

**Hope Valley Forum – 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008**  
**Hathersage Methodist Hall**

**Questions and Answers**

**Northern Rail – Mark Eastwood:**

Q. Frequency of services an issue. Note even hourly at the moment with a massive gap between 6:40 and 8:10. Some trains overcrowded. Does not meet needs.

ME: Fair comment. Not currently feasible to change frequency, but will continue to push for it.

Q. What can we do to increase pressure on the company?

ME: Keep engaging with us. Franchise was taken over on a steady state with no money for investment. Footfall is rising faster than we cope with.

Q. Trains every 2 hours – makes no sense.

ME: We are improving the service to New Mills which may help.

Q. Service to New Mills no good to us. This will be the only local line that doesn't have an hourly service. Service is in 'no mans land' in terms of regional management. Other companies not interested in providing a commuter service.

ME: We are continually trying to improve things, but it takes time with many issues such as capacity, rolling stock, staffing, etc.

Q. Problems have been going on for a long time, previous to Northern Rail taking over. Managed as a North West service – not from Sheffield. Believe that improvements on other lines show that things could be changed.

ME: Cannot change things overnight. Northern Rail still a relatively new franchise and working on a long term strategy to improve services.

Q. In the short term, major problem is overcrowding – only 2 carriage trains. Had instances of people fainting and the guard being unable to close the doors.

ME: New units are in the pipeline to help with the capacity issue. However, footfall is constantly increasing.

Q. How do you count footfall. Conductor doesn't get to all passengers due to overcrowding, so there must be a level of undercounting.

ME: Have a Collection Team to tackle this problem. Have passenger counters on some units. Working on the problem, but agree that it is too slow in being achieved.

Q. People don't have the opportunity to buy tickets. Getting on at Edale have to queue at Manchester Piccadilly for tickets.

ME: Some units need strengthening so that people can sit down and the conductor can get through to sell tickets.

Q. Why are there no ticket machines at stations?

ME: Experience has proved that they make little difference and are regularly vandalised.

Q. Ticket machines work on the Newcastle Metro. Why can't we buy multiple tickets as we used to be able to, but they were withdrawn?

ME: Will take the suggestion back to the Revenue Manager.

Q. What can the community do to raise the Hope Valley up the 'pecking order' for action? How can we get notice taken of?

ME: Northern Rail website contacts, local Councillors, PTE's and straight to the company.

Q. Is lack of investment linked to perception of demand. There would be extra trains if the company thought there was demand?

ME: Subsidised loss making services do run – GMPTE operate such services.

Q. If there was an hourly service it would probably lose money.

ME: Agree.

Q. Stations are not user friendly. Need better infrastructure in the stations. When trains are running late it is an unpleasant place to wait.

ME: Trains are currently running at plus 90% punctuality.

Q. What is the problem in getting more services – is it lack of rolling stock, footfall, blockages at both ends?

ME: Junctions at each end are a major problem. Only limited slots to get through them between other services.

Q. If we had a user group would it be able to work with Northern Rail?

ME: Yes. Also Northern Rail aspiration for communities to take ownership of stations.

Q. Are user groups any use?

ME: Experience elsewhere has proved they can be very effective in getting service improvements.

Other statements from the floor:

- Need better infrastructure to get more users
- TransPennine Express won't stop anywhere else. Not enough time
- Easier to drive to Chinley to get more frequent trains there – company losing customers through this

### **Hope Valley Railway Users Group – Peter Fox**

Was active three years ago, but had a number of problems. All officers left and now is running in name only holding no meetings. Would like to revitalise the group. The audience was invited to speak with Peter after the event to try and restart the group to lobby for improvements.

### **Concessionary Travel – James Adams (DCC)**

Q. There is no free travel on National Express services?

A. That is correct.

Q. Will it affect community transport? Will there be a loss of income?

A. Ben Jay – HPBC: Community Transport is currently funded by Derbyshire County Council. It was proposed that it would be withdrawn, but this is now not happening.

### **Accessibility Partnership – Rebecca Pennyfather (DCC)**

Q. Will someone get a grip on providing integrated transport eg: buses and trains working together.

RP: Will look at this and see what can be done. It is very difficult though.

Q. If companies get subsidies why can't they be pressured to make changes?

RP: Most services are commercial and we have no influence. Some though in the Hope Valley are, for example evening services.

Q. Return bus ticket should be valid for train and vice versa. Can there be better integration of services?

RP: In terms of integrated services, very complex. One change affects the whole network. Also, rail companies can change their timetables without any consultation.

Q. Involved in the South Derbyshire Partnership. Research showed people wanted to get into the city in the morning and out in the evening. Is there any more research that can be done. Can't buses be parked in the periphery to avoid 'dead journeys'?

RP: Will need to ask the companies rather than DCC.

Other statements from the floor:

- Service is not useable, whole system not used as it's not useable. Empty buses over the whole valley

- Where is the £500,000 from? Is it taxpayers money? This is subsidising the rail companies. We are paying tax to companies for things they should be doing anyway.
- Need to lean heavily on the operators. If there is demand there is money to be made.
- (Addressed to James Adams in general highways questions). Q. Will the road between Hathersage and Bamford be resurfaced as it is very noisy?  
JA: No plans to resurface it. Further comment from floor that aggregate used on road surface too large – if smaller it would make less noise

### **Additional Questions**

Q. There is a need to edge the footway by the A6187 Bamford to Hope; please can this be done before the path disappears under mud and grass?

a. This is one of many roadside footways in rural areas, which are maintained as public footpaths rather than to the higher standard of an urban footway. This is in accordance with County policy. The County Council will allocate the edging task as and when other priorities have been completed.

Q. The A6187 Hathersage - Bamford road is very noisy. Please can it be resurfaced to reduce the noise?

a. 'The current road surface is surface dressed, which can generate tyre noise. However, while the road construction remains sound, surface dressing is the cost effective treatment. When replacement of the road's surface course is necessary, consideration will be given to the use of a quieter material, but the current financial climate does not allow us to resurface for this reason alone.'