

REPORT TO GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF SHEVINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MARCH 3RD 2016

RAIL DEVELOPMENTS.

The selection of Arriva Trains (North) to operate the franchise for local rail services from April 2016 was reported to the December 17th 2015 meeting of the Parish Council. At that meeting it was resolved that a letter would be sent to Arriva Rail North to ask them what the new pattern of service would be at Appley Bridge and Gathurst, particularly once the Bolton to Wigan line was electrified, and the details of their plans for community involvement. They would also be asked whether the real time information available to passengers at local stations would include news about breakdowns and other delays (minute 171). We have not received an adequate reply to this letter.

Service Changes

At last month's Parish Council meeting we were briefed by Ormskirk, Preston and Southport Travellers Association (OPSTA) about the changes to the rail service expected in December 2017. As from December 2017 all trains on the Southport line would be routed to Manchester Victoria. This would sever the direct link to Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport. It is planned that passengers for the Airport and Piccadilly would change at Bolton. The impact of this would be to make journeys to the Airport longer and more difficult particularly for passengers with luggage. Passengers using Manchester Piccadilly to interchange with longer distance services would have to make two changes rather than one. Workers in the University Quarter would also lose their direct service.

OPSTA's briefing note about these proposals is attached.

Community Rail Engagement

At the same time as the above proposals emerged Arriva Trains North launched their Community Engagement initiative

They announced the establishment of a new community rail group which will provide support and advice for the operator's engagement with community rail partnerships.

The new Community Rail Executive Group (COMREG) will be made up of 15 industry professionals along with local community representatives and sustainability experts. Led by Arriva, it will help ensure that through the franchise, Arriva is engaging closely with local communities, working in partnership to deliver rail-related projects, and maintaining a strong level of funding for community-based activities.

The group, which will meet quarterly, will be chaired on an interim basis by Arriva's Professor Paul Salveson, who set up the successful Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) in 1997. It will also include ACoRP's general manager Neil Buxton and Sally Buttifant, who managed the award-winning Mid-Cheshire Community Rail Partnership.

Appendix B

Chris Burchell, Managing Director of Arriva's UK Trains Division, said: "The Community Rail Executive Group is a key part of our approach to developing community engagement across the Northern franchise. COMREG will help guide this approach which includes a major increase in funding for community activities. We are inheriting a network of 19 community rail partnerships and over 30 station friends groups. We intend to build on those relations, on what has been achieved to date, and deepen our involvement with communities across the North."

This statement does not sit well against announcements of service changes without any community consultation..

New Managing Director

Alex Hynes the current Managing Director of Northern Rail has been appointed to lead the new franchise.

Station Passenger Figures 2014-2015

The latest passenger figures for stations have recently been published. Gathurst where the number of passengers had been growing strongly over recent years dropped to 86050 a reduction of 6414(7%) over the previous year. Appley Bridge on the other hand has increased to 243034 (1256 more than the previous year(0.5%).

RECOMMENDATION

That Arriva Rail North are informed that the Parish Council are opposed to the proposed removal of services to Manchester Piccadilly and the Airport in December 2017 particularly as the new franchise requirement emphasises community engagement. Further it does not sit comfortably against the recent statements from them on community involvement.

These changes

- Do not reflect the current pattern of movement(see OPSTA survey Autumn 2015)
- Make access to the Airport more difficult particularly for passengers with luggage.
- Involve interchange at Bolton which will often be onto trains that are already crowded.
- Make travel more difficult for passengers travelling to Piccadilly for interchange with longer distance services.
- Impact on passengers working in the University Quarter

These comments should be copied to Transport for Greater Manchester, Wigan Council, Rail North, Lancashire County Council and Merseytravel

Barry King
February 28th 2016