

Milton Keynes and Bletchley Rail User Group

Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday 5 June 2007

Present: Louise Green, Alan Francis, Andrew Couldrake, Chris Wright, Andrew Fisher, Stuart Nightingale, Paul Bryan (Silverlink Trains), Samantha Hodder (Govia), Jill Hope (Liberal Democrats)

Apologies: Steve Leyland (Virgin Trains), Peter J Smith

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Outstanding Issues

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved

Alan Francis informed the Committee that the Department for Transport thirty year plan and white paper had now been published. He felt it was a disappointing document and both he and Chris Wright could find no mention of the East/West Rail Link.

Phyllis Starkey had copied the Group in on a letter she wrote to the DfT regarding the extension of the Brighton to Watford service to MKC. The Network Rail is in fact suggesting that the route be cut so that it does not go beyond somewhere in S London, Clapham Jn and Croydon are possibilities; there was no comment on the service being extended North to MKC. Dr Starkey is advocating that the service goes at least as far as Croydon, if not Gatwick. Paul Bryan confirmed that he is not aware of any plans regarding this service.

Andrew Fisher informed the Group that he has written to the Chamber of Commerce regarding access to the Group's funds. He is still awaiting a reply.

Andrew Couldrake raised the issue of the bridge closure south of the station. He explained that there is no alternative cycle route as the cycle path at the side of the temporary car park has been blocked. Paul Bryan offered to take up this issue with the Project Manager. **Action: PB**

Alan Francis confirmed that he is still awaiting a response from Network Rail regarding why the bridge was closed. He will also take up the issue of a diversionary route. **Action: AF**

2. New Franchise – Govia

Samantha Hodder, Communications Director at Govia, addressed the meeting. She explained that Govia will take over on November 11 2007 and the new service will be called London Midland. New rolling stock has been ordered. These are Desiros which will be in a 3+2 formation and will have air conditioning. New livery will be introduced and stations will be updated. Regulated fares will be at inflation plus 1%. Govia will also be reinstating the London to Birmingham via Northampton service, from December 2008. A new management team will be announced in due course. It is likely that there will be no major changes until December 2008. She encouraged anyone with questions to contact her. They also have a web site with a FAQs section.

Alan Francis asked if Govia would be willing to make a short presentation at the Group's AGM on October 2nd. Samantha confirmed that they would.

3. Update from Silverlink Train Services

Paul Bryan confirmed that services have continued to improve. The Charter Performance for the period July to Mid August stood at 97.2% with the All Day PPM at 95.4%. These results are some of the highest achieved. The work at MKC station is currently 6 weeks ahead of schedule.

He mentioned that car parking facilities at MKC are full on most working days and staff are having to turn customers away. He stated that this issue needs to be sorted as a matter of urgency. Samantha Hodder confirmed that Govia intend to increase the parking at MKC but she did not know how many extra spaces were planned. The Committee agreed this, together with the traffic arrangements at the front of the station, were crucial.

Paul informed the Committee that Virgin have a new station manager at MKC. She will liaise with Steve Leyland regarding attendance at our meetings.

4. Update from Virgin Train Services

Steve Leyland was unable to attend.

6. Arrangements for Annual General Meeting

These will be as follows:

Book room at Chamber and arrange projector facilities. **Action: LG**
Posters and leaflets for distribution at MKC and Bletchley. **Action: LG/PB/AF**
Invite DfT and Passenger Focus representative. **Action: AF**
Press release. **Action: AF**

7. Any Other Business

Samantha Hodder informed the Committee that Govia has a Stakeholder Advisory Board which consists of a mix of staff, customers and the Managing Director. They will be inviting people to apply to join this board. Full information is available on the web site.

7. Date of Next Meeting

AGM – Tuesday 2 October 2007
Committee Meeting – Tuesday 6 November 2007