

## Minutes of the LEP Place Leadership Group 11 July 2018

**NFU, Agriculture House, Pynes Hill, Rydon Lane, Exeter, EX2 5ST**

### Attendees

Barbara Shaw (BS)	-	Westward Housing
David Ralph (DR)	-	HotSW LEP
Derek Phillips (DP)	-	South West Chambers of Commerce
Helena Davidson (HD)	-	HotSW LEP
Ian Harrison (IH)	-	HotSW LEP Transport Board
Mel Squires (MS)	-	NFU
Mike Deaton (MD)	-	Devon County Council
Mike O’Dowd Jones (MODJ)	-	Somerset County Council
Paul Hickson (PH)	-	Somerset County Council/HotSW LEP
Tim Jones (TS)	-	Devon and Cornwall Business Council

### Supporting Officers

Rob Hensley (RH)	-	HotSW LEP Place Secretariat/Somerset County Council
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### Apologies

David Northey	-	Network Rail
Doug Bamsey	-	Somerset District Councils
Eifion Jones	-	HotSW LEP
Heidi Hallam	-	HotSW LEP
John Dixon	-	Plymouth City Council
Mark Worsfold	-	South West Water
Sarah Jennings	-	Devon County Council

	<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Lead</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome, introductions and apologies</b> BS welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves. Apologies are noted above.	BS
<b>2.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> There were no declarations.	BS
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of the Last Meeting</b> Minutes of the last Place Leadership Group meeting (8 <sup>th</sup> May 2018) were approved as an accurate record.	BS <b>RH</b> – To forward minutes to publish.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Natural capital Advocacy Document Update</b> SJ unable to attend – item deferred to September meeting.	SJ

<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>XCountry Rail Consultation</b></p> <p>IH gave a presentation on the consultation with the objectives being to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set the context</li> <li>• Identify and discuss key issues</li> <li>• Discuss the HotSW LEP response</li> <li>• Agree the process for LEP engagement to develop and sign off the final HotSW submission</li> </ul> <p><b>Context</b></p> <p>The presentation highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The predominant use of the XCountry Franchise is from leisure users but the level of detail from the data provided by DfT is limited</li> <li>• All services operate through Birmingham New Street; from south west England to north east Scotland and to Manchester in the north west</li> <li>• Overcrowding is an issue with Sundays (a maintenance day for Network Rail) being one of the busiest days</li> <li>• There are heavy commuter flows, particularly around cities</li> <li>• The passenger environment is poor, including lack of free Wi-Fi</li> <li>• Tickets are expensive</li> <li>• There is a susceptibility to delays</li> <li>• The DfT consultation was launched in June and closes on 30 August 2018</li> </ul> <p><b>Issues</b></p> <p>The national issues identified in the consultation are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to overcome crowding and accommodate future growth</li> <li>• Should services to “extremities” of the network be reduced?</li> <li>• Should there be changes to fares and ticketing policy?</li> <li>• What are the priorities for improved passenger experience?</li> </ul> <p>The discussion on the national issues highlighted that the current arrangements barely matches capacity requirements, let alone growth and therefore trains with more carriages would be good. Also, the view of the group was not to support Advance Purchase On the Day (APOD) which has had a disruptive impact. From a regional perspective, the need for resistance to sea spray (e.g. at Dawlish) was seen as crucial and there was no support for a reduced service to Torbay and Penzance, noting that the passenger experience needs to be good, particularly given the importance of the visitor economy.</p> <p><b>Proposed HotSW Consultation Response</b></p> <p>Issues put forward for the response were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overriding issue is train capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional trains needed, either by new-build or cascade</li> <li>- Trains serving South West Peninsula need to be weather resilient (Dawlish) – hence not Voyagers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provision of additional trains would enable the introduction of 2 trains per hour throughout the day between Bristol and Exeter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 trains per hour strongly supported</li> <li>- In the context of a new train fleet the resources gained by reducing the number of services extended to Torbay and Penzance would be minimal</li> <li>- Hence it is logical for us to support retention of the existing service levels to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>IH</p> <p><b>RH - to send out ppt.</b></p>
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Torbay and Penzance

- Fares and ticketing
  - Increased train capacity would enable greater availability of advance purchase discounts
  - APOD is extremely disruptive – remove ability to reserve a seat
- Passenger experience
  - New/ refitted cascaded trains would allow trains to be configured more suitably for passenger needs
  - More luggage space
  - Storage of bicycles
  - Catering offer – hot food?
- XCountry network
  - Are we happy with Plymouth-Edinburgh and Exeter– Manchester?
  - Intermediate station calls; what is the best solution?
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The views of partners from the Peninsular Rail Task Force (PRTF) have been sought and are closely aligned with the priorities set out in their “Closing the Gap” strategy.

