at these draft Terms of Reference, the following issues were considered:

The outline LM timetable does not show any strengthening of the current peak services both in the up and down directions. Also, NRUG's lobbying for a fast train to replace the 0712 or an arrival into Euston just before 0800hrs is not on the radar which is a key issue for NRUG.

The first train towards Birmingham on Sundays is still 0930 which is far too late given the route serves Birmingham International Airport. Network Rail needs to review its engineering access requirements to allow earlier trains.

Consequently, the sub group expressed surprise at reports that DfT and ORR are each of the view that Northampton's rail travellers receive a good service, since this opinion will clearly influence the post 2012 programme.

Regarding IEP; the Secretary of State apparently prefers the option for a train that has dual power options to give through services. Two options are combined electric/diesel traction or an all electric train with purpose built diesel locos to be attached on non electrified sections of track.

It was noted that the London Midland Business case for the 2012 timetable places emphasis on extending the Crewe service to Liverpool and diverting one train from Birmingham to Preston.

Consideration needs to be given to the relationships if any between the timetables and local transport plans.

There is a need to ensure NRUG's views are provided to inform the schemes that might go into the Control Period 5 spend. Infrastructure investment - in particular additional line capacity into Castle Station - should form part of individual NRUG members' and the group's responses to Northampton Borough Council's Central Area Action Plan consultation (closes 16th December – visit:

http://www.northampton.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=216&pageNumber=6)

ACTION 3: Individual NRUG members to be encouraged to take part in the consultation. NRUG to submit written comments.

Recommendations

1. NRUG December meeting to consider Action Points 1 and 2
2. Should the Terms of Reference be accepted in their proposed or amended forms, this may create the need for additional sub groups, each of which might investigate and provide recommendations on specific issues.
3. In accordance with action Point 3; individual NRUG members to be encouraged to take part in the consultation. NRUG as a body to submit written comments.
4. The sub group believes the idea of entering into closer liaison with the Long Buckby, Rugby and Milton Keynes Rail Users Groups. NRUG should offer to convene a joint meeting, which could lead to similar meetings being convened on an annual or six-monthly basis according to need or developments.

Geoff Steel
Paul Smith
Paul Varnsberry

1st December 2010