



BEDFORD COMMUTERS ASSOCIATION

THE RAIL USER GROUP FOR BEDFORD AND FLITWICK

JULY 2011 NEWSLETTER

WELCOME to the July 2011 Newsletter of the Bedford Commuters Association.

1. Siemens wins Thameslink order



Artists impression of Desiro City EMU in FCC livery

On June 16th, Rail Minister Theresa Villiers MP named Siemens plc and the XL Trains consortium of Siemens Project Ventures GmbH, PPP fund Innisfree Ltd and investment company 3i Infrastructure plc as preferred bidder to build, own, finance and maintain new trains and depots for the Thameslink Programme.

According to the DfT "The order will cover 'around 1,200' dual-system 750 V DC third rail/25 kV AC EMU vehicles for use on the Thameslink north-south commuter route between Bedford, central London and Brighton. Entering service from early 2015 to the end of 2018, they will replace the Class 319 units which are to be redeployed to the North West of England, the Thames Valley and other areas yet to be confirmed. The Class 377 units will be returned to Southern."

Siemens has invested more than £45m in developing the Desiro City EMU platform as

the basis for its Thameslink bid. The new trains will carry up to 1,750 passengers, offering improved passenger communication and easier access for passengers with reduced mobility than the existing fleet. They will be more energy efficient and also lighter, reducing track wear.

The trains are to be built at Siemens' Krefeld plant in Germany, with some components supplied from the Siemens Transmission & Distribution Ltd plant at Hebburn in Tyne & Wear. DfT says that 'up to 2 000' new jobs will be created in the UK: 600 associated with component manufacturing, 650 with the building of depots at Hornsey in London and Three Bridges in West Sussex, and up to 750 maintaining the trains and operating the depots, including the wider supply chain.

'We are delighted to have been selected as preferred bidder for the Thameslink rolling stock procurement programme and we look forward to working with the Department for Transport to bring the programme to successful fruition', said Steve Scrimshaw, Managing Director of Siemens' UK rolling stock business. 'Siemens has participated in a rigorous tender process for over two years. Our selection as preferred bidder is a significant achievement not only for the rolling stock teams both in the UK and Germany but for Siemens overall.'

The VeloCity consortium (Bombardier Transportation (Holdings) UK Ltd, RREEF Ltd, Serco Holdings Ltd, Amber Infrastructure Group Ltd and SMBC Leasing (UK) Ltd is being retained as reserve bidder 'in the event that contracts cannot be successfully finalised'. Given they were not the successful bidder, there is a serious risk

that Bombardier may close its UK factory in Derby, with considerable job losses, and marking the end of UK train manufacture.

Some of the key characteristics of the new Desiro City trains are 8 and 12-car units in three configurations:

- 8 car inner (standard class only)
- 8 car outer (first class and standard)
- 12 car outer

2 + 2 seating and full width gangways (no doors) between carriages

Contractual failure rate: 45,000 PPM (Public Performance Measure: a 5 minute delay)

Up to 1,200 vehicles (time will tell if 'up to' is significant & the order is later reduced)

First deliveries from early 2015

More information is available at:

1. DFT Press Release: <http://goo.gl/Gx78i>
2. Siemens Desiro City web site: <http://goo.gl/oGG5E>
3. Siemens press release: <http://goo.gl/gsvqP>
4. Siemens / FCC video: <http://goo.gl/o775b>

2. McNulty Report.

The publication of the interim report of the McNulty review of value for money in the rail industry took place on 19 May 2011.

One of the suggestions within the review is that companies could take on Network Rail routes within two years. A construction company or train operator (TOC) will be invited to maintain a regional rail route within two years, under the proposals unveiled. The move, suggested by Sir Roy McNulty, former head of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), would be a possible first step in dismantling the Network Rail monopoly.

His report found that the private company, which receives £4 billion a year to maintain the infrastructure, was a barrier to efficiency. In particular, Sir Roy highlighted its size, heavily centralised decision-making and "a culture which could at times seem arrogant and insufficiently concerned about the needs of its customers".

He recommended that it should enter into at least two joint ventures with other companies to run routes by 2013-14 and that at least one pilot scheme be set up for another company to take over maintenance of a regional railway.

