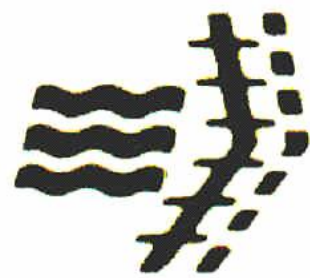


**MARLOW - MAIDENHEAD
PASSENGERS' ASSOCIATION**



*Covering Maidenhead - Marlow, High Wycombe
Twyford - Henley-on-Thames*

Annual General Meeting

Friday 25th March at 8pm

Bourne End Community Centre

*With a presentation on improving local
railways by*

Brian Barnsley,

From Association of Community
Rail Partnerships (ACoRP)

*plus your senior managers from First
Great Western and Chiltern Railways*

www.mmpa.org.uk

* * *

Membership Matters

It's that time again! Membership subscriptions are due on 1st April but will be very welcome in advance or at our AGM on Friday 25th March. There are no changes to the fees this year which are £4 for individuals, £5 for families and £3 for concessions (for which I rely on your discretion and honesty). If you joined after 1st January 2011 your membership will run through to March 2012 so you do not need to renew this year. A renewal slip will be enclosed with this newsletter, or attached in the case of email deliveries. Cheques should be payable to "MMPA" and sent to MMPA Membership, 23 Switchback Road North, Maidenhead SL6 7UF. If you wish to pay by internet banking please email me first so that I can give you the necessary information.

Data Protection Act - members' names and addresses, inc email addresses if applicable, are held on computer and we will not pass them to third parties unless we are required to do so by law.

London & South East Route Utilisation Strategy

The London and South East RUS (Route Utilisation Strategy) is a second generation RUS that builds on the previous route-based RUSs. It primarily deals with getting people into London during the morning peak. The RUS takes into account committed projects including Crossrail, Thameslink, Reading remodelling, Chiltern's Evergreen 3 and Thames Valley electrification. It anticipates the construction of HS2 into Euston via Old Oak Common.

The purpose of the RUS is to identify gaps between what the rail system currently does and what it is required to do by 2031, as projected by computer modelling. The RUS team believes that these figures will be reached at some point, but it could be earlier or later than 2031 depending on economic conditions.

Great Western Main Line

The RUS forecasts a gap of 5,200 seats in the busiest hour on outer suburban and long distance services. Crossrail will provide adequate capacity for inner suburban services east of Maidenhead. The Great Western RUS provides only sufficient peak capacity until 2019. The L&SE RUS discusses six options for Thames Valley commuters:

A1: Extend Crossrail services to Reading. This facilitates option A6 but is insufficient on its own.

A2: Increase IEP (Inter city express Programme - the HST replacement) service from 15 to 16 trains per hour (tph). This would not resolve the gap and may impact performance.

A3: Lengthen IEP trains. This would not resolve the gap in isolation.

A4: Additional 4tph 12-car high seating capacity Reading/outer Thames Valley to Paddington fast service. This is not operationally viable.

A5: As A4 but extending Heathrow Express from the Main lines through Crossrail. This is not operationally viable.

A6: As A4 but running Heathrow Express on the Relief lines at least in the peak hours, and extending through Crossrail.

The recommended is option A6, possibly in combination with some of options A1 to A3, subject to further development and business case. The current Crossrail plan is to have 14tph terminating at Paddington while the remaining 10tph serve Heathrow, West Drayton and Maidenhead. The RUS looks at extending some of the terminating services to other destinations including via the West Coast Main Line (WCML). Running Heathrow Express on the Relief lines (with some additional loops to facilitate overtaking) and then into Crossrail frees up two platforms at Paddington and provides extra Main line paths for the increased high speed services.

Further development is needed to determine how best to serve the proposed HS2 interchange at Old Oak Common.

Chiltern

The RUS considers that the Evergreen 3 project will provide service improvements including reduced journey times and the new Oxford - Marylebone service. This is likely to stimulate demand and further intervention may be required after completion of the project. The RUS does not make any specific recommendations at this time.

Heathrow Connectivity and Crossrail Extension Options

The RUS provides a number of options including:

A1: Crossrail to Reading (as above). Recommended to simplify operations and as an enabler for option A6.

A6: Heathrow Express onto Crossrail (as above).

J1: BAA "Airtrack" project currently under development.

J2: Heathrow Western Connection via Slough. This requires further investigation.

J3: New high speed rail complex serving Heathrow directly. The Government's proposals include this when HS2 is extended to include Manchester and Leeds.

The MMPA intends to support options A1 and A6 and considers that extending Crossrail to Reading now makes more sense than terminating at Maidenhead.

The Fair Fares Charter

The Campaign for Better Transport is campaigning for a more realistic approach to railway fares by the Government.

'We already have by far the highest rail fares in Europe, and they are set to rise by 31% above 2010 prices by the next general election. Although the Government has committed itself to fair pricing for rail travel, there has been no clarity as to what is meant by fair fares. This Charter sets out what we think fair pricing is, and how the Government could make fares truly fair.

We believe fair fares would be:

1. Cheaper: Regulated fares fall gradually, over time to the European average.
2. Fairer: reasonable peak times, options for part-time workers, and above all services that provided good value for money
3. Simpler: straightforward and smart tickets that remove barriers to choosing the train

A menu for fairer fares

We call for a fundamental review of existing fare regulation and structure. ... we support policies such as the following:

Cheaper

- Cap annual regulated fare increases at inflation (RPI) – 1%
- Regulate and set a ceiling on the price of all walk-on fares
- Move towards a system that allows Advance tickets to be bought right up to the train's departure from its originating station, and make public the number of Advance tickets initially released for specific time bands
- Introduce a National Railcard, with a one-off fee that provides discounted travel (similar to the current Network Railcard for south-east England)
- Introduce tax relief for employer-provided public transport tickets

Fairer

- Improve on current network coverage (number of routes and frequency of services) and incentivise train companies to improve punctuality and reliability
- Invest in new trains for the most overcrowded routes, and provide stronger incentives for operators to meet the requirement of providing peak-time passengers with a seat within 20 minutes of boarding
- Help part-time workers by introducing a smartcard based pro-rata annual season ticket, or a measure with equivalent benefit (e.g. carnets of 10 for the price of 8 tickets for commuter routes)
- Increase capacity in standard class by taking a more flexible approach to First Class.
- Allow passengers to pay the difference between what they have paid already for an Advance ticket and the appropriate new ticket if they miss their train or need to change their plans.

Simpler

- Regulate the periods that can be classed as 'peak', and reduce the premium that can be charged for peak travel
- Introduce a simple, zoned, integrated fare structure in metropolitan areas outside London, standardised across cities, with smartcards
- Require that the cheapest ticket for a particular journey is clearly displayed and offered, and require that the through fare never exceeds the sum of walk-on fares for individual legs of the journey.'

The Campaign has a website at www.bettertransport.org.uk for further information.

MMPA email: newsletter@mmpa.org.uk

