

SHREWSBURY ABERYSTWYTH RAIL LIAISON COMMITTEE

NOTES OF MEETINGS WITH FRANCHISE BIDDING COMPANIES ON 6th and 9th January 2017 in Welshpool Town Hall

No	Heading	Issues
-	INTRODUCTION	
1	NETWORK	The understanding is that all current services including cross border will remain as they are now for the next franchise. Request that minimum level of service is that being delivered now.
2	DISABLED ACCESS	Examples of poor service to disabled was given. Some improvements at Machynlleth. Some improvements planned for Welshpool. Orange and Blue Badge schemes noted. Information systems need to meet all disabilities. Seats on trains for disabled not policed. Toilets and access to them an issue. Meeting noted 30% of the populations of most communities along the line are over 60.
3	WELSH LANGUAGE	The information should be fully bilingual. Always needs to be both Welsh & English. Welsh first and English second when translated. The announcements should be bilingual. 'Accent' was considered important. Staff speaking Welsh important. Bilingual signs not present at Mach Lifts.
4	AIRPORT ACCESS	Access by train to main airports essential. Marketing of the lines to airport to be improved.
5	EVENTS AND TRAIN RESPONSES TO CHANGE	A requirement to meet changes in demand. Trains taken from Cambrian to service Cardiff events unacceptable.
6	OVERCROWDING	Most trains are overcrowded. Integrated buses with trains needs improvement. Since the new services 41% main line increase. Greater increase along the coast since May 15. Some trains were identified as worse than others. Sunday service on Coast line must be improved. West Midlands and the North West through to Mid Wales as important as Cardiff links. All trains should be 4 car units on the main line. Main trains which are overcrowded worse than others are: 7.33 ex Shrewsbury to Birmingham 8.33 ex Shrewsbury to Birmingham 9.30 ex Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth 17.30 ex Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth 16.09 ex Birmingham International 18.09 ex Birmingham International

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7	HOURLY TRAIN SERVICE	A full hourly service is required for the main line. A 7 day service including the coast is needed. Trains need to run later into the evening. Issue of limited number of 158 units (ie 24 fitted) Issue of 158's being used on other services where that type of train is not needed. A need for more rolling stock. Westbury loop may help give more paths.
8	TIMETABLING	Connection times need review. Just missing connecting trains an issue.
9	CROSS BORDER SERVICES	Services to Birmingham Int very important from a timetable as well as access point of view. Services to Manchester very important. Better services to Liverpool Airport desirable.
10	TRAINS	State of trains an issue. Poor toilet provision (particularly for disabled). New Trains needed sooner rather than later.
11	STATIONS	Improvements to stations identified: Machynlleth car park extension. Welshpool Station disabled lifts. Caersws car park essential.
12	CYCLISTS	Better provision for cycles on trains needed. Possible removal of one seat in each carriage to gain more space for cycles and storage.
13	INFORMATION	Better information on stations needed. Train information needs review (carriage info).
14	CONNECTIONS AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORT	Co-ordinated timetabled between trains and buses.
15	CATERING ON BOARD	Catering on board all main line and coast trains should be provided. This is important due to long journeys on rural lines. Access to trolley when trains full an issue.
16	KEY POINTS	The companies attending were given a copy of the Shrewsbury Aberystwyth Rail Liaison Committee 'Future Plan' recently adopted.

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17	COMMUNITY RAIL	A request for cross border Community Rail meetings
18	WHEN IT GOES WRONG	There is often no staff around to advise when things go wrong.
19	GUARDS ON TRAINS	Essential to have a guard on every train.
20	FUNDING	The funding is the same but to be used differently.

It was noted that the companies would be limited in what they could say due to the 'Transport for Wales' rules.

The SARLC is conducting 2 surveys in April and August for the Welsh Government via Welshpool Town Council.

R A Robinson
6th January 2017