

Devon Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 – Panel Hearings

First Great Western – Julian Crow - Commercial Planning Manager

Issues / Concerns

- Largest bus operator nationally & committed to rail franchise as well.
- Getting the Thames franchise was critical to services in the West Country. Devon will see timetable alterations, from early December. Allowing the planning of London to Reading section as one entity. Complete recast of timetable from 12th Dec 2004.
- Improve both local and long distance – joint control office, plan engineering more efficiently.
- Accelerate non stop services;
 - 3 hr journey to Plymouth
 - 2hr 2mins to Exeter
- Timetable designed for reliability, design out conflict – looking for a 7% increase in performance. Currently at tolerable level.
- New morning service from Plymouth to Paddington leave 6am arrive 9am.
- Over 1000 extra seats to West Country at evening times.
- Tiverton gets 3 more trains a day. 20 minute time saving, station will grow.
- Must bid for new franchise for the Great Western tender in early 2005.
- Business has been successful over the last 10 years with consistently high growth;
 - 50% more people than under privatisation
 - 34% more trains, 14 new high speed trains
 - Doubled the service to Bristol
- Rail becoming the prime mode for accessing London and the Thames Valley.
- Cornwall 7.5 miles of double track restored.
- A lot of work on bank slippage and signal improvements.
- All these improvements are occurring in a time of relative financial constraint.
- Over the next few years there is going to be very little new money.
- Two key documents have been published;
 - SRA route utilisation strategy – analysis of capacity and best use
 - Franchise specification for Greater Western franchise, likely to be far more prescriptive
- Sea wall at Dawlish is not a serious concern for us. Not the cause of the rail disruptions during the autumn storms.
- Next 5-6 years;
 - Continued economic growth
 - Continuing dispersal of population – West Country becoming more attractive place to live.
 - Increasingly looking for value for money – continue development in PUA's
 - Improve feel and appearance of public transport

- Links with bikes and buses crucial
- Not an issue of line capacity but an issue of length of trains – finite capacity as additional rolling stock is desperately expensive
- Access to airports is crucial – importance Heathrow nationally. Cross rail is another potential issue. Currently planned to run to Maidenhead – (financial constraints) for planning reasons should be to Reading.

Recommendations

- Access to rail network – car parking, work with Devon County Council to expand car parks.
- Making stations attractive places - public transport is the ‘Best worst option’.
- Increasingly looking for value for money – continue development in Principal Urban Areas.
- Where can improved capacity be best used?
- Facilitate integration – work with Devon County Council for good routes and timetables.
- Make most of what we have got - eg Exeter to the Met Office bus link.
- Passenger info – increasingly looking to self help, simple straight forward information – example of Reading Town Centre info displays – looking to reassure people about rail times.
- Look to Community rail schemes;
 - More people on rail
 - Lower level of subsidy
 - Community involvement through community rail partnerships
 - Addition of rolling stock big issues – can use ‘heritage’ rolling stock on some of the branch lines. Finding extra resource in the peaks isn’t particularly easy
- Rail schemes that appear in LTPs – SRA would expect holders of franchises to help deliver & suggest contributions.
- LTP consultation document on reopening stations – Kingskerswell is amongst the best of all schemes in the area –would have to be funded locally.
- In promoting late night services between Exeter & Plymouth are issues of financial viability. What are the volumes going to be?
- Accessibility (disabled) – Huge problems – want to work with each station to prioritise work at stations where greatest volumes are.
- Exeter Station forecourt improvements.
- Improved Information systems.
- “It is a positive story with lots of opportunities”