

# **BROMSGROVE RAIL USER GROUP (BRUG)**

Minutes of a meeting held at the Committee Room, Parkside, Wednesday 27 November 2019

## **Present:**

Robert Cholmondeley (Chairman & Secretary), Paul Evans, Neil Franklin, Peter Hughes, Rory Shannon, Sean Shannon, Nick Taylor, Graham Vickery, Tony Woodward.

## **1. Apologies and Minutes**

- Apologies had been received from Margaret Evans, Roy & Sue Hughes, Edwin Read and Caroline Spencer.

## **2. Subscriptions commencing in 2020**

- A functional bank mandate has been put in place.
- It was agreed to commence annual subscriptions in 2020 once the future structure and scope of the group has been determined

## **3. Extending BRUG to include Redditch**

- Extending BRUG to include Redditch requires consideration of who is being represented and to whom BRUG reports and communicates. Obtaining membership from Redditch residents needs to be achieved. Alignment between the Bromsgrove and Redditch is to be agreed and how to raise the profile of the new Group within Worcestershire County Council (WCC).
- A new list of contacts is to be drawn up and then the ways in which BRUG membership from Redditch can be attained.

## **4. Winter Timetables**

- The new timetables come into operation from 15 December 2019.
- There are no material changes to the Cross City or the Birmingham to Hereford line services. The gaps in the Cross City Line service to Bromsgrove remain when some services terminate at Longbridge (believed to be because paths for freight trains are needed).
- It was noted that rolling stock is to be freed up from the Chase Line which will be reallocated to the Hereford trains which should ease some of the overcrowding.

## **5. Worcestershire Parkway**

- The station opens on 15 December 2019.
- It is being served by Cross Country's Birmingham - Cardiff trains which do not call at Bromsgrove.
- The Great Western (Cotswold Line) is only single track through the station, though there is passive provision for future doubling. This impediment leaves gaps in the regularity of Hereford-London trains.
- The concerns of BRUG are that (i) the Cross Country trains serving Worcestershire Parkway do not stop at Bromsgrove; and (ii) there is little connectivity between the two lines' services inhibiting the use of the station as an interchange.

## **6. Issues at Bromsgrove Station**

- Improvements on the platforms to be pursued are (i) more covered shelter areas (especially closer to the footbridge); (ii) improvements to the rubbish bins so the plastic bags do not blow off when fast trains pass.
- Ticket pricing, from and to Bromsgrove, seems comparatively higher than other journeys on the Cross City Line.
- The time taken by Cross City trains to change their destination boards sometimes leads to confusion when passengers descend the steps. It was recommended that enquiries be made about a change of working practice, if the Class 323 technology allows.
- With the station car park now frequently full, raising the possibility of increased capacity will be taken on board by BRUG.
- Bus interchange could be improved by (i) the 2 stops being differentiated between buses to Bromsgrove town centre, and those from Bromsgrove town centre; and (ii) better promotion of the bus link between the two, especially in central Bromsgrove and possibly on some of the buses too.
- Crime and anti-social behaviour remain a problem. One suggestion is that locking cycle boxes are introduced in preference to the current open racks.
- The lack of a footpath on both sides on the western road exit to Stoke Road, is resulting in pedestrians in the road. The new footpath entrance to the station car park from Garrington Road is due to open on a pilot basis in early 2020. The concerns about this encouraging free street parking were noted.

## **7. Alvechurch and Barnt Green**

- Alvechurch has been identified as one of three stations in Worcestershire to which consideration of additional car parking is being given at a very early stage at WCC level.
- The installation of lifts at Barnt Green (due in 2015 to comply with the Equality Act) is slowly moving forward with the first hurdle through the Department for Transport successfully negotiated by Network Rail.

- The list of improvements to Barnt Green station submitted by the Parish Council to West Midlands Rail has not yet elicited a substantive response.

#### **8. Camp Hill Line**

- Decisions are still awaited on the extent of the proposed services on the Camp Hill Line, though it is recognised that there will be pressure and substantial costs if trains are terminated at Kings Norton.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

- Peter Chapman from the Community Rail Partnership joined the meeting and gave a brief outline of his new role, reporting to Andrew Leo at WMRE (West Midlands Rail Executive) and to the Worcestershire Partnership.

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