

Hebden Bridge Partnership Ltd

Minutes of General Meeting, held in Hebden Bridge Town Hall, Mon July 4 2016

Present: about thirty-five people.

1. Bob Deacon, chair, welcomed those present.

2. Presentation, Pete Myers, Stakeholder Manager, Northern

Pete explained the change in franchised train operator in April ('Northern' rather than 'Northern Rail'). The new franchise committed to £1bn of new investment, primarily in rolling stock. Pacer trains would be entirely phased out and other stock fully refurbished. More stations would be staffed, and there would be increased budgets for community rail partnerships (Friends of stations etc). A new locally accountable body, Rail North, was monitoring the franchise and should be the body awarding the franchise in ten years. There would be ticketing and fare changes, including advance purchase tickets up to 15 minutes before train departure; mobile phone and print-at-home tickets would be introduced. So-called 'Northern Connect' quasi express services would be introduced in 2019, and would call at Hebden Bridge. The key dates for changes were Dec 2017 and Dec 2019.

Questions and comments:

- Disabled access (Mike Troke from the audience advised that he was in contact with Nicola Wright, Network Rail, re station lifts)
- Manchester Airport through trains (awaiting completion of Victoria-Piccadilly link)
- Victoria congestion
- White lines on station steps wearing off
- Tickets for young people
- Fare anomaly re Yorkshire-Manchester cross-border journeys
- Electrification (on a wish list)
- Staffing plans
- Rolling stock reliability
- Late trains back from Leeds and Manchester

3. Presentations, Helen Batt and Simon Byrne (Environment Agency)

a. Helen Batt is Director (job share) of the Calderdale Catchment Plan initiative.

Liz Truss, current minister, is keen to see this produced. Cumbria's equivalent plan is already published. Helen set out a timetable which included workshop consultations on Saturdays in July, with a final draft due Sep-Oct. The catchment plan would also seek to link with the already published Calderdale Council Flood Risk Strategy.

Questions and comments:

- How is relationship between natural flood management and valley-bottom proposed work being handled?
- what support would there be from Defra if ministers are reshuffled?
- Can we learn from the continental European experience of water management, eg when Alpine snows melt?
- What actual research is being undertaken? (A: capacity of reservoirs to store water, natural flood management study, liaison with Natural England)
- Can the accumulated silt at Mytholmroyd be removed? (A: modelling evidence suggests this would not help)
- Need to stop fast flows off the hills. Upland management essential.

b. Simon Byrne is Project manager, Hebden Bridge work

Simon shared early ideas on ways to improve the confluence of the Calder and Hebden rivers at Black Pit. This was a complicated confluence; options included realignment, culverting, concrete 'benching'.

Another key piece of work was exploring ways of storing more flood water in the Yorkshire Water Reservoirs upstream from Hebden Bridge. A joint technical group was meeting.

A new Stakeholder Group would meet in early August. Simon also said that the CFFC hub shop near the Picture House was available for leaving comments.

Simon also briefed the meeting on other specific work: Nutclough (completed), Pin Hill, Erringden hillside, Woodland View (Charlestown), Burnt Acres Wood.

Works were expected to commence later in 2017

Questions and comments:

- Relationship between studies and proposed work?
- State for convergence modelling results (A: Probably Sep 2016)
- Nothing has happened since the 2012 floods. Concern about long timescales.
- Are EA forecasts accurate, given climate change?

- What are implications of Brexit vote on agricultural subsidies and therefore landowner engagement?
- Idea of computer modelling supported
- Can old mill ponds be used? (A: focus at present on YW reservoirs)
- People feel they're not being listened to by EA. How can EA listen to local people and use their direct experiences?

4. In closing the meeting, Bob Deacon reminded the audience of the Partnership's AGM on Monday Oct 24th.