

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales

Pwyllgor yr Economi, Seilwaith a Sgiliau/ Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee

Masnachfrait Rheilffyrdd a chyflwyno Metro / Rail Franchise and the Metro

Ymateb gan Cyngor Sir Gaerloyw / Evidence from Gloucestershire County Council

Introduction

Thank you for giving Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) another opportunity to contribute to the National Assembly for Wales Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee Inquiry into the Wales and Border Franchise and Metro delivery. I have the following officer comments to make to the second point raised in your email dated 27th January 2017 set out below.

Priorities for the franchise specification and Metro delivery to ensure rail services meet the needs of current and future travellers throughout the franchise area, and deliver value for money for both passengers and the taxpayer.

Commentary

The lack of car parking capacity at Lydney railway station has been an ongoing issue for a number of years. Passengers unable to find a space in the existing car park have parked on the footpath or on the approach road causing a potential hazard to traffic. Lydney is the only mainline railway station in the Forest of Dean. As such it acts as a gateway to the area and is an important piece of transport infrastructure for the wider area. Lydney is allocated around 1900 houses up to 2026 along with a considerable amount of employment land. Lydney station has seen a 140% increase in passenger numbers over the past 10 years and is key in enabling residents to access employment opportunities as well as encouraging tourism to the Forest of Dean.

GCC with other stakeholders including Lydney Town Council (LTC), Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC) and the local MP have lobbied Network Rail (NR) and Arriva Trains Wales (ATW) in an attempt find a solution to this problem. However, a number of factors prevented any progress being made, notably a lack of available funding.

Eventually in May 2014 NR offered GCC the lease on an area of land adjacent to the existing car park, which was coming up for renewal. After a period of protracted negotiations the car park was opened by GCC on 16th February 2017. GCC have taken on the lease for a period of two years expiring in March 2018.

Despite GCC having no statutory responsibility to provide additional car parking at Lydney station it has invested a considerable amount of time and money to break the deadlock and find a way forward. This has included installing fencing, lighting and additional disabled parking adjacent to the station as well as removing rubbish that had been left behind or subsequently fly tipped.

Recommendation

It is therefore requested that in the new franchise the future maintenance and lease of the extended car park at Lydney is taken over by the new franchisee as is the case with the existing car park and others across the franchise area. As well as alleviating the immediate capacity issues the increase of approximately 90 spaces will encourage greater use of the rail services across the Wales and Border franchise area. In turn this will reduce traffic on the road network whilst increasing demand for rail services between Cardiff and Cheltenham.

I hope these comments are useful in informing the Committee in their deliberations.

Rob Niblett
Planning Officer
February 2017