



RRUG UPDATE

Project 110 Consultation

In December RRUG responded to London Midland's (LM) 'Project 110 - Service Level Commitment (SLC) Change Consultation'. Project 110 is LM's proposal to run faster trains out of Euston direct via Weedon rather than via Northampton, subject to obtaining relevant approvals and confirming Class 350 Desiros can achieve a top speed of 110mph.

In line with the Group's aims, the response welcomes LM's proposals to operate faster off-peak (December 2012) and peak (May 2014) services as the potential benefits to Rugby are:

- reduced journey times between Rugby and London (typically about 20 minutes);
- a fast train to Milton Keynes, which is sorely lacking;
- reduced crowding on Rugby to London Pendolino services, as people from the Trent Valley are more likely to stay on their train;
- a second fast train to London per hour; and
- more competition providing a catalyst for cheaper fares.

However, support is conditional on:

- existing fast Rugby to London services, currently operated by Virgin Trains, being unaffected; and
- LM retain the current level of service between Birmingham New Street and Northampton.

In addition concerns were raised about increases in journey times going north from Rugby.

The full response made to LM is on RRUG's website (members' area).

Latest.....

Subject to meeting certain conditions, the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) has recently stated that it is "minded to approve" London Midland's application for 110 mph paths on the West Coast Main Line. See the RRUG website for more details.

West Coast Franchise

The Department for Transport (DfT) is set to publish the final Invitation to Tender for the new West Coast franchise due to run from December 2012 to 2026.

Four bidders are still in the frame: Abellio Intercity West Coast Limited (NV Nederlandse Spoorwegen); First West Coast Limited (FirstGroup plc); Keolis/SNCF West Coast Limited (Keolis SA and SNCF); and, Virgin Trains Limited (Virgin Group Holdings Limited).

RRUG has met with representatives of Keolis/SNCF and Virgin Trains and been in touch with First West Coast Limited to highlight the main issues that RRUG would like to see addressed, as set out in RRUG's response to the DfT's Intercity West Coast franchise consultation submitted in April 2011.

By way of a reminder, and for the benefit of Abellio Intercity West Coast Limited, the 8 page submission said that a new franchise operator should address issues of connectivity and journey opportunity on the whole of the West Coast route to supplement the focus on services to and from London. RRUG proposes that better use is made of interchange opportunities at main stations on the route, including Rugby, by selective calling patterns on long distance services, especially those to Glasgow and north west England. Where possible, alternatives to interchange via Birmingham New Street should be part of the service pattern to reduce congestion, make better use of train capacity and improve the overall journey experience.

At weekends RRUG wants services to offer increased journey options for a broader leisure market on the basis that reduced journey times are less important on Saturdays and Sundays than weekdays. Also train operators should work together to ensure there is a reasonable late night train service on Saturdays from London to provincial towns including Rugby.

www.rugbyrailusersgroup.org.uk



Sponsors required!

The newsletter is produced and issued for the benefit of RRUG Members as part of the membership package. The intention is that copies will also be made available free to people using Rugby station and other facilities around the town.

With limited funds, any donations to help with the print costs of extending our coverage would be gratefully received, possibly through sponsoring an issue and having your name included.

If you're interested please contact the RRUG Secretary via the 'Contact us' link on the website.

Coventry to Nuneaton Upgrade

The Department for Transport (DfT) recently announced a grant of £9.8 million towards the cost of upgrading the Coventry - Nuneaton rail service. The remainder of the cost will be provided by local authorities.

The scheme involves two new stations, one to serve the Ricoh arena in Coventry and the other at Bermuda Park. Bedworth station will have longer platforms, and a new bay platform for this service will be built adjacent to the west end of Platform 1 in Coventry.

When complete, trains will run every half hour on this line, with the possibility of enhanced services during major events at the Ricoh stadium.

Although this will not directly affect rail services from Rugby, as a result of this scheme passengers will be able to travel by rail from Rugby to events at the Ricoh stadium with one change at Coventry.

Annual Season Ticket Prices 2012:

The prices set out below take into account Chancellor George Osborne's announcement in his Autumn Statement that regulated fares would be capped at RPI + 1% this January. This is a reduction from the previously advised rate of RPI +3%, which will now apply to the January 2013 and 2014 fare rises only.