Sir Roy has indicated the following : "We are advocating that one of those Network Rail routes might be managed by someone other than Network Rail."

The Department for Transport (DfT) said it would consider the proposals and respond in due course. Industry insiders expect the Greater Anglia route, which includes busy commuter lines into London Liverpool Street, to be named as the pilot. The franchise to run services from Essex, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Suffolk and Norfolk ends early next year. The DfT is therefore in the process of setting up a short-term contract running until summer 2013.

Keith Ludeman, the out-going chief executive of Go-Ahead Group, told investors that the 18-month franchise was a stop-gap contract designed to give bidders time to come up with a long-term plan for running the route. Go-Ahead is bidding against Stagecoach Group and a Dutch operator to win the franchise.

Sir Roy said: "You could imagine a number of large construction and infrastructure companies being able to do this and it is not inconceivable that some of the train operators might wish to take this."

Whether or not other lines would be run by competitors would depend on the outcome of the pilot. Network Rail welcomed the announcement. The company said it had already initiated a programme of devolution on ten regional routes "better able to respond to the needs of customers and passengers".

The ultimate Thameslink Programme involves operation over several routes (on the north side of the Thames both GN/ECML & Thameslink/MML), with more south of the Thames. It therefore remains to be seen what structure is proposed post-2018 – and the actual destinations within the Greater Thameslink (franchise) network of routes. Hopefully Network Rail will reflect this configuration in its amended organisational structure.

3. Thameslink Programme

FCC continue to work with the DfT, NR and other TOCs to deliver the Thameslink Programme. It is now scheduled to complete in December 2018. An announcement was made on 16th June on the successful bidder to build the new trains (see item 1 above).

Station upgrades continue at Blackfriars, Farringdon and West Hampstead. FCC have recently introduced gateline schemes at Harpenden & Leagrave stations. The ticket barriers at Harpenden went live on Monday 27 June. Their operating hours will be Mon-Fri 0530-1030, 1500-2030; Sat 0630-1130, 1500-2030; Sun 0900-1600. More details at: <http://goo.gl/q0o4D>.

Network Rail has announced its plans to redevelop London Bridge station and is seeking views on the scheme. The transformation of the station and surrounding tracks will be the final phase of the Thameslink Programme which will mean a better station, longer trains and more frequent services. For more information and a chance to comment, visit:

www.networkrail.co.uk/thameslink

The work at London Bridge will result in **all** services operating via Elephant & Castle/Herne Hill during the duration of the redevelopment.

As a prelude to the work, a new bridge was installed at Borough Market over the Royal Wedding weekend at the end of April.

At Blackfriars over the May Day Bank Holiday engineers removed the metal shield put in place to protect the Underground lines from building work at the station above and to allow the Underground services to continue running. The underground station is still on schedule to open this December. Whilst this was going on two 38 tonne trusses were brought in and welded into place at the station. Two more are being manufactured to create the roofline of the new station.

At Farringdon the main entranceway has been narrowed and the hoarding line outside has moved to the south side of Cowcross Street to allow for the rebuilding of the other half of the road bridge. On Platform 1 both single staircases are closed and on Platform 4 a new temporary staircase leading from the main entrance has been provided making it easier to move around the station. Finally a new roof spanning all platforms is being put in place.

At Flitwick work has started on the platform extensions ready for December. Progress is rapid on the southbound (Up Slow line) platform 1, at its south end – with work continuing on platforms 2 & 3 (centre island platform). Platform 4 (Down Fast line in the Bedford direction) is being extended at its northern end, adjacent to the station car park. Network Rail has taken (temporary) possession of the FTC car park adjacent to platform 1, as a work-site/material storage for the platform extensions.

At Bedford work has started on the platform extensions, which has meant that the Sunday service has been cut to half hourly until mid afternoon. This will continue until September. Also work is continuing in providing five new 12-car length carriage sidings just north of the River Ouse bridge (adjacent to the Marston Vale Line).

