

BROMSGROVE AND REDDITCH RAIL USER PARTNERSHIP (BARRUP)

Minutes of a meeting held at the Committee Room, Parkside, Bromsgrove on
Tuesday 16 January 2024 at 14.15

Present

Robert Cholmondeley (Chairman & Secretary), Neil Franklin, Peter Hughes, Pat Tansell (representing The Bromsgrove Society), Nick Taylor, Graham Vickery

1. Apologies

- Apologies had been received from Tony Woodward.

2. Minutes 3.10.2023

- The minutes of the last meeting held on 3 October 2023 were accepted.

3. Feedback on Issues Raised about May 2023 Timetables

- Notwithstanding pathing issues, it still seems incongruous that 3 times per day the connection from Worcester to the Cross City Line for Barnt Green and Redditch at Bromsgrove involves a 47 minute wait.
- One of the key aims for BARRUP is that the Birmingham to Hereford services should call at Barnt Green. Members agreed that this could be at the expense of all the Cross City Trains to Bromsgrove not stopping at Barnt Green. There would be no increase in train numbers per hour. It was agreed that this suggestion should be put to West Midlands Rail (WMR). Action RC
- With new trains and additional capacity, it was agreed that the feasibility of the 07.52 from Worcester to Birmingham New Street calling at Bromsgrove should be reviewed as overcrowding should reduce. It was agreed that WMR will be asked when a further review of capacity constraints on this service will be conducted and a resolution sought. Action: RC
- It was agreed that a list of the improvements which BARRUP is seeking should be submitted to WMR for discussion and/or response. Action: RC.

4. GWR Worcester - Bristol Service

- Tony Woodward is working on an analysis of connections between GWR and WMR (northbound to Bromsgrove) at Worcester.
- The success of Worcestershire Parkway achieving footfall above planned expectations was noted. Members were curious to find out the split between travel on the Cotswold Line and the Cheltenham to Birmingham line.

5. West Midlands Rail Executive Investment Strategy 2023-2050

- The final version of the strategy circulated in late 2023 is no longer final because of the implications of the cancellation of Phase 2 of HS2 and funding and capacity implications of the Midlands Rail Hub. In the earlier document a semi-fast Birmingham to Bristol service was to be introduced by the end of 2023. This has now been downgraded and will not happen before

2029 at the earliest without any commitment that a stop at Bromsgrove would be part of such a service. It is now a project which Worcestershire County Council (WCC) would support, but not one that it would champion.

- NT is tracking publication of the strategy document so a review of the final version can be conducted.

6. Station Round-Up

- Bromsgrove – In December, NT, J Ellidge (Bromsgrove Councillor for Aston Fields) and RC met Andrew Leo of WMRE (West Midlands Rail Executive) concerning the state of the steps to the platforms and the lack of covered waiting areas on the platforms. These issues are being taken forward and there has been subsequent correspondence.
- Redditch – no update.
- Alvechurch – no update.
- Barnt Green – There are no dates specified for the installation of lifts, notwithstanding press updates in The Bromsgrove Standard and correspondence with Barnt Green Parish Council. The Network Rail website is due to have a link to the project by the end of January 2024.

7. New Rolling Stock

- The Class 196s have now replaced the Class 170 Turbostars between Birmingham New Street and Hereford. In December some 2 carriage trains were overcrowded at peak times, though it looks as though the diagramming problems have now been resolved.
- It is thought that the earliest that the Cross City Class 730s will be introduced is from December 2024.

8. Stakeholder Developments

- Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) resolved to write to Cross Country Trains (XC) and Network Rail advocating that some XC trains should call at Bromsgrove to generate better connections to Worcestershire Parkway, Cheltenham and, inter alia, the south west. XC has responded to BDC stating that it has no plans to do so, but is willing to talk about possible opportunities.

9. Any Other Business

- The information available to the public on connections between rail and bus for access to Bromsgrove town centre was deemed to be weak. It was agreed that real time departure screens would be a major improvement.

10. Next Meeting

- It was agreed that the next meeting should be held in early April (evening). It will start with the AGM. Tony Woodward will be asked to see if a room is available on Tuesday 16 April. Action: RC