

DEVON AND EXETER RAIL PROJECT WORKING PARTY

13 July 2018

Present:-

Devon County Council:

Councillors K Ball (Chairman), Y Atkinson, R Bloxham, J Clatworthy, A Eastman, J Hodgson, J Mathews, C Slade and N Way and M Squires

District Councils

Councillors B Bailey (East Devon District Council), B Deed (Mid Devon District Council), T Snow (Mid Devon District Council), J Goodey (Teignbridge District Council), R Prowse (Teignbridge District Council) and I Doggett (Torbay Council).

Apologies:-

Councillors T Wardle, R Denham, A Leadbetter, J Flynn, D Luggar, J Hawkins and D Sellis

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Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2018 be signed as a correct record.

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Matter of Urgency

(An item taken under Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972)

(Councillor Berry attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 (2) and spoke to this item calling on the need to reduce the duration of the closure of Station Road in Hele (until mid-December) to facilitate Flood defence works by Network Rail; and Councillor Davis attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 (1) and spoke to this item with the consent of the Committee)

The Chair had decided that the Committee should consider, as a matter of urgency, in view of concerns raised by Councillor Snow, on behalf of Councillor Berry and local residents and road users.

The Cabinet Member (Infrastructure Development and Waste) undertook to investigate the matter further with the Head of Highways, Infrastructure and Waste on behalf of the local County Councillor.

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Update from Great Western Railway

The Working Party received a presentation from Mr L Ward, the Assistant Development Manager, Great Western Railway covering:

- performance and current challenges across the Tarka, Riviera/Plymouth, and the Exeter-Exmouth Lines; and including the challenges presented by the severe weather conditions in March 2018;
- local improvements and news summaries including Exeter St David's Ticket gate line and concourse improvements, Exmouth Station improvement scheme (March 2018), preparations for the new timetable was still underway, although deferred, Exeter depot enhancements (May 2019) Castle Class (mini HST) introduced on regional services along mainline, major December timetable changes postponed following cross industry review; and Cowley bridge flood resilience work and managing the blockade;

- the Customer and Communities Improvement (CCIF) projects within Devon – local awards; and details of the funding application process for the GWR CCIF were available at: <https://www.gwr.com/about-us/supporting-our-community/customer-and-communities-improvement-fund>; and
- aspiration for Exeter St David's.

Members' discussion points with the Assistant Development Manager (GWR) included:

- the short-term capacity issues on the Tarka Line as GWR were under considerable pressure regarding rolling stock and that GWR were fully aware of their poor performance and were working to mitigate the situation as soon as possible, and GWR were confident that by the start of the January timetable all train moves would have happened and there would be additional capacity in place;
- the application process for the Customer and Communities Fund (CCIF) (details via the link above) for projects for up to £100,000 and noting that any proposed project need not necessarily be rail industry related;
- details of apprenticeship schemes offered by GWR across its varied service areas from engineering to customer care and catering for example on which the Assistant Development Manager undertook to provide more details for Members;
- plans to increase the availability of rolling stock in the region;
- the local appreciation of the improvements at Exmouth rail station; and
- the need for a second track to the South West on which the Development Manager; and would seek further information from SW Trains.

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Cross Country Franchise Consultation

(Councillor Davis attended in accordance with Standing Order 25 (1) and spoke to this item with the consent of the Committee)

The Working Party considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/18/28) on the Cross Country Franchise Consultation. The Department for Transport (DfT) was carrying out a consultation on the new Cross Country franchise and the new franchise was due to start in late 2019 and details was available on-line at:

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cross-country-rail-franchise

The consultation was open to any individual or organisation to respond by 23:45 hrs on Thursday, 30 August 2018.

The County Council's response would be made with the benefit of the views of the Working Party from this meeting.

The response to the consultation included 44 questions and the key issues were highlighted in the Report.

Discussion points raised by members included:

- the importance of the Cross Country connectivity and regular services between Bristol Temple Meads and Exeter (noting that the last train from Bristol was too early and that an additional later service should be provided) and beyond into Torbay (Riviera Line) Cornwall with more rolling stock (increasing capacity) especially at peak times;
- ongoing work by the rail industry to facilitate improved ticketing arrangements to always allow the cheapest fare available for any route;
- consideration to new policies to encourage the removal of freight from road to rail;
- no reduction in the East/West to the Peninsula through services to Penzance and direct services to Bristol, Taunton and Tiverton; and

- the need to seek the views of Travel Watch SW of which the County Council was a member.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor Ball, **SECONDED** by Councillor Squires and

RESOLVED that above observation and views be considered as part of the County Council's repose to the consultation.

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Devon and Exeter Rail Project Working Party - Future arrangements

(Mr R Burningham, Partnership Officer, attended on behalf of the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Working Party).

The Working Party considered the Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment (PTE/18/29) on proposed future arrangements and management of the group including options outside of the County Council committee structure. Members noted the advantages of a new forum with wider representation, scope (to include for example the Salisbury to Exeter Line Consortium) and flexibility. A new Forum would be supported by the Devon and Cornwall Partnership and reporting to its constituent groups.

It was **MOVED** by Councillor R Prowse, **SECONDED** by Councillor Deed and

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be recommended that this Working Party develop into a Forum working with the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership to allow greater flexibility for example over the frequency of meetings, voting arrangements and agenda items, to be supported by Devon and Exeter Rail Partnership outside of the formal County Council committee structure.

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Next Meeting

Friday, 18 January 2019 at 1.30 pm (to be the last meeting before the proposed establishment of a new Forum).

The Meeting started at 1.30 pm and finished at 3.40 pm