Ballast train on first of the new sidings



4. Service Incidents

There have unfortunately been several recent incidents where FCC &/or Network Rail's performance has been under severe scrutiny. There are currently two investigations underway into the incident at Kentish Town on 26th May :

(a) By the Rail Accident Investigation Bureau (RAIB – part of the Department for Transport) [see <http://goo.gl/pEI7Z>]

(b) By Atkins Consulting, who have been commissioned by FCC to undertake an independent review. This will be led by Ben Harding who has over 35 years experience in the rail industry spanning passenger railway planning, construction, operation and maintenance both in the UK and internationally.

The BCA (and APTU) were to meet Neal Lawson FCC's MD on 27 June, however this meeting has had to be rearranged (no date yet) due to the interim reports not yet being ready. We will report back after that meeting. We have asked FCC if they are confident that the circumstances that meant that the train moved off with open doors could not occur in normal service and have received the answer "yes". The following was extracted from a rail incident reporting database:

Event description: During a failure of the OHLE equipment and consequential train failure, a train composed of an eight car Class 377/5 "Electrostar" became incapacitated for a period in excess of three hours. During this time, several exterior doors were opened as a result of passenger action. Due to the length of time the train was stationary and without OHLE traction supply, the unit entered "load shed" mode. When the assisting unit was coupled up and ready to move, the driver could not carry out a power test. The fitter went through the train shutting the exterior doors, but due to passenger action they were almost immediately re-opened. The driver could not obtain traction power so the TIS was isolated and the lack of reliable warning from the TMS and the drivers belief that the lack of door interlock light signified that the TIS had been operated overtook the basic premise that there was a door open and resulted in no controls being put in place for two train movements.

What action has been taken to prevent recurrence and severe consequences? Driver re-briefing on the importance of checking train doors whenever the Traction Interlock Switch (TIS) is isolated and that Train Management System (TMS) indications must not be relied upon solely, during times of degraded train system failures, to determine whether or not exterior train doors are closed and secured. This incident is also subject to independent and RAIB investigation.

State the justification for an Urgent Operating Advice, including the factors considered in your assessment of the potential for recurrence and severe consequences if it did recur: This is justified as an UOA as with several train operating companies now employing traction fitted with Train Management Systems, it is felt that an over reliance on TMS indications may lull the driver into a false sense of security, and that during times of train system failure a back to basics approach should be taken by drivers in terms of safety checks to be made prior to a train movement commencing.

In our view, the decision to issue an "Urgent Operating Advice" means that FCC are not blaming the driver for what happened as they clearly think there were a number of significant wider factors. The problem was initially caused by a low hanging tree branch becoming caught up in the train pantograph well between Brighton and London (it was particularly low because of heavy rain earlier that day); a programme of vegetation cutback works by Network Rail is now underway.

At the last FCC Stakeholder Forum on 16th June, Neal Lawson (MD) commented:

a. That FCC regarded their response to this particular incident as unacceptable – he observed that the usual response to an incident of this impact is usually much better and therefore these don't make headline news.

b. The FCC commissioned report will be issued before the RAIB one; the RAIB will have a chance to comment on the draft and the FCC one will not cover those aspects that the RAIB is investigating (it is assumed this is (a) the train moving off with passengers still on the track; and (b) moving off with the doors open).

As soon as the results are available Neal said he will be certain to forward them to FCC customers. Because neither of these investigations has published a report (interim or final), information is somewhat sketchy as FCC have made the (correct) decision to wait for these reports before commenting in detail.

Network Rail has also come under scrutiny from ORR, being instructed to take urgent action to improve its safety procedures after it missed eight out of ten performance targets. ORR has identified (nationwide) 33 instances where Network Rail failed to address safety risks.

5. December 2011 Timetables

FCC are at present still working on the detail of the December timetable and as yet we do not know the specifics of which trains will be 12-car formations. At present we can only say that there will be three Bedford to Brighton trains and one Brighton to Bedford train in the morning peak and 3 Brighton to Bedford trains and one Bedford to Brighton train in the evening peak. It is hoped that by the next newsletter we will know those trains which will be 12-car formations.

BCA is still pressing EMT to improve the service northbound from Bedford. If we receive any positive news, we will let you know.