Rugby to/from London:

London Midland:

Standard £5,080; First £7,876

Virgin Trains:

Standard: £7,044 (no tube)/£7,468 (Zone 1 tube)

First: £11,540 (no tube)/£12,244 (Zone 1 tube)

Rugby to/from Birmingham:

All trains: Standard: £1,324; First: £2,056

Virgin Trains only: Standard: £956; First: £1,468

'HS2' in Parliament (source Hansard)

During Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday 14th December **Mr Brian Binley** the MP for Northampton South posed the following:

The Prime Minister will be aware that capacity levels on the West Coast main line are intolerable and getting worse. Does he share the concerns of rail users that delays to High Speed 2 will only make their journeys more unpleasant? Will he provide the assurance that they seek about the future that he promised them?

The Prime Minister replied:

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for raising that question. Clearly the country has a choice. Because the West Coast main line is as congested as it is, we need to replace it with either a traditional line or a high-speed line. It is well known that the Government's view is that a high-speed line is the right answer. That is why the consultation (*ongoing*) has been conducted. Not only will it be good for people who use the West Coast main line; it will be a successful regional policy that will link up our great cities, shrink the size of our country and ensure that all parts of the country can enjoy economic prosperity and growth.

Keep up to date with www.rugbyrailusersgroup.org.uk



On The Spot - Your Points Answered

Let us have your questions about the train services, station facilities, the station environment or other rail related issues relevant to Rugby rail users. We will then put someone on the spot to provide the answers and then report back in the newsletter. Your support is needed, so if you have any points to raise, please e-mail the Secretary via the 'Contact us' link on the website.

This newsletter – 'On the Spot' with RRUG Chair Stephanie Clifford

What is RRUG all about?

Formed with the help of Rugby's then MP Andy King back in late 2004, the Group aims to:

- Fight on your behalf to improve and maintain the Rugby rail service, the station and its environment.
- Act as a voice for Rugby rail users.
- Collect your views and feed them into discussions with Virgin Trains, London Midland and Network Rail.
- Take the longer term view of Rugby rail services by taking part in consultations run by the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Passenger Focus, Local Authorities and others.
- Maintain links with other Groups through membership of Railfuture.
- Provide members with information by e-mail, post, meetings and via RRUG's website.

Everyone is busy so we understand that it's difficult for you to find time to get actively involved in the campaign to improve Rugby rail services. We'll take the strain and fight on your behalf, but we can't do it without your support. You can:

- Join Rugby Rail Users Group today for just £5 to help with administrative costs (membership form on the back page of this newsletter).
- Come to periodic meetings held with the train operators and other key organisations - we will e-mail or post details to all RRUG members.
- Help with publicity and spreading news about the Group to other rail users.

Member or not, keep us informed about your rail experiences through the 'Contact us' link on the website.



Why should I support RRUG?

Rugby Rail users need all the support we can get! Don't be lulled into thinking that the relatively good service we've "enjoyed" over the past few

months is a permanent fixture. There are plenty of changes afoot, both planned and unplanned, which could upset our rail journeys. We need someone to stand up for our interests to make sure that Rugby isn't sidelined, as it so nearly was in the timetable changes of 2008. I firmly believe that "someone" is the Rugby Rail Users Group.

RRUG lets people act together, so we are stronger than individuals can be. We get noticed by the train operators, local authorities and the media, and we ask the right questions by knowing what's on the agenda. There are transport experts on the RRUG committee, and our members are out there on the trains every day, so we can tell it like it really is. We stand up for local issues like bicycle parking and the state of the station toilets.

Two of my priorities at present are:

December 2013: the December 2013 timetable is being discussed now, and it will remain in force until HS2 opens in 2026 - at least that's the plan. So it's an important decision for Rugby.

Project 110: London Midland's enhanced fast timetable proposal (Project 110 - see front page) has RRUG's support; it will bring back fast trains from Rugby to Milton Keynes, and the case for it "may" be enhanced by the relocation of Network Rail's headquarters to Milton Keynes, a move which is due to be completed by August 2012. It would be great to get a second fast train to London each hour.

If you do or if you don't agree with RRUG's priorities, join us and help us to fight for what people in Rugby care about!

Watch out for:the BBC Panorama programme due to be broadcast on 23rd January that may include a RRUG contribution.

