

RAIL ENHANCEMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

MEETING, 17TH FEBRUARY, 2014

Present – Councillors Chadwick (Chairman), G. Harkin (Vice-Chairman), Francis, Haslam, Pickup and Wild.

Also in attendance

Mr. R. Chapman - Transport for Greater Manchester
Mr. S. Curry - Northern Rail

Officers

Mr. M. Cox - Director of Environmental Services
Mr. S. Young - Assistant Director Environmental Services
Mr. G. Langley- Principal Engineer (Network Planning, Safety and Manager
Mrs. V. Ridge - Deputy Democratic Services Manager

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Jones.

Councillor Chadwick in the Chair

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

Members introduced themselves and the Chairman welcomed Mr. R. Chapman from Transport for Greater Manchester and Mr. S. Curry from Northern Rail to the meeting.

2. PURPOSE OF THE GROUP/BOLTON'S ASPIRATIONS

The Chairman reminded members that on 26th September, 2013 colleagues from the rail industry attended an 'all members briefing' in Bolton in order to outline the proposed changes and improvements to rail connectivity in Bolton and the wider Greater Manchester area and what this would mean for the services on offer. As a result of the briefing, it was hoped that a strategy could be developed which would hopefully deliver the following aspirations for Bolton:-

1. The restoration of the Scottish services from Manchester Airport to Glasgow and Edinburgh via Bolton following the electrification of the Bolton to Preston and Manchester lines after December, 2016;
2. The rerouting of half of the Birmingham to Scotland services via Bolton which would serve the greater population centres of Stockport, Manchester and Bolton than those at present served;

3. Consideration of the Cross Country services to the south and south west starting from Bolton or Preston thus restoring the service pattern which had previously existed; and
4. The installation of direct daily train services from Bolton to London.

The Chairman stated that, whilst, it was accepted that the delivery of the above aspirations would be challenging it was also recognised that fast and reliable rail links were an essential prerequisite for regeneration and the development of Bolton's economy and as such were committed to developing a strong and robust business case in order to achieve the above aims.

It was agreed that the position be noted.

3. THE FUTURE OF RAIL TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY IN GREATER MANCHESTER AND THE ASPIRATIONS OF RAIL PROVIDERS

Mr. R. Chapman, Transport for Greater Manchester, gave a presentation to members which outlined the shared Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)/Rail Users Group (RUG) hopes and shared aspirations for future Rail Timetables in the medium term.

Information was provided in relation to the following areas, viz:-

- How TfGM worked;
- The Greater Manchester Rail Priorities;
- How timetables were drawn up;
- Recent achievements with regard to rail timetables;
- The challenges to be faced as a result of patronage and station growth;
- Timetable development process;
- The development process in relation to partnership working;
- Issues associated with the Northern Hub/Electrification Planning; and
- Longer term issues in relation to the Northern Hub and Re-franchising.

Following the very detailed presentation, a discussion ensued and members debated a number of issues, in particular, around electrification; the need to establish a line direct from Bolton to Euston; and the Northern Hub.

It was agreed that the report be noted.

4. NEXT STEPS AND WAY FORWARD

A discussion ensued with regard to the next steps and way forward to meet Bolton's aspirations.

Members were advised that it would be prudent to produce a short briefing paper detailing the four aspirations, why they were seen as a priority for Bolton and how they could be achieved with respect to the socio-economic position of Bolton. It was explained that this should then be sent to the Department for Transport, Northern Rail and the Transport for Greater Manchester who would in turn address the points raised. It would also enable early discussions to take place with regard to what could be achieved from a new franchise which was due to be put out to tender in February, 2015.

It was agreed that officers produce a report, outlining the issues discussed, and that this be submitted to a further meeting of this Policy Development Group.

(The meeting started at 5.30 p.m. and finished at 7.00 p.m.)