6. Passenger Focus – National Passenger Survey

Passenger Focus published their Spring 2011 National Passenger Survey (NPS) on June 29th. The main findings affecting our route were as follows:

	EMT (satisfied)	FCC (satisfied)
Overall Satisfaction	86%	78%
Punctuality/Reliability	86%	74%
How dealt with delays	48%	25%
Value for Money	52%	32%
Sufficient Room to Sit/Stand	72%	59%

In our view there is significant room for improvement. The BCA along with APTU will be putting much pressure on both FCC and EMT to improve on these results over the coming months. If you wish to see the full results please log onto the following:

<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/research/nps/content.asp?dsid=496>

Although FCC has welcomed the publication of the NPS results, it admits that it must continue to work to improve in all areas of the NPS : particularly punctuality of services, customer information and train cleanliness. The BCA wish to see a considerable improvement from FCC, given its recent poor performance.

7. Train Fares.

As a general rule of thumb the average increase 2005 to 2010 in train fares (by category) is :

All fares	29.2%
Regulated standard class fares	21%
Unregulated standard class	33.5%
First class fares (all unregulated)	39.8%

Given the *real pricing* in train fares indicated by Phillip Hammond, it is inevitable that planned fare increases will outstrip pay rises. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) confirms the increase to the cap on regulated fares is RPI+3% for three years from January 2012. RPI is currently between 4.5% & 5%, so it is possible next January's fare increase will be about 8%. The CSR did, however, confirm Government funding for key rail infrastructure projects including the Thameslink Programme and Crossrail. Passengers are therefore contributing to these schemes through the "fare box" (as well as the general taxpayer).

8. FCC and Personal Cheques

FCC are reminding customers that the banking industry is withdrawing the cheque guarantee scheme and they will be unable to accept personal cheques after 30th June 2011. The decision to close the scheme was made by the Payments Council in June 2009 in response to the long term decline of guaranteed cheque use.

Company cheques will continue to be accepted for the renewal of a season ticket when the bank account name contains 'Ltd', 'Plc' and 'LLP'. Company cheques must be accompanied by personal identification such as a passport or driving licence, and business identification such as a headed letter. However cheques with a bank account name containing 'Trading as' or 'T/A' will not be accepted.

FCC will continue to accept the following debit and credit cards:

Mastercard, Visa, Electron Visa, Maestro, American Express, Diners Club

If you have any problems please let us know.

FCC's booking office teams will always try to ensure that Ticket Vending Machines are ready for morning peak demand. Members may not be aware that weekly Season Tickets that expire on Sundays or Mondays can be renewed from noon on the previous Friday with no loss of validity. For example, a 7-day Season Ticket which is due to expire on Monday 18 July can be renewed and the

new ticket will be valid until Monday 25 July.

Members may also wish to know that they can buy their monthly and longer Season Tickets on line. Full details can be found by clicking on the following link

<http://www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk/tickets-and-fares/season-tickets/>

This will save them time in comparison with buying their Season Ticket at the station.

9. East-West Rail Link (EWRL)

The Oxford – Milton Keynes/Bedford western section of the project is now a candidate for the Government's 2012 High Level Output Specification (HLOS). If it is selected for HLOS next year, the section is expected to open in 2017.

This year there have been more useful developments: Railfuture gave evidence at the Public Inquiry into the "Evergreen 3 Project" which will link Oxford to London Marylebone via Bicester; the project includes new track and stations between Oxford and Bicester, which can also be used in future for Oxford – Cambridge trains. A decision on the project is expected over the summer.

In Bedford the former Focus DIY store next to the station has been demolished; it is anticipated the space vacated will eventually be used for new bay platforms for Oxford- Bedford/Cambridge trains. In the meantime, it is being re-surfaced ready for

an extension of the Ashburham Road Car Park, run by Bedford Borough Council.

In April, County Councils and unitary authorities produced new Local Transport Plans (LTP 3). Comments on these plans have been sent in, as well as Councillor briefings. As a result there is more commitment to Oxford-Cambridge than before, though not as much as everyone would like. Indeed the BCA have been particularly disappointed by the lack of enthusiasm from Central Beds. Sadly this typifies their general indifferent attitude towards rail.

