



Memo

Date: Tuesday, August 29, 2006
From: Mr Robin D Gordon
To: Mr Nigel Whitburn (Action with Communities in Rural Kent)
To: Mr Martin Bacon (Ashfords Future)
To: Ms Nina Headde (Community Rail Project)
To: Mr Phil Cottrel (DFT)
To: Mr Jeff Sims (Edwards Harvey PR)
To: Mr John White (Hastings Diesels Ltd)
To: Mr Nick Gallop (Intermodality LLP)
To: Mr Stephen Hagues (LAA)
To: Mr Chris E Albrow (Lydd Mayor)
To: Ms Maria Gonzalez (S E Trains)
To: Mr Matt Ball (Southern)
To: Mr Roger Lanham (Southern)
To: Mr Jeremy Cooper (Stage Coach East Kent)
To: Mr Vince Lucas (Southern)
To: Mr. Stephen Gasche (Shepway District Council)
To: Mr. Jerry Swift (Network Rail)
To: Mr. Philip Carter (Michael Howard MP's team leader)

Subject: Record of the third meeting of the Lydd Airport Railway Action Group (LARA) 19 July 2006

In attendance:

Mr Robin D Gordon (LAA) RG
Ms Nina Headde (Community Rail Project) NH
Mr Roger Lanham (Southern) RL
Mr Roy Gould (MARSHopper) RGO
Mr Nigel Whitburn (Action with Communities in Rural Kent) NW
Mr Mike Grant (Hastings Diesels) MG
Mr. Stephen Gasche (Shepway District Council) SC
Mr. Jerry Swift (Network Rail) JS
Mr. Philip Carter (Michael Howard MP's team leader) PC

Apologies where received from:

Mr. Trevor Skelton
Mr. Vince Lucas
Mr Chris Albrow
Mr. Alan Marsh
Ashfords Future

RG Introduced the meeting and immediately suggested that JS give the group an overview of the issues to be faced with operation of passenger rail services on the Lydd Ashford railway line.

JS mentioned the high costs involved in this type of enterprise. He went on to say that clearly he could not give any estimates of these costs without a level of consideration and formal study. This formal study, under Network

Rails mandate would need to be paid for. He Mentioned a figure of £10,000 for which would produce an outline estimate of the costs and possibly the required revenues or demand that could be anticipated. *JS to write to RG with a proposal for a study.*

MG mentioned the aspirations of St Leonard's Railway Engineering to offer older slam door stock to operate on the line, possibly on a start up basis.

JS mentioned his concerns on the rail wheel interface and possible damage to track posed by older units in general but felt that consideration could be given to this approach.

JS asked if MG intended to be an open access operator and MG confirmed this point.

RG mentioned the role that Govia and the Go Ahead Group had in relation to passenger handling services at major airports in the UK.

RL mentioned a possible scheduling opportunity with the Rye Shuttle, pointing out that this would mean a reduced service Rye-Ashford; that this approach was stock limited.

JS asked about frequency of service and facilities required.

RG suggested that timings might need to feature a first arrival time in the range 0545-0600 and a cessation of service around 2300. He sketched out one possible build up in services favored by one possible operator. Two aircraft operating around six rotations a day followed by a third unit as and when demand justified.

RG mentioned that a light rail solution was at the front of the groups thinking and that bus or coach operation would of course form part of the mix and be core to start connections from the airport to Ashford.

MG asked about construction standards and in particular who would build the line where it brought into the airport terminal.

JS mentioned that Network Rail in the norm would build the line but outlined an exception to this rule pointing to a line re-opening in Wales.

JS stated that in any case post construction Network Rail would take over the line prior to its operation.

PC asked about the planning issues.

NW pointed out that with the early hours connection requirement this could well mean that there would be no connectivity at Ashford.

JS pointed out that if the physical requirement changed from a spur line to a halt this would greatly reduce the costs involved. It would obviate the need for signaling and a junction.

RG mentioned the twin track that existed from Appledore to Ashford.

MG mentioned a proposal to sell the existing Lydd station (from the residual assets board) and a general discussion ensued regarding the former use of this site, its association, in the past, with the military.

SG mentioned that he had been consulted on this matter and had replied stating that Shepway would wish the site to be protected for future possible railway use. Subsequent to the meeting SG copied RG with the following email addressed to gerry.newnham@railprg.org.uk

“Following your letter of 12 January 2006 requesting Shepway District Council's response to the proposed release for sale of BRBR former railway land LS-HAF-7-6 Lydd, Former Station and Yard, I responded on the same date using the pro-forma supplied and indicating that our Local Plan protected this site with a view to possible future railway use.

I have been asked by the Lydd Airport Rail Air Group (LARA) to ascertain the response of the BRBR Property Review Group to our response, and would be grateful to receive notification of this from you.”

JS pointed out that under certain circumstances any body protesting against the sale of a site could be required to buy the site.

PC asked about the role of the franchising process.

RL responded that no mention of Lydd Airport had been made when his company was tendering for the current franchise that expired in 2009.

PC asked if Ashford played a role in the franchise.

RL responded that no, they did not.

PC asked if Kent County Council paid any attention?

SG mentioned that only if the development was seen as pivotal.

SG mentioned the inclusion of Lydd Airport in the various development framework plans. Shepway DC's Local Plan 2006 (now agreed and currently being printed) supports the expansion of Lydd Airport up to 2 million passengers per year subject to consideration being given to its effect on the local environment and wildlife habitat. Also, KCC's Local Transport Plan for 2006 to 2011 (LTP2) has included in its fourth and fifth years (2009/10 and 2010/11) provision for expenditure on highway and other improvements in the vicinity of Lydd Airport so as to improve its transport access.

RL asked who will pay for a feasibility study?

MG wanted a round table discussion

JS agreed to discuss with colleagues. He mentioned that the route enhancement team would give one hours free work.

RG again mentioned the light rail solution.

JS responded with details of the thinking at Network Rail. That design of rolling stock had been steered toward making it crash proof. That in the past the thinking had been light and heavy rolling where mutually exclusive. That this thinking was changing with the advent of TPWS.

A general discussion ensued on the light heavy rail issue.

RG mentioned that a proposal to change the groups name from action group had been received. It was felt around the table that there was some validity in this as action group conferred a negative connotation.

NH suggested Lydd Airport Rail Air and this received some support.

PC asked about the planning process.

PC mentioned that all the bases in planning must be covered.

PC mentioned the renewed support coming from Kent County Council.

PC mentioned the three villages' scheme put together by TML Euro tunnel to guarantee house prices in the three villages most affected.

RG ran through the minutes of the previous meeting and these where accepted.

RG passed out feedback from the public consultation process.

RG mentioned the developments at the airport.

RG updated the group on the timetable for a planning application to extend the runway and build a new terminal.

RG gave an update on market activity.

RG briefed the group on the Lydd Air Show 9th and 10th September.