

Milton Keynes and Bletchley Rail User Group

Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday 9 January 2007

Present: Louise Green, Alan Francis, Andrew Fisher, Sean Hickey, Peter J Smith, Chris Wright (OBRAC), Andrew Couldrake, Paul Bryan (Silverlink Trains)

Apologies: Stuart Nightingale, Keeley Eaton (Virgin Trains), Steve Leyland (Virgin Trains)

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2. Update From Silverlink Trains

Paul Bryan reported that he had returned to his post of Group Station Manager following a secondment to project work. The charter figure for period 12 were 86% compared with 90.2% last year. The PPM figure was 90.9% compared with 89.1% last year. Paul also confirmed that there are now MKBRUG poster up around the station, including several in the car park and one in the waiting room at the North end of platform 2.

2.1 He acknowledged the problems experienced when the power lines were damaged before Christmas and explained that it did take a couple of hours to put alternative arrangements in place. There appeared to be particular organisational difficulties at Euston, which is not run by Silverlink.

2.2 Louise Green asked why the 17.23 from Euston to Milton Keynes is now changing to the slow track at Hemel Hempstead rather than at Ledburn junction. This is often causing the service to arrive late at Leighton Buzzard as it is following the 17.09 Euston to Tring which stops at more stations. Paul Bryan will take this up with Mark Steward. **Action: PB**

2.3 A member of the travelling public had emailed the group to explain that several times, late at night, his son had narrowly avoided missing his train due to platform alterations at Milton Keynes that were not announced. Paul Bryan explained that there are no Silverlink staff on after Midnight; Virgin staff are on duty until 1am. However, it is Network Rail who make these changes and they do not tell the station staff. Paul Bryan will take this matter up. **Action: PB**

3. Update From Virgin Train Services

Steve Leyland had emailed a letter regarding Virgin's "set down only" policy at Milton Keynes (copy attached). This policy will not change for the foreseeable future.

4. Dr Starkey's Meeting with Transport Minister

Dr Starkey had supplied notes of her meeting with the transport minister (attached). The committee noted in Point 2 that from the 2008 timetable "...commuter services to and from London will be on the fast line. There will be 2 fast services an hour but in Desiro Trains." It was also agreed that there is a demand for a Gatwick service. Paul Bryan confirmed that he received many letters complaining when the Gatwick service was withdrawn.

5. Response to Rail Fare Increases

The Committee agreed that lower fare increases would be preferable but that any formal complaint would make little difference.

6. Milton Keynes Stations Working Group

Alan Francis reported that scrub clearance at the back of Platform 5 at MKC has begun. In April the bridge at the North End of the station will be demolished. Network Rail has now presented a better scheme for the new platform at Bletchley. Bedford trains will use platform 5 rather than 6. Alan hopes that this scheme will now be adopted as it addresses various issues.

Alan Francis noted that in Dr Starkey's letter there was mention of 110mph trains on the East/West rail link. This comes from a soon-to-be-published consultants report which considers the option of running south coast trains up to Manchester via Milton Keynes and the Trent Valley. These trains would use double track and would require 110mph running.

7. Any Other Business

Louise Green asked if our account had been put on the Group's web site. Andrew Fisher explained that this had not been done and asked Sean Hickey to confirm the exact amount of money in the Group's account. He will then send a file to Andrew Couldrake who will put this on the Group's web site. **Action: Andrew Fisher/SH**

8. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 6 February at 19.30