

7b

REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	AGENDA ITEM:
DATE OF MEETING:	15 NOVEMBER 2007	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	RICHARD GROVES	DOC:
SUBJECT:	WILLINGTON STATION PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES	REF: u:/Richard/COMMITTEES/EDS15
WARDS AFFECTED:	WILLINGTON, REPTON, FINDERN	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 That the Council:

- (i) strongly object to Arriva's proposal to severely restrict the frequency of passenger rail services at Willington Station from December 2008,
- (ii) request that service frequencies at Willington be increased, rather than reduced and
- (iii) request that Arriva collaborate with the South East Derbyshire Accessibility Partnership to develop measures to encourage growth in passenger numbers at Willington Station.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To advise members of changes to the timetable for rail services from December 2008 proposed by Arriva, the new franchise operator.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Department for Transport has selected Arriva to operate the new CrossCountry rail franchise to 2016, the geographical extent of which is illustrated in the plan at Annexe A. Arriva is proposing changes to various aspects of the existing service and has published these for consultation. Whilst the consultation document refers to many detailed aspects of the service, summarised at Annexe B, this report concentrates upon proposed changes to the timetable affecting services at Willington Station.
- 3.2 From December 2008 services stopping at Willington will represent part of the proposed Cardiff-Birmingham-Nottingham route. The table at Annexe C compares current service frequencies at Willington with those proposed. Members will note that on weekdays the number of services running in each direction from Willington would be reduced from ten per day to four in the direction of Birmingham and from nine per day to four in the direction of Derby and Nottingham. The frequency of weekend services would also be significantly diminished.

3.3 Local Government involvement in public transport services is the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council, which has set up the South East Derbyshire Local Accessibility Partnership to address matters such as this, as referred to at Environmental and Development Services Committee on 23 August 2007 (minute EDS/19 refers). However, given the importance of these proposals, and the fact that the consultation period allows insufficient time for the Partnership to formulate a response, it was considered appropriate to bring the matter before Committee.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 The proposals are inconsistent with the following themes of the Council's Corporate Plan:

- "Prosperity for All", insofar as rail can provide a means of transport for those lacking access to a private motor vehicle.
- "Rural South Derbyshire", which seeks to ensure that rural areas have good quality, affordable public transport.

6.0 Community Implications

6.1 The proposals are inconsistent with the following themes of the Community Strategy:

- "Sustainable Environment" in that they will be counter productive in regard to the encouragement of modal shift away from the private car.
- "Creating Opportunities for All" in that rail can provide a means of transport for those lacking access to a private motor vehicle.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 It is understood that Arriva intends to seek to maximise passenger numbers by minimising journey times between major population centres. Arriva considers that faster journeys will make the service more attractive and will allow more services to be run per day. Following examination of passenger numbers at Willington and some other stations serving smaller settlements, it has been proposed that services stopping at these points should be curtailed to facilitate the achievement of these wider objectives.
- 7.2 Arriva's emphasis on passenger numbers fails to take account of the social and economic role played by railway services in smaller centres such as Willington, where it is important to be able to travel to major centres in order to access employment and higher order services. Not all travellers have access to a private car for reasons such as age and income. The proposals will also run contrary to any potential future improvements to the railway station infrastructure at Willington. They are also inconsistent with the potential establishment of a Derby South Parkway Station close to the former Willington Power Station, an idea that was put forward in the Multi-Modal Study into North-South Movements on the M1 Corridor published by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions in 2002. The Draft East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, published in 2006, makes provision in Policy 50 for the promotion of the development of new park and ride facilities in appropriate locations to reduce traffic congestion on routes into the Region's Principal Urban Areas and along strategic transport corridors.
- 7.3 The proposed changes would make rail travel to and from Willington far less convenient than at present and would therefore be likely to deter usage. Conversely an increase in the number of services per day would result in greater convenience

and would be likely to lead to growth in usage. The proposed measures listed in Annexe B will make use of the Cross Country network generally more attractive. Other measures that could lead to an increase in passengers at Willington Station could include the introduction of new bus routes and improvements to the frequency of existing ones, the co-ordination of bus and rail timetables and the introduction of through-ticket services. Access to rail services by cyclists could be improved by installing secure cycle lockers at the station.

7.4 Some of these measures could be implemented or assisted by Arriva whilst others would need to be taken forward by other organisations. The vehicle for collective working toward improved rural transport is the South East Derbyshire Local Accessibility Partnership and it is therefore considered that Arriva should be asked to work in collaboration with the Partnership in the pursuit of measures that would lead to growth in passenger numbers at Willington Station.

8.0 Background Papers

Changing Times – Consultation on the 2009 Timetable Arriva, 2007

Proposed Cardiff – Birmingham – Nottingham Service Timetable Arriva, 2007
2009