

**Arriva Rail North – Community Involvement Policy
A Presentation by and Discussion with Matthew Worman
Stakeholder Manager (Central Region)
Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting
Thursday, 1 September 2016**

Introduction

Matthew Worman had come to the Committee meeting to discuss Arriva Rail North's Community Involvement Policy and how it would be delivered through partnership with local community groups, but he also talked about improvements that the company were committed to introducing during the period of their franchise. The Committee took the opportunity to raise a number of issues of concern to the local population.

Improvements to be Introduced by Arriva

Over £1billion would be invested over the lifetime of the franchise to deliver improvements. Much of this investment would be used to improve the quality of the trains. In general new trains would be introduced over a period of time. Many of the older trains would be refurbished. The exceptions to this would be the pacer trains. They were no longer 'fit for purpose' and were being scrapped entirely.

There would be a heavy investment in customer service. The company employed more than 2,000 people and was growing. Trains would in future have conductors as well as drivers and free wi-fi would be available on board.

The ways in which tickets were sold would also improve. Most stations would have ticket vending machines, help points, LED lighting, etc. A 'Delay – Repay' service had already been launched.

The contract with the Department for Transport involved the delivery of four key projects in a space of approximately four years. There would be two big time-table overhauls: the first in December 2017, followed by another one in December 2019. The aim would be to provide better services more frequently, e.g. services that were currently provided hourly were expected to become half-hourly. New time-tables to be issued in 2020 would be providing 2,000 more journeys.

After the pacers had been scrapped it was expected that seat availability would increase by between 10% and 19%.

Previous franchises had been managed centrally by the DfT, but this one was being managed by Rail North, a public body made up of elected members from the North with its Head Office in Leeds.

Community Involvement

The company had decided to remove the Level One adoption arrangements. This was because a 'Report It' facility was now available for all members of the public to

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use and the company's contractor, Corillion, had been instructed to do the work of the Level One adopters.

In future the company would be working mainly with voluntary groups whose aim was to improve the appearance of the stations. £38million was to be invested in station improvement. Funding would be available for community projects that would add value to local stations.

Staff were to be installed at thirty-four stations that were currently unmanned. Staff hours at fifty-four station that were already manned were being extended. The company were also launching off-peak and advance fares.

The area of the country covered by the company had been divided into four regions: Central, West, East and North East. Each region had a Director with a small management team, which meant that it should be possible to deal with issues more quickly.

It had been proved that when a station was looked after by the community patronage increased. Hindley and West Houghton stations were good examples of this.

The company were willing to work with existing groups. Funding was available for both major and minor projects. Requests from groups were coming in.

Arriva intended to have a partnership approach in relation to community involvement and was not going to dictate what form community projects would take – that would be up to local groups. The company's focus would be on engaging with the community with regard to sustainability and achieving it in an environmentally friendly manner. It was anticipated that by January 2017 there would be a community and sustainability manager in place in each region.

Local Matters

Groups that were fully endorsed by Arriva were entitled to several rail passes, which could be used by their members on trips within the Central region. The company were in the process of issuing these. Mr Worman needed to know the number of active members in order to ascertain how many passes each group should receive.

To be eligible for full endorsement a group needed to have a committee, a Chair and a bank account. As part of an application for endorsement a group had to provide a description of what they wished to do.

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Current arrangements in place locally were described. It was suggested that the groups should combine under one umbrella. In reply to an enquiry Mr Worman confirmed that Arriva would help to underpin work practically.

A member observed that improvements were needed in relation to car parking issues and cross-boundary ticketing. Mr Worman explained that the responsibility for parking provision lay with Network Rail and the LAs – Arriva was the tenant. Funding was available for car parking initiatives.

The length of trains to be provided in relation to the length of platforms at stations along the Manchester to Southport line was discussed.

The controversial issues surrounding proposals for the Manchester Airport and Piccadilly Station services were raised. Mr Worman explained that Arriva's proposals were driven by infrastructure, how the franchise had been prepared and how Transpenine Express were operating. Arriva would be consulting on this matter when the draft time-table for December 2017 was being prepared.