Finally, mention should be made of an excellent video of the project which you can see on www.eastwestrail.org.uk. Also check www.railfuture.org.uk/Ox-Cam/

The BCA believes that it is vital that SEMLEP (the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership), of which Bedford Borough & Central Beds are members, should rise to the challenge and help in the delivery of EWRL. The Government has indicated that LEPs are expected to play a key role in bringing forward transport priorities. With the removal of regional structures and planning documents LEPS must work together to assist in the delivery of transport infrastructure. The likely 'regionalisation' of Network Rail into separate business units will only increase the need for LEPs to come together to prioritise and support schemes such as EWRL. By working with adjoining LEPs, investment in the wider EWRL will benefit people within this area (as well as outside it).

10. **Crossrail**

Concrete signs of work underway on Crossrail can now be seen in the City of London & elsewhere. Finsbury Gardens Bowling Green and part of the gardens around it have been closed to become a temporary worksite for the new Liverpool Street Crossrail station. Several buildings

have also been commandeered around Moorgate leading to the relocation of some shops. Moorgate station will be revamped to accommodate the new line and the project was factored into the construction of Moor House when it was built in 2004.

New stations, including Farringdon, will offer larger entrances and ticket halls, more space and easy access to Crossrail and other rail/underground services. Crossrail Limited is producing useful newsletters covering each area of work (eg Farringdon). For more information about Farringdon station see :

www.crossrail.co.uk/assets/library/docu ment/f/original/farringdon_station.pdf

From Saturday 18 June members using the Liverpool Street and Moorgate areas are being advised that some long term but temporary changes will be made to local travel arrangements as work continues on the new Crossrail station at Liverpool Street. Some changes are due to works that are expected to be completed by early 2012 with others remaining in place until the station works are complete in 2018.

Around Moorgate station there will be changes to the roads and footpaths that will change the way passengers enter or exit the station. From September 2011 Moorfields will be closed between the station and London Wall. The Moorfields entrance will be accessible from either Moor Place or from Ropemaker Street. Passengers can also access the station by using the entrance on the east side of Moorgate, or the entrance on the west side of Moorgate through a covered footpath.

More information is available at :

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/transport helpdesk@crossrail.co.uk](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/transport/helpdesk@crossrail.co.uk)

www.crossrail.co.uk/near-you

11. **Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)**

The BCA was approached earlier in the year to offer its support to both the Bedford Borough & Central Beds Councils' bids for LSTF. Our aim was to see funds made available for further station improvements, bus-rail integration and other initiatives which helped rail users.

Unfortunately the outcome of the first tranche LSTF bids has recently been announced by the DfT. Both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire have been turned down for funding.

However, it is understood that Central Beds are being invited by the DfT to resubmit for Tranche Two following further improvements to their bid.

Whilst obviously the BCA are extremely disappointed at this decision, at least Central Beds are being offered the chance to re-bid in February 2012, unlike many other local authorities (which include Bedford Borough) who are not. For further information see :

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/statements/baker-20110705>

Central Beds are remaining 'tight-lipped' at the moment about what improvements are to be bid for, but they will be receiving feedback from the DfT shortly. The BCA are aware that other local authorities have been far more successful in their recent LSTF bids:

In Stratford upon Avon (Warwickshire) plans include a new railway station and supporting train services; a park and ride bus service enhancement and a walking and cycling facility to link the station with key residential and employment areas.

Public transport schemes across England, designed to boost economic growth and reduce carbon emissions, were given the go ahead in early July, thanks to £155 million of Government investment. 39 projects have won funding as part of the first allocation from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). They cover eight regions and a total of 37 local authorities, with many more as **partners**. All have been judged to be effective against the fund's two key objectives of creating growth and cutting carbon. The successful schemes also include a variety of measures such as smart ticketing, the promotion of infrastructure for electric vehicles, bus and rail improvement measures, cycling and walking and are designed to link together to create a sustainable transport package that delivers economic growth.

Local Transport Minister Norman Baker said:

"I am delighted to be able to fund these excellent projects. "All the winning schemes have one thing in common – they will help build strong local economies while addressing the urgent challenge of climate change. "We have empowered local authorities to create packages of sustainable initiatives that are tailored for their local areas, and this is only the beginning – even more funding will be announced next summer following a second round of bids."

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For more information, see our website - www.bedfordcommuters.org.uk
If there's something you want to tell us about, please email admin@bedfordcommuters.org.uk

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