**Discussion**

The main points of the subsequent discussion were as follows:

- Two trains per hour is seen as essential as resistance to sea spray, noting that services via Dawlish can be cut off at short notice if forecasts predict poor weather
- Rail franchises are generally revenue generating and it is known that other areas of the country are resistant to reduced services to the “extremities” of the network
- Great Western Railway (GWR) is due to increase services to two trains per hour which will be relevant to some “extremity” locations, but it is still important to retain connectivity in place like Torbay which only has four trains per day
- It was agreed that customer experience is very important and needs to improve significantly. This includes the resolution of ticketing issues such as “split ticketing” and APOD
- Franchises typically run for seven to nine years, but the duration of the new franchise is not explicit at the moment
- The view was that local trains are getting “tired” and therefore there could be a substantial refurbishment in future. If the fleet were to be replaced, it would be logical that trains could go anywhere (i.e. electrified and non-electrified parts of the network). Conversion to “hybrid” trains might be a possibility
- It is thought that Government favours a franchise model approach rather than a direct award (it was felt that the latter did not draw in much investment when last used)
- The scope of the consultation was raised in the context of the significance of rail to the integrated transport network, which includes links to local rail franchises, parkway stations, front of house activity at stations and connections to park and ride facilities
- It was agreed that parkway stations are an important way to connect to the XCountry network which in turn connects to a wide geographical area. This underlines why stations such as Tiverton Parkway are so important. Others, such as Worle Parkway could be developed further but priorities and rationale need to be clear. Worcester Parkway is being built and trains to/from Cardiff will stop there; the LEP should support Bristol and Birmingham trains stopping there also
- XCountry is not responsible for stations, so this isn’t the right consultation to make comments about stations but it is important to reflect the importance of stations as

	<p>hubs for the region and particularly the relationship between the franchise and stations. The connectivity to local networks was seen as being very important, for example aligning timetables and the availability of the first and last trains in the day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noting that the need for investment at Bridgwater was included in the PRTF strategy, it was agreed that franchises need to consider the best solutions including stopping frequency at stations such as this</li> <li>• The franchise is due to start late 2019-early 2020</li> </ul> <p><b>Process</b> It was agreed that the following process would be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strawman developed by IH</li> <li>• Draft circulated to PLG and Business Leadership Group</li> <li>• Responses collated and final draft developed</li> <li>• Sign off by HotSW LEP CEO</li> </ul> <p>The LEP's view should also be shared with James Heapey (MP for Wells and Parliamentary Private Secretary the Secretary of State for Transport).</p> <p>It was agreed that a link to publicise the XCountry Rail Consultation would be posted on the HotSW LEP website</p>	<p><b>IH to send draft to RH</b> <b>RH to send out draft</b> <b>HD to post link</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b> <b>National Infrastructure Commission – National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA)</b> IH attended a regional event to launch the NIA which looks forward to 2050. HotSW LEP had provided a response to the NIA consultation earlier in 2018. The recommendations from the NIA are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationwide full fibre broadband by 2033</li> <li>• Half of the UK's power provided by renewables by 2030</li> <li>• Three quarters of plastic packaging recycled by 2030</li> <li>• £43 billion of stable long term transport funding for regional cities</li> <li>• Preparing for 100 per cent electric vehicle sales by 2030</li> <li>• Ensuring resilience to extreme drought</li> <li>• A national standard of flood resilience for all communities by 2050.</li> </ul> <p>Highlighting significant items for HotSW, IH explained that the report asserts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for subsidies to fund fibre installation in areas that are least likely to have needs met on a commercial basis.</li> <li>• That no more than one more nuclear power station should be built after Hinkley in favour of renewable low carbon/low cost options</li> <li>• That the uptake of electric vehicles can be expected to happen quickly but that Government must provide consumer confidence and subsidise infrastructure development when commercial solutions are unlikely. There is a challenge here for rural areas</li> <li>• The £43billion for regional cities looks like a stable fund, but which places are eligible? There could be a risk that the focus will be on larger places.</li> </ul>	<p><b>IH</b> <b>RH - to send out NIC Report</b></p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Next meeting:</b> 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – Details to be confirmed</p>	

<b>Actions Log Summary</b>	<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Status Update</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
To forward previous Place Leadership Group meeting minutes for publication on HotSW LEP website.	11/07/2018	Rob Hensley	Completed 12/07/2018	N/A
Rail operators to be advised to liaise with PH and RH regarding participation in future PLG meetings.	14/03/2018	Ian Harrison	In hand – raised with rail operators	
Update on emerging work on the Delivery Plan by the Policy and Technical Support Group to be provided to July PLG meeting.	08/05/2018	Paul Hickson		
A brief on Natural Capital to be prepared for the July LEP Board meeting.	08/05/2018	Paul Hickson Rob Hensley	Deferred to September	
Update on Natural Capital to be provided to July PLG meeting.	08/05/2018	Sarah Jennings	Deferred to September	
XCountry Rail Consultation presentation by IH to be circulated	11/07/2018	Rob Hensley	Completed 12/07/2018	
Draft XCountry Rail Consultation response to be prepared	11/07/2018	Ian Harrison	Completed	
Draft XCountry Rail Consultation response to be circulated to PLG and BLG for comment	11/07/2018	Rob Hensley	Circulated 14/08/2018	
Link publicising the XCountry Rail Consultation to be posted on HotSW LEP website	11/07/2018	Helena Davidson		
National Infrastructure Assessment report to be circulated to PLG members	11/07/2018	Rob Hensley	Completed 12/07/2018	